

## UFI Global Congress: Progress is impossible without constant change

- **The exhibition industry’s global meeting to welcome delegates from over 50 countries**
- **Expanded Congress Programme to run from Wednesday through Friday – with a special focus on doing business in Africa on Friday afternoon**

Paris: 10 October: Change is the one constant in business life and the industry of exhibitions is no exception. The global exhibition industry is valued at approximately €49 billion / \$55 billion. At present, the industry is growing faster than the global economy as a whole. In order to maintain this momentum and to further grow their respective portfolios, industry leaders need to constantly review, reflect and reinvent the status quo.

Hosted by the Johannesburg Expo Centre, the 84<sup>th</sup> Global Congress, UFI’s flagship event, will take place at the Sandton Convention Centre in the heart of the business district, from the 1 – 4 November 2017. UFI’s Global Congress has earned the reputation of being “the exhibition industry’s global meeting”, and with participants expected to attend from over 50 countries, UFI is living up to that reputation yet again.

“Raising the Odds - Pressures and Profits”, is the main theme selected for this year’s congress. With growing uncertainties both politically and economically, plus an ever faster digitization around the world, it is the ideal time to focus on adapting, overcoming barriers and innovation to ensure the industry is not only sustained but continues on a progressive path.

The expanded Congress programme will begin on Wednesday lunchtime, with special programming on Wednesday afternoon around event technology and destinations. Additional sessions have also been added on the Friday afternoon to connect the global industry with business opportunities in Africa.

*“I always look forward to UFI’s Global Congress. It is the perfect event to gauge the fitness of the industry and benchmark against peers and competitors in healthy competition. It offers opportunity to discuss industry topics with like-minded colleagues and keep the excitement of exhibitions alive and well. I particularly enjoy watching the next generation of leaders share their passion of the industry, absorbing wisdom from stalwarts, which feeds and maintains a robust, prosperous industry”* says UFI President Andreas Gruchow.

The official programme will commence on Thursday 2 November with the Keynote speaker; Johan Reyneke, a South African winemaker and surfing champion. Johan created South Africa’s very first biodynamic vineyard and winery and is keen to share his experience: the challenges and triumphs, the will to overcome obstacles through change to become a successful entrepreneur.

Another interesting viewpoint will come from the New Generation Leaders, who were successfully selected for the UFI 2017 NGL Grant Programme. The focus of their presentation is on sustainable growth and smart exhibitions. The five grantees originate from Lebanon, Germany, South Africa, Turkey and the United Kingdom, offering a diverse viewpoint on this pertinent topic from the younger representatives of our industry.

### **Invaluable Insight**

The two parallel sessions; Pressures, Profits and Opportunities in Emerging Markets and the Hot Seat Interview will offer insight into how industry professionals faced challenges head-on, plunged into new markets and learnt through trial and error to reap the rewards of successful events. These sessions offer case studies and first-hand experience to the participants, with the sharing of knowledge and experience to benefit the industry as a whole.

Mark Brewster from UFI research partner Explori will unpack and review information gained from the latest research on exhibitor expectations. Are we too complacent about our customers’ level of satisfaction? Are we prepared to move into the “danger zone”, and address what they **really** think? He will discuss with industry heavyweights from UBM, Informa and Messe München.

Continuing the topic of change, a special session on Changing Formats challenges the traditional configuration of exhibitions where panelists testify that taking risks, making changes and reinvention can lead to success.

**Quality Content**

Included in the programme is the wide selection of parallel events, going deeper into specific themes. Special Interest Groups (SIG) will address current trends and present issues on Large Venue Management, Human Resources, Digital Disruption, Government collaboration and a new SIG on UFI Insights that will be an update for current UFI members, and a primer for new ones.

The Best Practices SIG will showcase global industry best practices by asking on stage the winners of the 2017 UFI Award programmes. Speakers will share their proposals, strategies and/or programmes that were deemed outstanding – on issues ranging from marketing to operations, from sustainability to digital innovation.

Closing the main programme of the congress will be Jochen Witt presenting his global review of the industry. Jochen Witt is one of the most popular speakers at the congress; and justly so. With this being his 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Jochen will look back over the last ten years, and assess how the major exhibition players have fared during that time. He will also present an analysis of global politics and the economies of the countries where the exhibition industry is strongest.

**Time to reflect**

UFI’s General Assembly will take place ahead of the main Congress programming on Wednesday 1 November. With many UFI members scheduled to arrive in Johannesburg that morning, a finger fork / cocktail lunch will welcome everyone on arrival before the assembly. Based on last year’s success, the UFI Xchange sessions have been re-introduced for this year: one on destinations, the other on EventTech.

*“To make an impact is to be involved, to ingrain yourself into this dynamic exciting world that we are all privileged to be part of. It is through hard work, dedication and determination that the exhibition industry is sustainable and is able to make such a worthy contribution to the worldwide economy. I am looking forward to welcoming you to South Africa and to our 84<sup>th</sup> Congress”, says UFI Managing Director / CEO Kai Hattendorf.*

UFI’s Global Congress not only offers quality content of case studies, expert presentations and interactive discussions, it is also a platform for industry professionals to unite over common interests, share experiences and forge alliances during the many networking breaks and social programmes. It is the perfect meeting place to meet or reacquaint with industry colleagues and catch-up with long-time friends.

Participants will experience African themed evenings of traditional food and soulful music that makes this land so unique. They will also have the opportunity to explore the history of South Africa or delight in their wildlife during the post-congress tours. South Africa is a vibrant, colourful country, full of passion and promise. This will be an unforgettable experience, forged in the minds of participants long after the sun goes down.

For more information (including registration details) visit [www.ufi.org](http://www.ufi.org)

Attached: UFI Global Congress promotion.

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*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 86 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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