



Matchmaking at the heart of the exhibition industry

UFI Marketing White Paper

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Introduction

Matchmaking at the heart of our industry

Whether it's a trade show, a congress, Instagram or Tinder: no one will come just because of the beauty of the platform. People join in because of the matches they expect to make: matches with other people; matches in interests for topic or products; matches they value a lot, for one reason or another. In the business sector, there is a lot of money behind these interests and valuations. So if this is the essence of why people come to our events, one should expect the matchmaking experience and technology is, well... world class?

The UFI Matchmaking survey 2019 takes a deeper look at the status of matchmaking in our industry. It highlights that over 90% of survey participants already do matchmaking and 71% indicate it as an important or very important part of their event. However, the survey shows that adoption varies across industries and type of show, and it is rarely paid for by the visitor. While satisfaction among customers is perceived as reasonably well by respondents, there are still some obstacles to overcome to provide all customers with a superior matchmaking experience. In addition to the survey, we therefore invited a challenging voice on the topic, which Stephan Forseilles was happy to contribute. As the survey suggested that organizational aspects of matchmaking vary across participants, we also collected some

best practice examples on how matchmaking is actually performed at various shows. From physical, people-oriented approaches to more tech-reliant solutions, there are many roads to the perfect match, dependent on type of event and aims associated with the matchmaking.

Like no other industry, the exhibition industry exists to facilitate meetings between people, and matchmaking is a key instrument to that end. Developing it forward requires management attention, taking full account of technological enablers, and truly excellent organization. While there are many good examples around, we should continue our journey to further perfect the matchmaking experience. And we should not forget what matchmaking first and foremost is: a human-to-human approach.



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Matchmaking: An Overview of the 2019 UFI Survey Results

by the UFI Marketing Working Group¹

ABSTRACT

Matchmaking proves to be a highly relevant topic in the exhibition industry, with 71% of survey participants indicating it as an important or very important part of their event. Matchmaking is particularly popular in the B2B sector (73%) and mostly free of charge for trade show visitors (79%). The top three industries in terms of matchmaking are engineering/industrial/manufacturing, food/beverage/hospitality and construction/infrastructure. The three most important matchmaking goals are increasing customer – i.e. exhibitor and visitor – satisfaction (81%), efficiency of the trade fair visit (70%), and the number of participants (51%). Among the challenges that need to be overcome are the no-show rate of customers or too little interest on their part. All the same, the majority of customers that make use of the possibility of matchmaking are reportedly satisfied or very satisfied with the service (63%). Overall, survey findings confirm the importance of the topic, the progress that is being made, and the fact that there is still room for further improvement. The matchmaking journey continues.

INTRODUCTION: WHY MATCHMAKING MATTERS

Like no other industry, the exhibition sector exists to facilitate meetings between people, creating the ideal platform for successful meetings and as a result, meaningful connections between event professionals across the globe. The buildings, technology, AI or data science, although very important, are merely tools we use to achieve the ultimate goal – perfect matches between people.

Given matchmaking plays such a key role, one would expect there to be high-quality matchmaking opportunities at a wide range

of trade shows and congresses. However, research evidence casts some doubt on this. In a UFI survey on matchmaking carried out in 2011, 73% of participants had organised matchmaking sessions in the last three years. However, not even half of the respondents (48%) were satisfied or very satisfied with their overall matchmaking experience. More than half were only partly satisfied or even dissatisfied.

Has the situation improved since then? Anecdotally, there are whispers about highlights and best practices. But overall, the UFI Marketing Working Group felt it was about time to conduct another survey, to shed some light on the industry's current situation and to provide a basis for further discussion and development. The intent of this paper is to raise awareness, not to present silver bullet solutions. As the use of matchmaking varies widely, rather than the one single optimal solution, a variety of practices have evolved for different uses. Therefore, in addition to the survey results presented here, we also include a collection of best-practice cases in the whitepaper. They exemplify different ways in which matchmaking works.

In the following document, the survey results are presented. Firstly, purpose, definition and method are laid out. Then, the evolution of matchmaking is illustrated in an eight-year comparison, followed by a view on the importance and goals of matchmaking. The question of payment, challenges for matchmaking, as well as organisational aspects round up the survey results before some conclusions are presented.

PURPOSE, DEFINITIONS AND METHOD

The purpose of the survey is to investigate the status quo of matchmaking in the exhibition industry worldwide. Throughout the survey, matchmaking is understood as organising a meeting between two people or two groups of people who share a common interest (e.g.

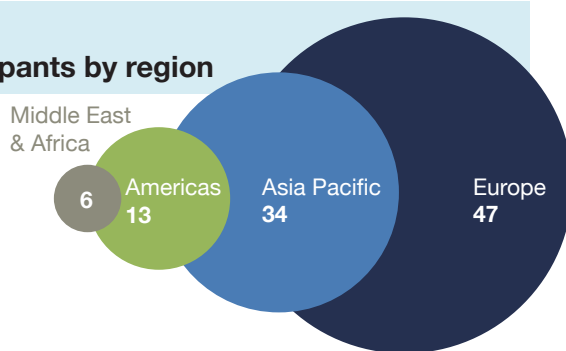
¹ The UFI Marketing Working Group gratefully acknowledges the support of the Messe München market research department in this study and thanks Johannes Knoll and Sylvia Zwerger for their assistance.

exhibitors and visitors at trade shows). Typically, participants fill out a profile with their needs and goals (online or on paper). Organisers then look for potential partners who match this profile and set up a meeting involving the parties.

The survey was conducted online, and was sent out by e-mail invitation to 754 UFI contacts.

- In total, 124 respondents participated, equivalent to a response rate of 16%.
- 38% of the respondents are members of the management board or CEOs.
- 22% are exhibition directors/managers.
- 20% belong to the marketing division of a company.
- The remaining 20% work in other company divisions.

Fig. 1
Participants by region



56% of the respondents indicated that they are organisers of exhibitions, congresses or conferences or also provide venues for events (44%). Most of the participants work in a company with 1-100 members of staff (59%) or 101-500 members of staff (32%). Only 9% work in a company with more than 500 employees. The majority of respondents are located in Europe (47%) as well as the Asia-Pacific region (34%). 13% are from the Americas and 6% from the Middle East/Africa.

EVOLUTION OF MATCHMAKING

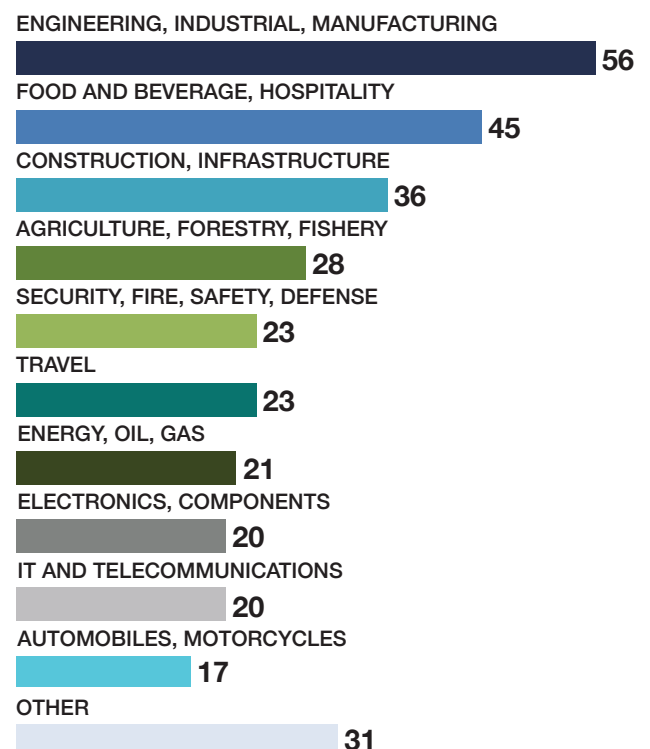
The first striking result: over 90% of the respondents do matchmaking and only 10% don't. Analysing the latter group in greater depth, some stated that they had tried it in the past and it did not work, some are hearing about it for the first time, and some think it is too much effort. 50% have other reasons for not offering matchmaking services, for example that matchmaking is not expected by their target group at the moment. As the study follows up on a previous survey on the same topic conducted in 2011, it is interesting to highlight some developments during the last eight years. Looking at the frequency of matchmaking events per year, the

survey suggests that these take place slightly less frequently than in 2011. At that time, 22% answered that they do matchmaking for every show, compared to only 15% in 2019.

The industries to which matchmaking is usually offered stayed roughly the same as in 2011 and quite a range of further industries were added. The top three industries continue to be engineering/industrial/manufacturing with 56% (36% in 2011); food/ beverage/hospitality with 45% (29%); and construction/infrastructure with 36% (27% in 2011). Nevertheless, a slight shift between the industries is visible: matchmaking is becoming more important for the security and defence industry (from 16% in 2011 to 23% in 2019) while the automobile and motorcycle industry is showing less interest in it (from 22% in 2011 to 17% in 2019). A huge increase in other industries such as the fashion, health or textile industry with 31% (10% in 2011) is also striking.

Matchmaking is still mainly relevant to the B2B sector, as the 2011 survey already showed. The results of the 2019 survey confirm that for 73% of the respondents, matchmaking is directed towards B2B contacts. Only 27% say it is directed towards B2C contacts or both.

Fig. 2
Importance of matchmaking by industry



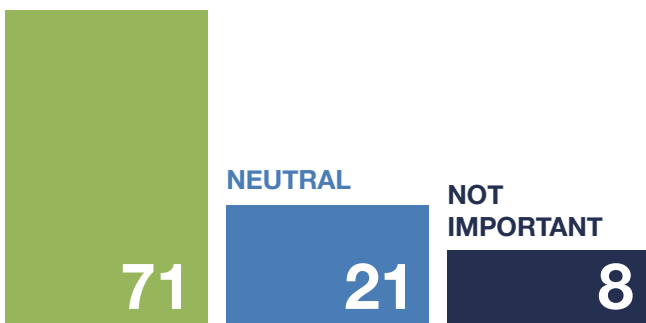
IMPORTANCE AND GOALS OF MATCHMAKING

Just how important is matchmaking? 71% claim that it is important or very important to the event. Matchmaking obviously is a highly relevant topic for the industry today. Only 8% think that matchmaking is not important for their events and 21% take a neutral position towards it. However, if 29% still claim that matchmaking makes no difference or is irrelevant, then this is an interesting statement in itself.

Fig. 3

Importance of matchmaking

IMPORTANT

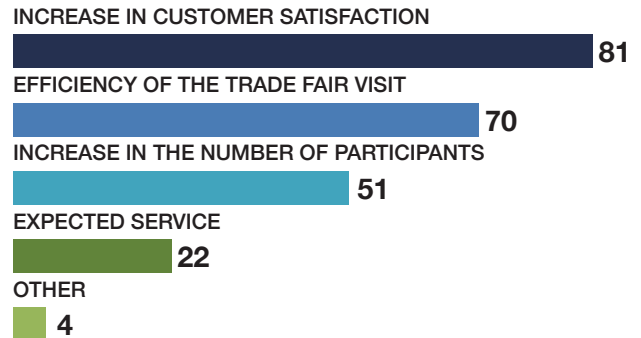


Moreover, the importance of matchmaking is positively correlated (0.2) with the number of matchmaking events one conducts: the more the participants see matchmaking as important, the more matchmaking events they conduct (or vice versa). That is to say, the perceived importance is not just in people's minds but is realised as actual matchmaking events.

We also asked the participants to identify their matchmaking goals. The goal to increase customer (exhibitor and visitor) satisfaction (81%) is foremost here. The second most important goal is to increase the efficiency of the trade fair visit (70%), followed by increasing the number of participants (51%). Only 22% offer it because it is an expected service.

Fig. 4

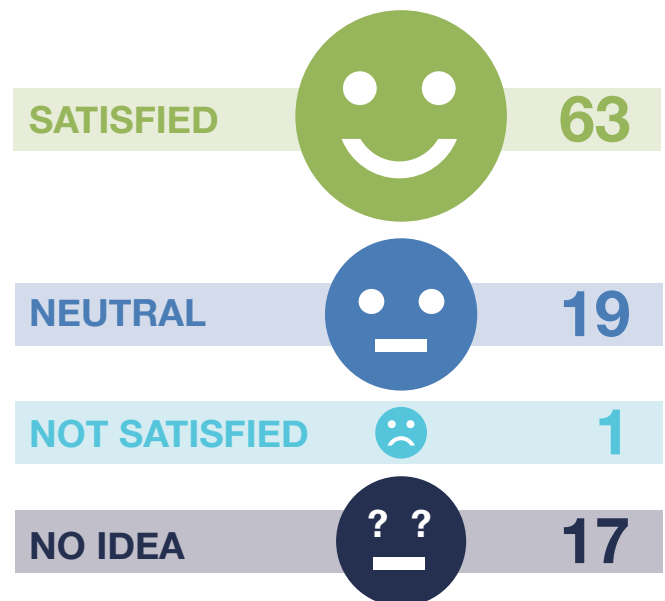
Goals of matchmaking



In order to get an overall picture of how effective and successful the matchmaking actually is, it is important to look at customer satisfaction. 63% of participants state that their customers are satisfied or very satisfied with the matchmaking experience.

Fig. 5

Satisfaction of customers



Only 1% think that their customers are not satisfied and 19% have a neutral opinion. Interestingly, 17% of the interviewees have no idea whether their customers are satisfied with their matchmaking. This calls for stronger implementation of standardised satisfaction measurement at actual customer (exhibitor and visitor) level in matchmaking, given the importance assigned to it by the industry.

A QUESTION OF MONEY – AND MORE CHALLENGES

Furthermore, we asked the participants whether customers had to pay for the matchmaking service. The matchmaking is mainly for free (79%), while 21% charge for the service. This marks a slight decrease of 4% compared to 2011, when 25% indicated that their customers had to pay for matchmaking. A deeper analysis of the results revealed that there is no connection between participants' matchmaking goals and matchmaking as a paid service. That is to say, organisers are not more likely to offer matchmaking as a paid service when they pursue a specific matchmaking goal (e.g. to increase the number of participants).

All the same, matchmaking faces some challenges. First, it is important that customers are interested in the offering at all, which is not sufficiently the case according to 43% of respondents. The no-show rate of customers is the biggest challenge that has to be overcome – 45% of respondents see an issue here. Although still the number one problem in matchmaking, it's also the biggest success compared to the last survey, as this number decreased over the period from 70% in 2011. Another challenge to face is matchmaking the participants incorrectly, which decreased from 38% in 2011 to 32% in 2019. Other challenges might be that the customer's interests are difficult to predict or that there is still only a small database available for matchmaking.

Fig. 6
Challenges of matchmaking in perspective

NO-SHOWS OF CUSTOMERS



WRONG MATCH OF CUSTOMERS

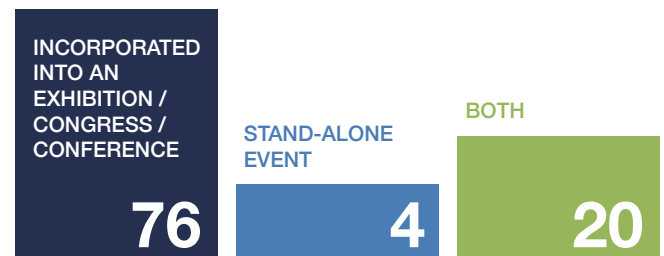


So what can be done to overcome these issues? If there is no interest, a better promotion strategy could be created. An in-depth look at the profile of potential participants might also help. If there are too many no-shows, maybe a fee on the side of the participants could create more commitment to actually attending appointments. In addition, technological advances, better quality of customer data, and more sophisticated algorithms that also take into account soft factors could provide a better basis for matches. Lastly, a superb organisation of the physical matching on the premise, including last-minute incident management, will certainly help increase both actual meeting quality, and its perception.

HOW DO WE DO MATCHMAKING?

How matchmaking is incorporated into an exhibition/congress/conference programme is an interesting question. The majority of the survey participants (76%) integrate matchmaking services into the programme. Only a few host stand-alone matchmaking events (4%) and 20% do both. Matchmaking is primarily seen as part of another event.

Fig. 7
Matchmaking in different kind of events



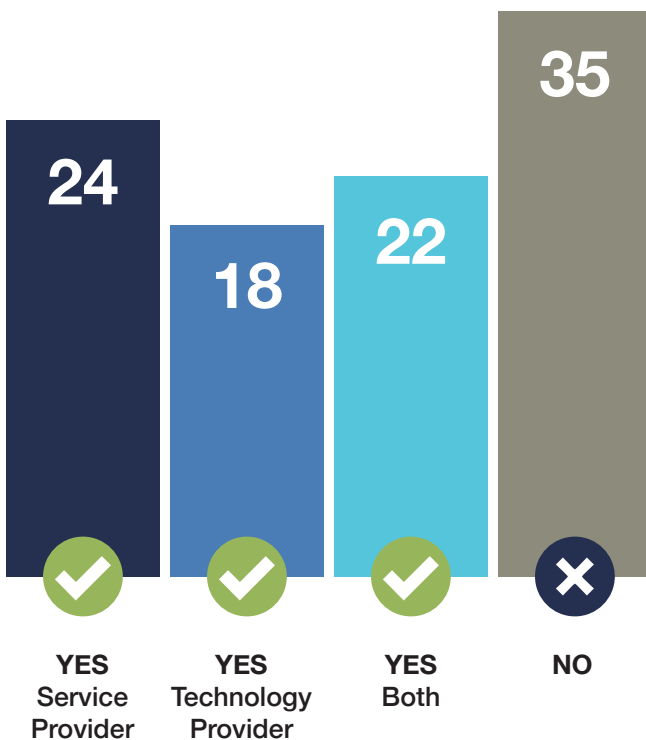
As an example of where or how matchmaking could work at an exhibition or congress, we asked the participants how important it is to have a business lounge/area available. Over 60% of respondents stated that such places are important or extremely important for them. Neutral places where people can meet are therefore good for enhancing the possibility of matchmaking. 39% found that such areas are somewhat important or not so important. In the end, whether it is a dedicated room, or only a table with chairs at a designated space on the exhibition grounds – enabling physical meetings is what matchmaking in our industry is all about.

INTERNAL ORGANISATION

How do we organise internally to provide a matchmaking service? Most of the participants state that they have a service provider or technology partner that helps them to organise matchmaking. Specifically, 24% have a service provider, 18% a technology partner and 22% have both. Only 35% of the participants organise matchmaking completely on their own.

Fig. 8

Organisation of matchmaking



Looking at the internal organisation of the matchmaking process, it is interesting to see that over 58% of the participating companies do not have a special team dedicated to matchmaking, whereas 42% do have one. Most of the companies with a matchmaking team answered that only two or fewer people from their company are exclusively responsible for matchmaking matters.

Interestingly, whether companies have a team specifically dedicated to matchmaking is not dependent on company size. Smaller and larger companies alike either do or do not have teams dedicated to matchmaking.

CONCLUSION

The survey overall shows that the importance of matchmaking in the exhibition industry is increasing – over 90% already do matchmaking and 71% indicate it as an important or very important part of their event. Matchmaking is an indispensable feature of events and, in most cases, providing a matchmaking possibility is a key ingredient in creating an attractive programme and therefore a successful event. There are many ways to promote an environment that is conducive to matchmaking, for instance business lounges or special areas for people to find one another and connect. Nevertheless, matchmaking faces challenges that need to be overcome. The no-show rate of customers, too little interest on their part, and the quality of matches continue to be issues where further improvement is required. Nonetheless, the majority of customers that make use of matchmaking are reportedly satisfied or very satisfied with the service (63%).

Developing matchmaking moving forward requires management attention, taking full account of technological enablers, and truly excellent organisation. While there are many good examples around, the journey to further perfect the matchmaking experience continues. We keep in mind that matchmaking first and foremost is a human-to-human approach, as after all – matchmaking makes business, business makes success, and success makes people smile.

What is your experience with matchmaking? Do you have a best-practice case to share? Tell the Marketing Working Group what you think at mwg@ufi.org, and share your findings!

#ufimarketing #ufimatchmaking

Critical industry voice

What does Matchmaking mean for exhibitions?

BY STEPHAN FORSEILLES

Matchmaking has been an ‘on/off’ topic in events for at least 15 years. From the ages of manual matching in Excel to the era of artificial intelligence being the promise of effortless and real-time recommendations, things have evolved. But not so much. Most of us are still selling to exhibitors the right to annoy visitors.

So, as usual in that situation, I remove my “organiser” hat and look at it from my “frequent visitor” perspective.

I must make a confession: I rarely install matchmaking apps, especially when I attend a show related to event technology. Being CTO/CDO for a relatively large organiser, I know I’ll be bombarded with requests because the landscape is really, really teeming with new companies at the moment. I mostly prefer to be left alone (believe it or not, I’m an introvert), browsing the list of exhibitors and selecting myself who I want to meet. And let’s be honest: I also want to keep some time for people I already know, who may or may not be my suppliers, are sometimes friends, colleagues or ex-colleagues, but with whom I always have a good time.

I strongly believe matchmaking should be visitor-led. It’s a matter of experience. I expect from a matchmaking system to make meaningful recommendations of exhibitors and products I should see. Relevance is the key. Netflix and Amazon have incredible algorithms to know what my interests are. Amazon is so good at it that they sometimes start shipping goods closer to your home BEFORE you order them! They have started working on that more, than four years ago. That’s what I’m expecting from a matchmaking system: booking time for me in an exhibitor’s agenda BEFORE I request a meeting.

Of course, the key to better relevance is data. The better the data, the better the recommendations of algorithm. So where to get that data?

Registration questionnaire, the first channel we think about, is probably not a good place. Pro tip about your registration questionnaire (yes, yours!): it is too long. Data from long registration questionnaires is notoriously bad quality. Most people just want to get through it as fast as possible and finding the shortest route to the badge, the checkbox that will not trigger an additional question and the “click-NEXT-click-NEXT” at the speed of light are a sports at which we, frequent visitors, often excel.

As organisers, we have to find new ways of collecting more meaningful data through other, less intrusive and annoying means. And we have to do it in a way that is totally transparent and open to the users. If they understand that what we are trying to achieve is optimising their experience and not harvesting data to re-sell to exhibitors and partners, they will more gladly help us.

That’s what good matchmaking must be to me, as organiser AND as visitor: more relevant, less annoying and more honest. Getting there will require a change of mindset and some amazing technology. And both are on their way!

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www.ufi.org/ufilive

Case Study

THE MAGIC OF MATCHMAKING SERVICES

BY ELENA CHETYRKINA

OVERVIEW

St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF) - The St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF) is a unique event in the world of business and economics. SPIEF has been held since 1997, and since 2006, it has been held under the auspices of the President of the Russian Federation, who has also attended each event. Over the last 21 years, the Forum has become a leading global platform for members of the business community to meet and discuss the key economic issues facing Russia, emerging markets, and the world as a whole.

Europe+Asia Event Forum (EFEA) - is the first events industry forum in Russia. Annually EFEA proves its efficiency as a communication site for active interaction between events industry professionals; organisers of exhibition; forums and conferences; specialists in business and incentive tourism; as well as specialized contractor organisations and customers from among the representatives of Russian and foreign business communities. R&C Market Research Company organises EFEA since the very beginning – from 2012.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of using any matchmaking is to create a competitive advantage to the business component of the event. This involves:

- Effective targeted promotion
- Direct contact at the decision-maker level - Targeted contacts and effective promotion among target audience. Attendees spend their valuable event time with the right business partners to secure future business success.
- Maximising ROI - Increase of participation/visit efficiency
- Maximising time – Schedules planned in advance with attendees knowing who and when they are meeting and able to hold many negotiations/ meetings in one place.
- A Single base of participants (exhibitors, delegates, visitors)
- Qualified administrator assistance

Requirement of the Matchmaking service:

- To enable attendees to set appointments with compatible company representatives.
- To break shyness barrier by organizing meetings with individuals who have already been already met online.
- To ensure that users are disciplined and Discipline in order to see the whole event and hold every planned meeting.

ACTIONS

Our matchmaking service was organized by a subsidiary – named Linist, who specialize in organizing matchmaking for other companies.

The first Matchmaking was organized in 2006 and since then we have specially developed software and customer-oriented administrative technologies to improve the experience for users.

Every time we use an individual approach to an event, but the matchmaking system is FREE OF CHARGE for all delegates, exhibitors and visitors, who are able to use the online user-friendly networking service and the technically equipped meeting area at the event - as well as special team of administrators who are available before and during the conference.

BEFORE THE EVENT

The matchmaking system allows users to reach and interact with people before and during the meeting. It provides professionals with an opportunity to connect with others in their industry and allows them to contact one another before the event begins to make appointments to discuss concrete topics. The matchmaking Service is a one-to-one business networking tool for delegates/exhibitors and attendees. Meetings are set up, arranged and fulfilled via an automated meeting scheduler and participants can use the 'Day Planner' section of the personal web office or the mobile app to plan and arrange business meetings.

DURING THE EVENT

Participants can use the Business Networking Lounge to host or join a business meeting scheduled via the mobile application or the personal web office. At the venue the business networking area is a specially equipped space offering a comfortable meeting rooms/space/ lounge for participants.

To ensure efficiency, there are a number of conditions for booking meeting areas at the business networking platform:

- Meetings are held according to a schedule created by the online system. Rooms can only be booked by submitting an application in the 'Day Planner' section of the personal web office.
- In order for a meeting room to be reserved for the selected time slot, the meeting must be confirmed by the invitee within 72 hours, but no later than one hour before the start of the meeting.
- Meetings are to be held strictly at the allotted time and last no more than 25 minutes. Extensions may be made only if free space is available.
- To be admitted to the meeting room, the meeting participants must present themselves at the business networking platform administrator's stand and show their badges.
- If the meeting is not confirmed in advance, a room will only be allocated if a free slot is available.

RESULTS

- All participants - delegates, exhibitors and visitors are interested in the meetings (matchmaking).
- Matchmaking has become an integral component of our events.
- The share of "not held" meetings has decreased.

Year	2017		2018		2019	
Name of the event	SPIEF	EFEA	SPIEF	EFEA	SPIEF	EFEA
Booked meetings	990	574	1005	413	1017	668
Number of held meetings	590	372	840	279	897	454
Share of held meetings	60%	65%	84%	68%	88%	68%

2019 RESULTS

2500+ meetings within events of this year up to 8000 users (concurrent connection)

Matchmaking has become a barometer of the economic condition of the industry.

Case Study

BITS & PRETZELS A PERFECT MATCH FOR STARTUPS

BY HOLGER FEIST AND BERND STORM VAN'S GRAVESANDE

OVERVIEW

Munich-based founder festival Bits and Pretzels is all about perfect matches: founders meet founders, founders meet investors, founders meet talents, founders meet research, founders meet corporates — and vice versa. From personal matchmakers for individuals to the famous Munich Oktoberfest morning on the very last day, the event is centered on founders and their needs — for each and every minute.

OBJECTIVES

The three founders of Bits &Pretzels, Andy Bruckschlögel, Bernd Storm van's Gravesande and Felix Haas, felt early on in their own startup careers that they would benefit from more connections with other tech startups. Because of a lack of appropriate events they developed a format "from founders for founders"- thereby creating a good mix of business knowledge, networking and entertainment. The aim was to bring together the most important protagonists of the startup ecosystem: founders, investors, corporate executives, media professionals and researchers – and to ensure that the founders have the most meaningful conversations of the year at the new event platform, which they called Bits & Pretzels.

ACTIONS

A whole variety of formats was created. There is of course an exhibition and a conference, both heavily interwoven and integrated with matchmaking happening practically everywhere within the exhibition.

Firstly, in the “Startup Exhibition” — over 200 startups find their matches with potential customers and investors.

Secondly, in the “Pitch Competition” startups are matched with investors. Over 600 startups apply and roughly one tenth of them are allowed to pitch. Ultimately four finalists are chosen and the winner gets a lot of industry and media attention. The prize in this event is not the money but the matches with investors.

Thirdly, a lot of corporate partners make specific matches for specific interests like HR, tech etc.

There is a physical matchmaking area of roughly 150 sqm to generate matches on a personal level. In this area, various formats are offered: from 1:1 speed dating over round tables on certain topics to Hyde Park Corner-inspired free speech on a small stage. All of this is run by 50 dedicated matchmakers who actually match the people interested. These matchmakers help attendees to make the best out of the event, and have tips tailored to each startup’s current situation. It allows real people to meet each other face to face.

Finally, at the side events outside the founders’ festival, special events are organized to match several groups of people – most notably, an ice hockey game with Startups vs Investors (sponsored by a partnering media company). And of course, on the very last day, everyone meets in the Schottenhamel Oktoberfest tent, where participants can choose which Table Captain’s group they want to join for breakfast and start a last round of matchmaking.

RESULTS

What started as a cozy Bavarian founders’ breakfast, is now widely considered a huge success on the European conference and exhibition scene. It has become a huge founders’ festival where more than 5,000 entrepreneurs

meet to discuss current start-up topics. In the matchmaking area alone, 1,500 people were matched last year, 13,000 contacts enabled and 5,000 cups of coffee served.

Success seemed to be limited only by the maximum capacity of the congress center. So in 2019, when Barack Obama, 44th President of the United States, came for a talk, an additional hall was opened so that all participants could experience the keynote live.

LESSONS LEARNED

At least three lessons learned come to mind. First of all, matchmaking is the purpose and not just a feature.

Secondly, apps and technology are a must, but they are not the solution. Tech helps a lot in guiding people through the various offerings (and maybe even in giving them opportunities to connect pre or post show) but tech alone is not sufficient — people attend to meet other people.

Thirdly, and most importantly: What matters most in creating relevant, sustainable matches during an event is variety and attention to detail in the formats offered for matchmaking. This starts with a deep understanding of the specific needs of every relevant segment of the audience. It continues with the creativity to develop and offer the adequate formats which address these needs. Last but not least, it all depends on excellent delivery — and, most notably, on dedicated matchmakers who are not only specifically trained for the purpose, but also by nature show a genuine interest in other people, in hosting and connecting them.



Case Study

SUBCONTRACTING MEETINGS, ATTENTION IS KEY

BY DOROTA WALLUSCH

OVERVIEW

Subcontracting B2B Meetings (matchmaking event) are organized within the Industry “Cooperation Trade Fair Subcontracting”. This takes place every year in June, alongside the ITM Industry Europe exhibition in Poznań, Poland. The event is dedicated to the machinery industry as well as other industries in need for subcontracting cooperation.

OBJECTIVES

Operational objectives – a new B2B and international event in the Grupa MTP’s portfolio, recognized within the broad scope of industry professionals.

From the very beginning, the clear objective was to create a matchmaking event that would give the added business value for the exhibitors of the biggest industry event in Poland and CEE countries.

ITM Poland had a very clear focus – to find a potential client who would fill in with the company’s spare production capacity. Grupa MTP’s role was to identify the potential clients and invite them to register for meetings. Very quickly we realized we are creating a valuable, time-efficient and effective event for high profile business representatives, who find the meetings THE place to be within the year.

ACTIONS

As we were aiming for it to be strictly matchmaking event, the project team decided to reach for a professional matchmaking tool from the very first edition of the event. We chose B2Match as an experienced provider for this kind of events, and added a search engine of all matchmaking events submitted on the platform, which gave an additional promotion channel.

The next step was to select the potential database of clients and create a clear message about the goal of the event. The offer was directed at two groups of companies: those who just wanted to matchmake and those who were also exhibiting. For those who exhibited as well as VIP Buyers – the participation in meetings was free of charge. For the others – it was a paid event.

After the experience of the first event, a guide was created to show the participants how to register; how to select a partner; how to let potential partners know that they were required, and how to make others invite you to meetings. The guide led each company through the registration process as well as partner selection. It explained how to be visible by creating a profile, but also advised all participants to respect time of a partner, and make the meeting as effective as possible.

However, the guide is only a guideline. What all companies really need is personal assistance, advice and contact with the organizer. That is why the project team had a dedicated meetings coordinator, and experienced matchmaker who learned about the companies, asked the right questions and helped select potential partners. Technology is helpful, but the meetings wouldn't take place without the help of people. For every event a dedicated meeting area was selected. It was separated from the noises of the exhibition area and gave the participants the comfort of negotiating and discussing potential contracts in an appropriate environment. However, the rooms were always near the exhibition to give both sides the opportunity to see the product at the exhibition stand.

No participant was ever anonymous, the participants with largest number of meetings have reserved tables, and in the event of

cancellations, the coordinator helped to match partners on-site, in the real time.

The coordinator is present and dedicated to greet all participants, answer their questions, solve any problems, call missing participants or even break meetings if they take too long.

RESULTS

2017	287 meetings for 100 participants from 12 countries
2018	322 meetings for 117 participants from 15 countries
2019	353 meetings for 138 participants from 14 countries

The event was named one of the best matchmaking events organized under the patronage of EEN (Enterprise Europe Network).

KEY LESSONS LEARNED

Matchmaking is effective and successful only when:

- The participants are well identified
- They describe their offer or needs in detail and with relevant keywords
- They actively look for partners and engage in the process
- The interest of a meeting comes from both sides
- There is a coordinator to ensure that all of the above is in place.

Based on the above the conclusion and a recipe for a successful meeting is for all parties concerned to be engaged in the process. No one is anonymous and everyone states clearly their expectations. Attention is key.

Organizer: Grupa MTP, at MTP Poznań Expo in Poznań, Poland

Case Study

MATCHMAKING SERVICE FOR EXPORTING RUSSIAN FOOD PRODUCE

BY ANDREY ZHUKOVSKIY

OVERVIEW

The Russian Export Centre organized a matchmaking service to increase the amount of exports of Russian food produce exported to China under the “Made in Russia” brand. The service was provided by the contractors “Russcom IT Systems” – a UFI member since 2006

OBJECTIVES

- To increase the conversion of meetings held between exhibitors and potential buyers into signed contracts following participation in the international exhibition.
- To increase export turnover at least by 10% (within 1 year) following the work at the exhibition.
- To achieve a target of coordinating and conducting not less than 330 B2B meetings between Russian food producers and Chinese distributors at the event.

ACTIONS

There were three stages of actions undertaken: (1) Pre-Preparatory Work (2) Matching Buyers and Sellers (3) On Site Work.

STEP 1. PREPARATORY WORK

(duration – 2 weeks, 2,5 months ahead of the exhibition - 4 employees of the contact center participated in this work).

- Contacts with all exhibitors were established (65 companies);
- Each exhibitor was rated on export potential using a scoring system - companies with higher scores received more assistance, as working with them would lead to more contracts.
- Presentations on companies - exhibitors and their products were prepared.
- Presentations were translated into Chinese.
- A landing web-page was created with information about Russian exporters and a facility to allow meetings to be arranged.

STEP 2. FINDING BUYERS, CONFIRMATION OF THE MEETINGS

(2 months ahead of the exhibition opening - 6 employees with a command of Chinese were involved in this work).

- The CRM system was used to analyze the list of potential partners-buyers in accordance with the REC exporters' identified needs.
- Contacts with potential buyers were established via cellphone, WeChat messenger and the landing Web-page. PowerPoint documents and Q&As were then sent on their areas of specific interest.
- Matchmaking of potential partners was carried out and meeting dates were suggested. Personal meetings were scheduled and confirmed between interested matches.
- 4,465 calls were made and 3,751 emails sent.

STEP 3. ON-SITE WORK

(3 days during the exhibition - 10 employees participated in this work).

- Reminders about meetings were sent to all participants.
- All buyers arriving at the meeting zone were registered.

- The meetings schedule was shown on monitors online.
- Meetings were rescheduled or canceled if needed.
- The questionnaire was conducted following not less than 80% of the meetings.
- All the work was conducted with the use of a special digital platform.

RESULTS

351 meetings were held and participants of 287 meetings were surveyed. 91% considered meetings useful or rather useful; 7% - rather useless; 2% - useless.

Russian participants viewed the probability that contracts following the meetings will be signed as follows:

7% - Agreed to sign, 79% - Probably will sign
12% - Probably will not sign, 2% - Definitely will not sign

As a result of the work, the average export potential of the meetings held reached more than 80 million US dollars (+35% of the current export turnover of Russia's food producers – participants of the meetings).
10 contracts and letters of intent to supply the products for 14.2 million US dollars were signed (+6,22% of the current export turnover of Russia's food producers – participants of the meetings)

LESSONS LEARNED

1. At this event like at any other we saw different levels of preparation among exhibitors. Companies which are less prepared for international trade required more assistance in terms of cultural and business communications, market structure, requirements, certifications and etc. Only if they are provided knowledge in these will they derive maximum benefits from the exhibition.

2. This event and many others showed that: The use of digital platforms for the meetings arrangement is not effective unless supported by the employees from the contact center. If only digital platforms are used the conversion of planned meetings into meetings that are actually held is 10 and more times less.

Case Study

MATCHMAKING FOR FEMALE PROFESSIONALS

*BY NATASCHA HOFFNER
AND ROSMARIE STEININGER*

OVERVIEW

herCAREER, the leading German career fair and networking event for women, deals with every aspect of career planning for females. Women find peers, meet top-level role models from politics, business and the academic world, as well as attractive employers. At each event there are around 300 meet-ups and job-offer-talks as well as over 60 panels and speeches that cover all aspects from family & career to training, entrepreneurship or finance and innovation.

herCAREER aims to ensure a personalised, maximised fair participation for all attendees, herCAREER partnered with CHEMISTREE for

1:1 matchmaking between attendees (visitors, speakers, exhibitors' personnel) and for personalised suggestions regarding the exhibitors' jobs, educational or consulting services. CHEMISTREE specialises in engineering high-quality connections and for herCAREER, they mastered the challenges of a high-volume career fair.

OBJECTIVES

Trade fairs are changing. More than ever, they cannot leave contacts to chance but must offer visitors and exhibitors measurable added value. herCAREER aimed to move visitors' networking, interaction and knowledge transfer to a higher level through innovative, algorithm-based matching. The aim was to connect supply and demand and – most important in the digital age – to share knowledge among visitors and speakers as well as personnel.

ACTIONS

1. QUERYING NEEDS AND PREFERENCES

Based on tailored online questionnaires, all attendees (exhibitors, personnel, speakers and visitors) were invited to specify their product/service portfolio and to give their preferences in the weeks before the fair:

- Exchange Matches - Participants interested in meeting sparring partners could state in which areas (e.g. leadership, founding a company) and for what specific aspects they needed sparring and when they planned to visit the herCAREER.
- Job Offers - Exhibitors could state what kind of expertise on which entry level they were looking for, as well as location and languages requirements. Visitors answered corresponding questions.
- Workshops & Services - Furthermore, offers and preferences regarding services, workshops and seminars could be selected.

2. MATCHMAKING SUGGESTIONS

Starting five days before and during the fair, visitors received daily matching suggestions in their chosen categories. For every suggestion, they could view the detailed profile of the match as well as information on “why we match” and print lists of all suggestions that they liked.

RESULTS

- Participation rates were very high among exhibitors and visitors: 220 exhibitors were invited to take part in the matchmaking. They completed 255 questionnaires, of these 81 for job offers and 20 to 30 for each of the other categories.
- 6143 visitors were invited, 2538 questionnaires were completed. Of those visitors that registered for the fair two or three days before, the vast majority took part in the matchmaking.
- The 841 speakers and booth personnel filled 181 questionnaires.
- There were 43.536 matches between visitors, exhibitors and sparring partners in total.

On average,

- every exhibitor’s job offer was matched to more than 200 visitors.
- every visitor received more than 30 job offers and around 15 suggestions for services.

- every person looking for a sparring partner had around 20 matches.

In addition, 400 workshops & talks were suggested to visitors according to topic, date and language. This amounted to another 81.480 suggestions.

Visitors were able to sort matches (yes /no) on the platform. Until the end of the fair, this option was used 4483 times, showing that visitors really worked with the matching suggestions. Even after the fair, this number was increasing daily.

On the whole, herCAREER was able to further strengthen its claim as bridge builder and icebreaker by making it so easy and fast to network and to exchange ideas.

LESSONS LEARNED

A strategic decision has to be taken whether to include visitors in the matchmaking that did not register online, since many of those who bought a ticket at the fair itself would have wanted to take part also.

Matchmaking communication and onboarding for speakers and personnel should be improved since not all speakers and personnel understood that they had the opportunity to be matched for 1:1 sparring or saw the need to take part.

The matchmaking platform will be kept open after the fair, since visitors keep on working with the suggestions, using job offer matches to apply for jobs and connecting to 1:1 matches.

Offering matchmaking provides an optimal basis for herCAREER to set up further digital business models: Year-round networking dates for personal exchange or digital job matches. In addition, herCAREER has developed a better insight into the visitors’ competencies and can offer to recommend them for podiums and in media.

CHEMISTREE has learned how to use its expertise for high quality matches for a setting where thousands of participants were provided with more than a hundred thousand matching suggestions within just five days. Based on participant and system feedback data, CHEMISTREE and herCAREER are now able to further optimise matching process and settings.

FOCUS ON THAILAND

BY KELLY KANOKPORN

OVERVIEW

The Focus on Thailand project was conceived to initiate dialogue between local Thai organisers and global organisers, offers both corporate matching and local market education for attendees at the congress. So where better to practice the match-making skills we have developed over years in the global exhibitions industry.

At this year's special session at The UFI Global Congress, Thailand as a host of the event will once again demonstrate our credentials as a match maker of the highest order; a speed-dating session as part of our Focus on Thailand event. It will take place alongside the 2019 The UFI Global Congress; the most prestigious exhibitions networking event in the global calendar.

A joint collaboration with the Thai Exhibition Association (TEA), this initiative will showcase the country's potential as a dynamic platform for international trade shows in South East Asia.

OBJECTIVES

Recent research from event management company Bizzabo shows that 95 per cent of people at a networking event spent most of their time with people they already knew. Which is

uncanny when you consider the fact that for the vast majority of business event attendees, the priority is business networking.

One of the key success factors in successfully launching an event overseas, is the formation of a winning partnership in their target market; a local partner or local government figure to help them realise your goals.

The Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (TCEB) consider its role of matchmaker as integral to the success of the overseas organizers we work with. In fact business match-making in all its forms (speed-dating, profile-based introductions and the like) has become best practice at TCEB, and a key reason for the relationships we enjoy with international organisers.

It is an integral component at all our major roadshows in Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam (CLMV), where we work hard to connect Thai organisers with prospects, associations, chamber of commerce in these countries.

TCEB expects the matchmaking initiative to help Thai organisers receive at least five quality leads, pre-scheduled with international organizers via the Jublia platform. But the bottom line is clear; more productive meetings mean more shows launching in the wonderful exhibition market that is Thailand, the surrounding CLMV and ASEAN nations.

Our country has become a global exhibition destination and a leading launch pad into South East Asia, and today more than ever we are defined not just by our location and industry, but by the local stakeholders able to turn your event aspirations into reality.

Make sure your events become a remarkable part of our rich trade show landscape, and become part of our Focus on Thailand at the 2019 The UFI Global Congress.

ACTIONS

FOCUS ON THAILAND – STAGE ONE

The matchmaking event will begin with a presentation by Senior Vice President of TCEB (Business), Mrs Nichapa Yoswee, on ‘Government policy to move the MICE industry forward in Thailand’, which will focus on support from the local government and collaboration with key stakeholders in the Thai exhibition industry, delivered within the context of a promising future presented by Thailand 4.0. This will be followed by a panel titled ‘Trust in Thailand: Best practices for reinforcing successful partnerships’, which will focus on working with local partners when establishing events in Thailand.

Both events aim to explore the best practice required to forge mutually beneficial business partnerships in Thailand, focusing on the benefits that arise from Thailand’s ease of doing business, Government support schemes, and support from Thai associations.

FOCUS ON THAILAND – STAGE TWO

The second half of the Focus on Thailand session will be a speed-date style matchmaking session, giving international organisers a chance to spend three to five minutes with a selection of Thai exhibition professionals from various parts of the industry. These may be trade show organisers with fast growing events, international-standard venues and other potential trusted partners in any campaign to conquer the South East Asian marketplace. The first meeting time slot will be arranged by the Jublia System, confirmed after mutual agreement to meet, with subsequent meetings arranged manually.

Crucially, international delegates will only be able to meet with local organizers, each assigned to the 10 up to 25 fixed meeting tables. This is depending on the number of local companies joining the program. The rest of the The UFI Global Congress is your time for meetings with international attendees, we’re using the speed-dating session to keep things local.

PROGRAMME

8 NOVEMBER 2019

14:00

Registration at Lunar Room, Level 10, Avani+

14:30

Riverside Bangkok Hotel Opening

14:35

Keynote Presentation

Government Policy to move forward MICE industry in Thailand

Mrs. Nichapa Yoswee, Senior Vice President of TCEB - Business

14:50

Panel Discussion

Trust in Thailand: Best practices reinforcing successful partnership

15:40

Coffee break

15:50

Business Matching / Speed Meet format

17:00

Session concludes



UFI Marketing Working Group



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(Vice-Chair)
Chief Strategy Officer
Messe München GmbH



ANDREY ZHUKOVSKI

Chairman
Russcom IT Systems

UFI member employees who are marketing experts and want to voluntarily push this topic are invited to apply for membership. **For more information, please visit the UFI website www.ufi.org**

UFI Marketing Working Group

WHO ARE WE?

Members of the UFI Marketing Working Group are passionate experts with extensive experience in marketing and the exhibition industry overall.

WHAT IS OUR MISSION?

Any topic that moves our customers in the exhibition world moves the UFI Marketing Working Group. This working group takes a customer centric perspective on industry matters related to the marketing of trade fairs, exhibition venues and related services. It provides a platform to benchmark new concepts, develop ideas and exchange experience.

HOW DO WE ACCOMPLISH OUR MISSION?

We do this mainly through the following activities:

- Showcase best practice examples through the annual Marketing Award programme
- Use working group meetings as discussion forums
- Conduct specific marketing research studies
- Organise Marketing Forums for and by marketing experts

WHO CAN JOIN US?

UFI member employees who are marketing experts and want to voluntarily push this topic are invited to apply for membership.

WHAT ARE THE TASKS OF A GROUP MEMBER?

We expect an ongoing and proactive contribution from each member to the group and participation in annual working group meetings,

as well as help with promoting the group's activities. The Marketing Working Group annually organises approximately three face-to-face meetings to discuss working group matters and industry trends. These meetings are traditionally organised alongside UFI Regional Conferences and the Global Congress. In addition, depending on availabilities and needs, it is at the Chair's discretion to suggest additional face-to-face meetings or set up conference calls throughout the year.



White Paper Contributors



STEPHAN FORSEILLES is Group Head of Technology and Digital Transformation of Easyfairs and regular speaker on everything digital. With a background in infrastructure and networks, he has a sweet spot for technology and is the strange kind of person who feel complimented when he is called “a geek”.



ROSMARIE STEININGER founded CHEMISTREE with the mission to create impactful personal connections. She has experienced the power of relationships all throughout her own career – as IT specialist at BMW, as deputy CEO at Eberhard von Kuenheim Stiftung and as a female founder in tech. www.chemistree.de



NATASCHA HOFFNER is the founder and managing director of messe.rocks GmbH which organises the herCAREER events. Hoffner studied business administration and has over 19 years of experience in the exhibition industry. She worked in many managing positions; most recently as CEO of a Deutsche Messe AG Hannover subsidiary. <https://www.her-career.com/>



BERND STORM VAN'S GRAVESANDE is co-founder of Bits and Pretzels and has just sold his shares in the contract management service aboalarm to the media company ProsiebenSat1 Media SE. Dorota Wallusch is a member of UFI Marketing Working Group and is also a marketing professional with passion towards innovation and international development. She has a heart of an engineer and understand the engineers' need for subcontracting events.



DR. JOHANNES KNOLL is Head of Market Research in the Corporate Strategy Division of Messe München. Backed by his long-time research experience in science as well as industry he is strongly dedicated to generating customer and market insights for Messe München.



SYLVIA ZWERGER is project assistant in the Corporate Strategy Division at Messe München GmbH. She is an ambitious event professional with a highly motivated nature and despite her young age she was already able to initiate, host and participate in prestigious projects and programs.

UFI Research - An Overview

Global Reports



Analysing the global exhibition industry with global comparisons.

Global Barometer

Bi-annual report on industry developments.

World Map of Venues

Report on trends in venue space and project developments globally.

Economic Impact Study

Report on the value of exhibitions globally and regionally.

Regional Reports



Regular market overviews on UFI's chapter regions.

Euro Fair Statistics

Annual list of certified data for Europe by country.

The Trade Fair Industry in Asia

Annual analysis of market developments for Asia/Pacific by country.

The Trade Fair Industry in Latin America

Overview of the exhibition market in the LATAM region.

The Exhibition Industry in MEA

Overview of the exhibition market in the MEA region.

Topical Reports



Focused reports on challenges and developments within the exhibition industry.

Global Visitor Insights & Global Exhibitor Insights

Data driven research reports on visitor feedback and exhibitor expectations.

Best Practices Compendiums

Case studies of successful industry developments.

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

Reports on the economic, social & environmental impacts of a number of exhibition industry projects around the globe.

Special Industry Topics

A wide ranging selection of bespoke reports into specific industry topics.

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