

UFI releases latest update on the state of the global exhibition industry

- UFI's Global Barometer confirms positive operating profits for 2019
- Turnover expectations for 2020 – surveyed immediately before the coronavirus spread – are positive, but with strong levels of uncertainty in many countries
- The state of the economy at home, global economic developments and competition within the industry remain the top three issues faced by companies
- Study delivers dedicated profiles for 22 markets and regions, including – for the first time – the United Arab Emirates

Paris - 11 February 2020: UFI, the Global Association of the Exhibition Industry, has released the latest edition of its flagship Global Barometer research, which takes the pulse of the industry. Notably, the report confirms strong industry performance for 2019, but also a higher level of uncertainty when looking towards 2020 in many countries, especially in the Asia-Pacific region and Latin America.

The survey reveals a positive result in terms of operating profit, with at least 70% of companies in each of the four regions maintaining a good level of performance in 2019 compared to 2018. The majority of companies from all regions also expect an increase in gross turnover. However, there is uncertainty in many countries, even prior to the coronavirus issue.

Results also indicate that the key issue for the industry remains the “state of the economy at home” (selected by 26% of all respondents). This is ahead of “competition within the industry” (20%) and “global economic developments” (19%). In recent editions of this long-running UFI research, there has been a trend towards this focus on the national/regional economy over global economic development.

In terms of strategy, in all regions, a large majority of companies intend to develop new activities, either with classic exhibition industry initiatives and/or by moving outside current product portfolios. In terms of geographical expansion, on average globally, more than one company out of three declares an intention to develop operations in new countries.

The survey also tackles the evolution of the exhibition business model and to what extent specific features are implemented. The results indicate a major use of “conference stages on and near the show floor” (3.6 out of a scale of 5).

“Exhibitions grew again in 2019, but a slowdown is expected for the beginning of 2020. The novel coronavirus outbreak, which has already led to many shows being postponed or cancelled in China and Asia, will impact this as well. We all hope this situation settles quickly, as the exhibition industry is using these results to shape its general development plans and how it’s adapting to the continually evolving classic business model ,” says Kai Hattendorf, UFI Managing Director and CEO.

Size and scope

This latest edition of UFI’s bi-annual industry survey was concluded in January 2020 and includes data from a record 438 companies in 70 countries and regions.

The study delivers outlooks and analysis for 18 countries and regions: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, China, Colombia, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Macau, Mexico, Russia, South Africa, Thailand, the UAE (for the first time), the UK and the US. In addition, it analyses four aggregated regional zones.

Economic developments

In all regions, the majority of companies (those in a position to assess their turnover), expect an increase in gross turnover. Eight of the selected countries have, for the three periods surveyed, a majority of companies declaring an increase in turnover: Australia, Brazil, Germany, India, Indonesia, Russia, the UAE and the USA.

However, significant levels of uncertainty over the period are recorded in Argentina, China, Macau, Japan, Mexico and the UK.

In terms of operating profit, the highest proportion of companies declaring an increase of more than 10% are observed in the USA (62%), Brazil (50%), Germany (42%), Thailand (42%) and India (41%). Conversely, the lowest proportion of companies are in Indonesia (29%), Russia (29%), Australia (28%), South Africa (24%), the UAE (11%), Macau (0%) and the UK (0%).

Key business issues

As in previous surveys, around 80% of all answers relate to the following four issues: “state of the economy at home” (26% in the current survey, up 2% compared to six months ago); “competition within the industry” (20% in the current survey, up 1% compared to six months ago); “global economic developments” (19% in the current survey, same as six months ago); “internal challenges” (16% in the current survey, down 1% compared to six months ago), where “human resources” are named as the most important aspect.

Strategy

79% of companies in the Asia-Pacific region, 87% in the Middle East and Africa, 90% in Europe and 93% in the Americas intend to develop new activities, in either the classic range of exhibition industry activities (venue/organiser/services) and/or moving outside current product portfolios.

In terms of geographical expansion, 36% of companies on average declare an intention to develop operations in new countries, and this is the case for the majority of companies in 7 of the 22 markets analysed: Germany (73%), the UK (73%), South Africa (64%), “other Middle Eastern countries” (56%), Brazil (50%), Italy (50%) and the USA (50%).

Evolution of the exhibition business model

The 24th Global Barometer survey looked into how the exhibition model is evolving, by questioning companies as to what extent specific features are implemented, as well as the share of available space used for these features.

Results indicate a major use of “conference stages on and near the show floor” (3.6 out of a scale of 5), followed by “open meeting spaces” (2.9) and “catering/designated food spaces” (2.8). “Off main site events” are, by comparison, less common (2.0). These features occupy on average less than 10% of the total space of the exhibitions. The survey results reveal various stages of development and diverging focal points across different markets and regions.

Background

The 24th Global Barometer survey, conducted in December 2019 and January 2020, provides insights from 438 companies in 70 countries and regions. It was conducted in collaboration with 14 UFI Member Associations: AAXO (The Association of African Exhibition Organizers) and EXSA (Exhibition and Event Association of Southern Africa) in South Africa, AEO (Association of Event Organisers) in the UK, AFIDA (Asociación Internacional de Ferias de América) representing Central and South America, AMPROFEC (Asociación Mexicana de Profesionales de Ferias y Exposiciones y Convenciones) in Mexico, EEAA (The Exhibition and Event Association of Australasia) in Australia, IECA (Indonesia Exhibition Companies Association) in Indonesia, IEIA (Indian Exhibition Industry Association) in India, JEXA (Japan Exhibition Association) in Japan, MFTA (Macau Fair Trade Association) in Macau, RUEF (The Russian Union of Exhibitions and Fairs) in Russia, SISO (Society of Independent Show Organizers) in the US, TEA (Thai Exhibition Association) in Thailand and UBRAFE (União Brasileira dos Promotores Feiras) in Brazil.

In line with UFI’s objective to provide vital data and best practices to the entire exhibition industry, the full results can be downloaded at www.ufi.org/research.

The next UFI Global Barometer survey will be conducted in June 2020.

Below visuals:

- 1) Cover of the 24th edition of the UFI Global Barometer report
- 2) Infographic relating to the top business issues

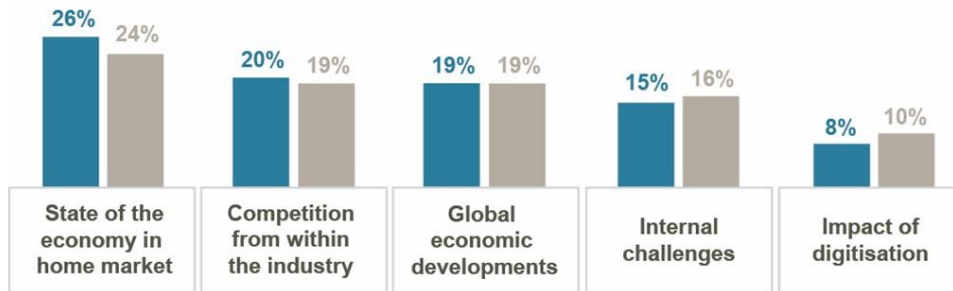


UFI Global Exhibition Barometer

Top concerns of exhibition industry leaders globally

January 2020

July 2019



24th UFI Global Exhibition Barometer/January 2020 © www.ufi.org/research #ufiresearch



About UFI – The Global Association of the Exhibition Industry: UFI is the 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 more than 50,000 exhibition industry employees globally, and also works closely with its 60 national and regional association members. More than 800 member organisations in 89 countries around the world are presently signed up as members. Around 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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