

UFI reports continued growth around the world, reaches more industry professionals than ever before

- UFI's General Assembly has reviewed 12 months of activity, highlighting events, education, research, and advocacy efforts
- Global membership now exceeds 800 member companies and continues to rise steadily
- Participants at UFI global events exceeds last year's record by 8%, Global Congress in Bangkok ties for biggest UFI event ever
- Global Exhibitions Day activates more than 17,000 industry professionals in 88 countries and regions

Paris/Bangkok, 6 November 2019 – UFI members from over 50 countries met today in Bangkok (Thailand) to review UFI's work throughout 2019 and confirm plans for the year ahead. The 2019 UFI General Assembly preceded UFI's Global Congress, "Platforms of Trust".

With over 550 registered participants from more than 50 countries, this year's event in Bangkok is the largest in UFI's history, matching the record number of attendees at the Shanghai (China) Congress in 2016.

Chaired by UFI's 2019 President, Craig Newman, the General Assembly highlighted an array of new initiatives supporting UFI's global membership in around 90 countries. Once more, membership has grown steadily this year and – for the first time in the association's 95 year history – exceeds 800 member companies.

Craig Newman, UFI's 2019 President comments, "Reviewing the past twelve months, I feel proud - proud of the achievements and developments UFI has seen. For me, three things stand out from all the work around the world: UFI's focus on collaboration, the development in UFI's smaller chapters in Middle East/Africa and Latin America, and UFI's research work."

Newman continues: "UFI is unique – we have more than 50 national and international exhibition industry associations as members. We work with and for our members. UFI does not compete with national associations. We don't run national chapters. We work together. Because together, we are stronger! This year, we have signed an agreement to take these collaborations one step further, to the global level – the Global Alliance with AIPC and ICCA. As the business models for exhibitions and conferences today overlap, we can learn from each other. Together, our future is brighter if the best global trade associations collaborate for the benefit of our members."

Another year of growth in UFI Events

Around 1,400 industry professionals attended the broad array of UFI events held around the globe, from the "Global CEO Summit" in London (UK) to the "UFI Global Congress" in Bangkok (Thailand). The number of delegates rose by approximately 8% compared to 2018, which was also a record year.

UFI's Global CEO Summit, the exhibition industry's annual curtain-raiser event, kick-started a year that saw two global events, three regional conferences and two topical meetings worldwide, with many informal meetings and gatherings as well.

Following plans to promote activities in the Middle East and Latin America, UFI's Middle East / Africa Conference became the largest ever designated regional exhibition industry conference in MEA, taking place at the Dubai World Trade Centre.

With UFI's Global Congress returning to Bangkok this year after a successful edition in 2004, the association is putting the spotlight on the largest trade show market in ASEAN. According to UFI research, in 2018, 640,000 sqm of trade show floor space was sold in Thailand, an industry increase of around 4 %.

Strong educational global offerings

Education and Diversity in Leadership are both strategic priorities for the association. After two sold-out editions of the UFI-VMA Venue Management School programme in Shanghai (China), a third edition will take place in Shanghai in December, and the programme will expand into South East Asia in 2020.

This year saw another edition of the International Summer University (ISU) in association with Kölnmesse and the University of Cologne. Along with the ISU several UFI-EMD programme courses were held around the world.

Furthermore, the scope of UFI's talent recognition programme, the "Next Generation Leadership Grant" has expanded to include individual mentoring for grantees.

Global Economic Impact, regional Latin America report added to research portfolio

UFI delivers regular research insights on global, regional and topical themes, and the association's activities in this area continue to evolve. The size and scope of UFI's research available to members have grown significantly in recent years and is now considered world-leading. To facilitate access to research, the association has relaunched their research portal at ufi.org/research.

UFI and Explori published a third report about in-depth reviews on participant expectations with regards to show organisers and venues. Including data from over 13,000 trade show visitors globally, this is the most extensive study of its kind. Once more, this Global Visitor Insights study received support from The Society of Independent Show Organizers (SISO).

UFI released the Global Economic Impact study. Produced with Oxford Economics and supported by The Society of Independent Show Organizers (SISO), the report provides both global and regional data on the total economic impact of the exhibition industry, most notably in terms of economic output, GDP (gross domestic product) and jobs. UFI has also established an agreement with Oxford Economics wherein any UFI member association can obtain a national number for a cost-base price, and any such country profile will be added as appendices to the global study.

On the amplifying issue of sustainable development, UFI released a report titled "The Exhibition Industry and the UN SDGs", aggregating twenty case studies on projects in the exhibition industry which pay into the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

A UFI Report on Best Practices in Marketing adds to the portfolio of reports showcasing the winning and shortlisted entries from UFI's award schemes. Each of these reports shares more than 40 respective case studies from around the world.

Two updated editions of UFI's Global Exhibition Barometer were released as well as the annual update on market overviews for Europe ("Eurofairs Statistics") and Asia/Pacific ("The Trade Show Industry in Asia").

At the Global Congress in Bangkok, UFI will release two new studies:

Global Exhibitor Insights, produced jointly with UFI research partner Explori, will provide global trends on exhibitor experiences and expectations at trade shows. Based on a sample of more than 1,500 trade show exhibitors, the study showcases developments as well as threats and opportunities that lie ahead for the industry.

Furthermore, the Congress will see the release of the first-ever comprehensive overview of the trade show industry in Latin America, covering all the markets in this fast-growing region. Again in the context of supporting new markets, work on this groundbreaking overview has been a core project for the UFI staff in the regional office in Bogota (Colombia).

Global Exhibitions Day activates over 17,000 industry professionals in 88 countries and regions

In terms of Industry Advocacy, the 4th Global Exhibitions Day on 5 June 2019 could increase the campaign reach even further. Coordinated by UFI with the association's global network of association partners, the campaign recorded activities in 88 countries and regions around the world, activating more than 17,000 industry

professionals to join initiatives and activities to highlight the role of exhibitions for economies and societies large and small.

In Europe, the European Exhibition Industry Alliance (EEIA) has represented UFI's European members and EMECA's members in Brussels since 2012. The EU-funded "Business Beyond Borders" matchmaking programme concluded successfully. EEIA continues to monitor relevant legislation and political moves in Brussels, with special focus on GDPR, posted workers, services and trade and tourism.

In Asia, UFI works as a registered NGO in China for a number of years already, the first international business events industry association to receive this status. It allows the association to serve as a link between the members and the authorities to optimise relations.

Summarising UFI's activities for 2019, Kai Hattendorf, UFI Managing Director / CEO says: "We are pleased to report another year where we have been able to support our members around the world. Their success is our reward, and we are happy to see that, globally, the exhibition industry continues to grow at a steady pace despite political and economic headwinds. With our global portfolio of events, research, education, and advocacy activities, we do our part to help our community of more than 50,000 industry professionals to make the connections, get the data, and have the knowledge and recognition they need to navigate successfully through tougher times."

"For the first time in UFI's 95-year history, we count more than 800 member companies. This makes us proud, and serves as motivation to the UFI team in Paris and around the world to work even harder for the industry", **comments Sonia Thomas, UFI Director of Operations / COO.**

UFI's outlook for the year ahead

Over the next twelve months, UFI is set to continue with its current strategic initiatives, focusing on events, research, education, and advocacy globally.

The annual Global CEO Summit will take place in Rome (Italy) from 5 -7 February. Three Regional Conferences are scheduled to take place in Macau (China) from 4-6 March, Buenos Aires (Argentina) from 20-21 April, and Gothenburg (Sweden) from 3-5 June. The Global Congress will return to the MEA region, in Muscat (Oman) from 9-12 November. In addition, several UFI Forums will take place: the Digital Innovation Forum in Macau (China) on 4 March, a Forum on Sustainable Development in Paris (France) from 13-15 May, and an HR Management Forum in Gothenburg (Sweden) from June 2-3.

While the Congress is reserved for UFI members, conferences and Educational Forums are open to all industry professionals. The latest overview of UFI events around the world is available on the UFI website: www.ufi.org/our-events/ufi-events-calendar/

Mary Larkin, President US Diversified Communications, (USA), is UFI's 2020 President. She is joined in UFI's new presidential leadership trio by Anbu Varathan, CEO IMTMA (India), as Incoming President, and Craig Newman, CEO Johannesburg Expo Centre (South Africa) as Outgoing President.

UFI is grateful to all its members, partners and sponsors, notably the Diamond Sponsors Freeman, Qatar Tourism Authority, Shenzhen World and TCEB.

Attachments: [CV](#) and [picture of Mary Larkin](#) and photo of the [new presidential trio](#).

About UFI – The Global Association of the Exhibition Industry: UFI is the leading global trade 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. Almost 800 member organisations in 89 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.

For more information, please contact:

UFI Headquarters,

Justine Evans, UFI Marketing and Communications Manager

Email: justine@ufi.org

Tel: +33 (0)1 46 39 75 00

www.ufi.org