

New findings of the Global Recovery Project revealed

- Latest data from global study hints at the role digital and hybrid events might play in the future of business events

Paris / London – 27 August 2020: UFI and Explori are today releasing new findings from the ongoing “Global Recovery Project” research. The study programme is conducted by live events research specialists, Explori in partnership with UFI, the Global Association of the Exhibition Industry and supported by SISO, the Society for Independent Show Organizers.

The findings, comprising over 9,000 responses from 30 countries, have shown that whilst visitors and exhibitors overwhelmingly prefer live events, digital event elements (often called “virtual”) have a role to play in serving segments of the audience going forward. Around half of respondents have now experienced an online-only event in some format, with two thirds of exhibitors having spoken at a third-party event, or run their own online event. As of early August, **only 13% of exhibitors had paid to sponsor a third-party online event.**

Both visitors and exhibitors rate live events more highly across almost all aspects. Networking is seen as a particular strength of live events, with 77% of exhibitors and 83% of visitors stating that face-to-face events were much better than online in this respect.

However, visitors do already recognise that online-only events offer a reduced cost of attending and are beginning to compete with face-to-face events in the quality of the content they can offer. **52% of visitors felt online-only events were as good as, if not better than live events in their content offering.**

79% of visitors have at least some interest in attending a hybrid event as an online-only delegate. When asked to consider an event they had never attended before, they had a much higher interest in attending remotely compared to an event they were familiar with.

“This global survey delivers key insights to organizers as they plan ahead. It underlines the clear preference that people want to meet in person to do business. At the same time, it gives a clear roadmap for areas where digital events need to evolve to become a permanent fixture in a hybrid future for the business events industry,” said Kai Hattendorf, UFI CEO.

Sophie Holt, Global Strategy Director, Explori added: “Online and hybrid seem to have a complimentary role to play alongside live events. Not only will they give reassurance to visitors who are concerned about safety in the short term, but still want to connect with their community, but they may also have an important role to play in bringing new audiences to established events. This could form part of the customer journey, with online-only events acting as qualification and conversion tools for a flagship live event, or giving sponsors access to a totally new audience whose needs are better met by the virtual setting. We will be conducting a further phase of research in the near future to further understand the sentiments of visitors and exhibitors, including their views on different aspects of the digital event formats.”

Further results from the study will be released in the coming weeks via the industry press and the UFI Connects webinar series available here: ufi.org/uficonnects

Attachment:

- [Global recovery insights](#)

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 88 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.

For more information, please contact: UFI Headquarters: Email: media@ufi.org Tel: +33 (0)1 46 39 75 00 or www.ufi.org

About Explori : Explori is a uniquely scalable platform allowing event organizers to capture high-quality visitor and exhibitor feedback from any market, in any language. Combining an online survey platform designed for the live event industry, with research support and consultancy from event experts, Explori allows organizers to easily and cost-effectively create robust audience insight year after year. With offices and support partners in London, Dubai and Italy, Explori serves exhibition organizers in every market in the world. They currently support events in 50 countries in 30 languages with more being added all the time. Explori has grown to become the industry’s biggest source of event benchmarking data and insight with over 2,700 shows participating and 3 million responses conducted globally.

Press Contact: Natalie Campbell Reid, Communications Lead - n.campbellreid@explori.com - www.explori.com