

UFI, Explori present largest ever Global Visitor Insights study

- Data from over 13,000 trade show visitors globally shows shifting patterns of expectations
- Trade shows seen as stable, solid, business channel, but competing channels of interaction may see faster growth
- While there is some shift towards more “festivalisation”, the current visitor cohort values meeting business objectives over entertainment
- Concrete visitor ‘pain points’ cluster around easy-to-manage actions for organisers and venues

Paris – 13 December 2018: Trade show visitors globally are reporting a stable overall satisfaction with the shows they attend - but at the same time, between 22 and 27% of show visitors from mature markets feel that shows are “getting worse”. Younger, C-suite show participants are also more likely to require trade shows to become more entertaining, while still enabling them to meet their business needs.

These are some of the core findings of the 2018/19 Global Visitor Insights Study, jointly conducted by UFI - the Global Association of the Exhibition Industry, and event research specialists Explori, that has now been released.

Based on a combination of the unique global UFI network and the global reach of the Explori customer and research base, the 2018/19 Global Visitor Insights provides the largest ever global insight into exhibition visitors. The study is based on the analysis of more than 13,000 responses from trade show visitors, combined with in-depth interviews with 29 event directors and senior marketers.

It provides many insights and take-aways for professionals within the exhibition industry, among them:

- Globally, trade shows receive a 3.86 (out of 5.00) overall satisfaction rating, and a Net Promoter Score of +7. Both values have remained stable over the past three years. Organisers appear to be doing an effective job at maintaining visitor satisfaction and advocacy; however visitors from developed markets are showing more signs of fatigue from the traditional trade show model than those from developing markets.
- Visitors rate the trade show channel as “best of class” in regards to their core business needs to network/meet people, to buy/source products, to learn/stay up to date with the industry, and to find new ideas/innovations. However, they indicate that their use of other channels will grow at a greater rate than their use of trade shows.
- The ability to source new ideas and solutions is most closely correlated with overall visitor satisfaction. Therefore, access to an appropriate number of quality exhibitors remains key for visitors. In parallel, the traditional model for trade shows needs to evolve to meet changing needs or audiences: preferences of younger visitors and those from developing markets are beginning to change the current balance; approach to sustainability also becomes a compelling factor in some cases.
- Organisers perceived visitors as expecting a more seamless experience and this corresponds with the areas that frustrate visitors most. Seating areas, catering, and queueing times top this list. WIFI accessibility only appears at number nine on the list of frustrations, but is more likely to be seen as an issue by younger visitors.
- Whereas event technology can have a beneficial effect on the visitor experience in many areas, there is still a general lack of awareness, functionality and execution which currently limits its value to both organisers and visitors.

Kai Hattendorf, UFI Managing Director/CEO said: “This study confirms the central role of exhibitions for visitors as their clear channel of choice for their business development. In addition to highlighting the key drivers of visitors experience and the impact of the age of visitors, the study also reports some significant regional differences, and a clear indication as to how organisers can address core elements of the way visitors experience their shows.”

Sophie Holt, Explori Global Strategy Director and report author, added: “Global Visitor Insights is the most expansive study we have yet undertaken during our partnership with UFI and we were delighted by the support from organisers around the world in helping us secure such a large response base. I would like to thank all the organisers who participated, especially those who shared their experiences, hopes and frustrations during the research interviews. I look forward to sharing more report insights with the industry throughout the coming year.”

For the 2018 Global Visitor Insights study, 13,000 responses from trade show visitors in 135 countries have been analysed in addition to a meta-analysis of the Explori global data-set comprising visitor feedback from over 1,600 trade shows. The UFI/Explori Global Visitor Insights are jointly researched and written by UFI and Explori. The report is supported by The Society of Independent Show Organizers (SISO). The research series by now includes three in-depth reviews of both the exhibitors’ and the visitors’ expectations towards show organisers and venues.

A summary of the research is available free of charge at www.ufi.org/research. The full reports are available to all UFI members in the Members’ area of the UFI website at http://members.ufi.org/members_access.aspx.

Attached: cover of the UFI & Explori Global Visitor Insights 2018/19 Edition.

About Explori - Head-quartered in London, Explori has rapidly grown to provide scalable research solutions to event organisers worldwide. With a global client base including ITE, Clarion, Reed Exhibitions, Comexposium, Informa and Messe Frankfurt regularly contributing to their global benchmarks, Explori now holds the biggest set of exhibition performance insight in the world. This unique data-set contains over 2.5 million responses from over 2,000 trade and public expos from every major exhibition market. Explori support their clients through their offices and partners in all key exhibition markets globally. They are the official research partner of UFI, The Global Association of the Exhibition Industry and regularly provide insight to the Association of Event Organisers (AEO), Society of Independent Show Organisers (SISO) and Association of Event Venues (AEV).

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 780 member organisations in 86 countries around the world are presently signed up as members. Over 1000 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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