

NEC Birmingham walks away with the 2017 Operations & Services Award

The Operations & Services Focus meeting took place at the end of March this year at the Jaarbeurs Exhibition and Convention Centre in Utrecht, the Netherlands. As part of the programme, the two finalists of the 2017 Operations & Services Award presented their solutions to the audience.

The theme for this year's award was: "Successful approaches to creating the perfect customer journey". Both finalists, Messe Frankfurt and NEC Birmingham, presented their high quality, well thought-out solutions to improve the customer experience.

After a transparent process of voting by the audience, NEC Birmingham was named the overall winner for 2017.

NEC Birmingham presented a creative and energetic solution focused on moving from a functional to an experimental customer journey. They convinced the audience that any visitor to the centre would walk away with an emotional bond, an experience that would remain with them for a long while after.

During the presentation, NEC Birmingham Market Development Director, Richard Mann, explained that when they started reviewing their customer journey several years ago, the first thing they needed to do was to work out exactly which journey each of their customer groups was taking - because each one has a different journey. To get a clear view of what their customers experienced, they engaged an independent research and consultancy agency and mapped out each group's entire customer journey, from beginning to end. From this research, they not only extracted information on what they were doing well, but also what they needed to improve. NEC Birmingham then focused on the areas identified as needing improvement by their various customers and made sure that not only did they improve on these areas and/or services, but that they offered solutions that were different from the norm. More specifically, they offered solutions that touched on customers' senses to create an emotional connection.

In keeping with NEC Birmingham's emotional, sense-igniting campaign, Mann won the audience over with his presentation of their creative customer journey solution.

Mann was elated when NEC Birmingham was announced as the winner stating that "*it is such an honour to be awarded this prestigious award! It reaffirms that all the hard work we have done over the years has really paid off!*"

NEC Birmingham will present their customer journey solution during the Special Interest Group Session "Best Practices" at the UFI Global Congress on 1 – 4 November 2017 at the Sandton Convention Centre, Johannesburg, South Africa.

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 58 national and regional association members. More than 700 member organisations in 85 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.

About NEC Birmingham - has been in existence for 40 years, since HM The Queen officially opened the NEC in 1976. The venue has grown significantly in size and reputation to become the UK's number one venue of choice for organisers, exhibitors and visitors. With the original design, the venue accommodated seven exhibition halls - today they have 20 as well as 34 conference suites and a host of additional outdoor spaces.

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