

UFI's European Conference in Cologne to cover drivers for future success in the exhibition industry

Paris, 11 April 2017 – UFI, the Global Association of the Exhibition Industry, is bringing together exhibition organisers and venue managers from Europe and beyond to take a peek into the future of exhibitions.

Changing event formats, shifting exhibitor and visitor expectations, global competition, and more digital venues will be the main topics at this year's UFI European Conference, headlined "It's time!", on 10-12 May in Cologne (Germany).

With more than five billion euros currently being invested in venues and venue infrastructure in Europe despite continuing geopolitical uncertainty, the conference focuses on trends and initiatives shaping the exhibition industry for the future.

"This conference will be a chance to look at tomorrow's success factors: venues 'going digital', new formats, changing business models... It's going to be the sort of event where you come away buzzing with ideas for your own business," says Kai Hattendorf, UFI Managing Director.

"We are proud to host this year's UFI European Conference at our home base in Cologne. As a company, we 'promise to energise' the business of our customers. By hosting UFI's biggest event in Europe this year, we want to do our part in energizing the discussion and dialogue about what is driving the future of the exhibition industry", says Gerald Böse, CEO Koelnmesse.

With his help of David Boon, conference moderator and General Manager of International Business Development for Brussels Expo, the delegates will swap practical insights with international peers and learn from some of the leading industry experts from Europe, the US, and Asia.

Some programme highlights:

- Keynote speaker Denzil Rankine, Executive Chairman, AMR International (UK) will call on European exhibition businesses to face up to toughening global competition. His advice to organisers: Focus on corporate structures, digital changes, and global trends.
- Dr. Stefan Rief from Fraunhofer Institute, and Matthias Schulze, Managing Director at the German Convention Bureau (GCS), will share their latest 'Future Meeting Space' research – and show the changing demands on how to utilize venue space for events.
- Singapore's Arun Madhoc, CEO of Suntec, will share his journey in turning his venue into one of the most advanced digital venues globally, providing guidance in decision-making for organisers and venues.
- Mark Brewster, CEO at Explori, will highlight changing expectations from the exhibitors' and visitor's perspectives, peppered with current trends and developments – and insights into what makes the best shows.
- And with many event trends finding their way into Europe from the North America, Deborah Sexton, President and CEO of the Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA), will lead a session on meeting trends from the other side of the Atlantic – and the impact they have.

UFI events are appreciated both for their high level content and extensive networking opportunities. The UFI European Conference will be no different. Runners among the delegates are invited to join the #ufirunningclub, part of numerous social functions and networking opportunities organised throughout the two-day conference.

Alongside the conference Cologne will also host a wide array of parallel UFI meeting, ranging from the semi-annual meeting of UFI's Board of Directors to committee meetings and a workshop for this year's nominees for the "UFI Next Generation Leaders Grant". New to the fold of topical meetings is a HR breakfast, hosted by the HR Management Committee, to foster deeper exchange on talent related issues.

The UFI European Conference is organised every year in May. It has previously been hosted in Basel (2016), Istanbul (2015) and St. Petersburg (2014). The 2018 host will be announced in Cologne. It is open to UFI members and non-members.

For more information please contact events@ufi.org and visit www.ufievent.org/cologne

About UFI - The Global Association of the Exhibition Industry UFI is the leading global association of the world's tradeshow organisers and exhibition centre operators, as well as the major national and international exhibition associations, and selected partners of the exhibition industry. UFI's main goal is to represent, promote and support the business interests of its members and the exhibition industry. UFI directly represents around 50,000 exhibition industry employees globally, and also works closely with its 55 national and regional association members. More than 700 member organisations in 84 countries around the world are presently signed up as members. Over 900 international trade fairs proudly bear the UFI approved label, a quality guarantee for visitors and exhibitors alike. UFI members continue to provide the international business community with a unique marketing media aimed at developing outstanding face-to-face business opportunities.

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