

Record number join UFI Asia-Pacific Conference in Tokyo

- Over 300 exhibition industry leaders from Asia and beyond gather in Japan to “face the future”

Paris/Tokyo – 15 March 2019: Over 300 delegates from 22 countries and regions attended the sold-out UFI Asia-Pacific Conference this week in Tokyo, making it the biggest of its kind in the event’s 14-year history. Held at [Tokyo Big Sight](#) on 14-15 March, it marked the first time that UFI has held the annual Asia-Pacific industry conference in Japan.

A mix of speakers from inside and outside the business events industry covered this year’s theme of “Facing the Future”:

Among them was Kengo Kuma, the world-renowned Japanese architect who designed the stadium for next year’s Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics. He opened the conference with a strong talk about the power of creativity, and how it can trigger harmony to create integration and connections.

Margaret Ma Connolly, CEO in Asia for Informa (previously known as Informa Global Exhibitions), shared her views on how our industry can attract and develop talented managers. Scott Munro, Chief Commercial Officer of Branded Limited, shared his experiences of building a “festivalised” B2B conference. He challenged exhibition organisers to offer their support to festival and event organisers who are increasingly looking to “exhibitionise” their festivals.

George Tanasijevich, President and CEO of Marina Bay Sands, outlined his views on the opportunities in Japan for “Integrated Resorts” to internationalise and transform Japan’s MICE sector. Josephine Lee, COO of Reed Exhibitions China, updated delegates on Reed’s growing portfolio of B2B exhibitions in China, Asia’s largest exhibition market.

Tadao Ishizumi, President of Reed Exhibitions Japan, delivered a compelling case study focusing on how Reed Japan has developed from humble beginning 33 years ago to become an organisation that produces over 200 exhibitions in Japan annually, generating hundreds of millions of US dollars in revenues – “all organically, without any acquisitions.” He called on Japanese authorities to fast track the development of additional venue space in Japan to allow the market to grow.

There were also several sessions about the role that digital platforms and technology can play in transforming the future of business events. Speakers included Eddie Choi from Mills Design, Jason Popp of GES, Tesi Baur of MBB-Consulting, Gunnar Heinrich of adventics, and Stephan Forseilles of EasyFairs.

All talks will be made available to UFI members in the coming days in the member section of the UFI website (www.ufi.org).

“The exhibitions industry in the Asia-Pacific region continues to grow at an impressive pace, as this year’s conference has shown once again. As more venue space becomes available and as the government paves the way for the development of integrated resorts in Japan, Asia’s second largest market is seeing a fresh surge of international interest,” says UFI Managing Director/CEO Kai Hattendorf.

The UFI Asia-Pacific Conference featured two days of networking and learning as well as a Marketing Committee meeting and an Associations’ Committee Meeting. Other onsite activities included a tour of the Tokyo Big Sight venue, an UFI Asia-Pacific Chapter member meeting led by new Chapter Chair, David Zhong, and a UFI China Club meeting. There was also a welcome reception for all delegates held at the Tokyo Conference Centre Airake, as well as city tours and much more besides.

This year’s conference was hosted by Tokyo Big Sight, Japan’s largest exhibition venue. The conference was supported by representatives of all four UFI Diamond Sponsors: Thailand Convention & Exhibition Bureau ([TCEB](http://www.tceb.or.th)) and Global Experience Specialists ([GES](http://www.ges.com)), Qatar National Tourism Council ([Qatar](http://www.qatar.com)) and [Shenzhen World](http://www.shenzhenworld.com).

Full details of the UFI Asia-Pacific Conference 2019 can be found on the event website: <http://ufievent.org/tokyo2019/>

The UFI Asia-Pacific Conference 2020 will take place in Macau, from 6-9 March 2020. “We are excited about the opportunity to go to Macau next year. Everyone attending the conference will be able to experience first-hand the impact the new road bridge between Hong Kong and Macau is having,” says Mark Cochrane, UFI Regional Manager Asia-Pacific. The 2020 conference will be hosted by [IPIM](http://www.ipim.com).

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 60 national and regional association members. More than 780 member organisations in 86 countries around the world are presently signed up as members. Over 1,000 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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