

## UFI Asia-Pacific Conference reflects the return of and changes across the exhibition industry

- Around 250 delegates tuned in and networked online
- “All signal, no noise” programme from speakers across the region and beyond

Paris, 25 May 2021: UFI’s Asia-Pacific Conference reconnected a pandemic-affected exhibition industry community digitally across the Asia-Pacific, as different markets in the region are in different stages of re-opening for business. Speakers from across and beyond the region provided updates and insights into topics as diverse as policy updates, best practices on adapting events to the current context, and opportunities and trends in the field of mergers and acquisitions. Experts from industries such as e-sports and theme parks offered strategies to deliver customer-centric products and services under changing circumstances.

The digital conference was attended by around 250 exhibition industry leaders from over 20 different markets in the Asia-Pacific region and the world. This event was open to all industry professionals.

*“It has been a uniquely difficult year for our industry. So, it was more important than ever for UFI to give our members an opportunity to gather, reconnect and share experiences. Of course, we would have preferred to meet face to face, but this year’s online Asia-Pacific Conference did provide a platform for our delegates to learn, network and look to the future in a post-pandemic world. On behalf of the UFI team, I also want to thank the speakers and panellists for delivering such compelling and valuable content. And I think I can speak for everyone when I say we are already excited to meet in person, in Macau, at the 2022 UFI Asia-Pacific Conference,”* says Mark Cochrane, UFI Regional Director for the Asia-Pacific region, who moderated the event.

Keynote speaker Margaret Ma Connolly, President and CEO of Informa Markets in Asia, reports: “the return of visitors to physical shows has been better than expected across China, where shows restarted in summer 2020.” Her message to the industry, when looking towards to a more “hybrid”, digital future, is to focus on customers. “Tech is an enabler; service is king. And the ROI for the customer is gold,” she says.

Jor Zhou, CEO of GL events China, foresees an ongoing consolidation among exhibition organisers across China. “Confidence in the Chinese market amongst international organisers remains high,” he says, and he foresees more deals between Chinese and international organisers to be concluded in the coming months.

Prakash Ramajillu, Division Director at Koelnmesse Pte Ltd., and Andy Anderson, Technology Director at Hong Kong Disneyland, shared trends and developments from the areas of e-gaming and theme park management, to serve as pointers for developments on and around show floors.

Kenny Yong, Founder and Group CEO of Fireworks Trade Media, reported his experiences in staging and successfully running trade shows, despite the pandemic, in markets across South East Asia. His two key pieces of advice: “be prepared for a game of roulette if you do intend to hold your show, and be honest, open and realistic about what the show will look like with your exhibitors.”

Participants also connected live to the show floor at Art Basel Hong Kong, and received a guided tour of the event, delivered by Andrew Strachan, Managing Director at MCH Group Asia, and Megan Leckie, Regional Head of VIP Relations Asia. Asked to share their experience in seeing the doors of the show open, they said: “it is exhilarating to see attendees on site; they are so excited to re-connect. For the art scene, as an intimate community, re-engaging is so important.”

In contrast, Danny He, from Alibaba Group, shared the online trade show strategy they are rolling out via a number of digital trade shows, some in collaboration with organisers of physical events.

Wendy Lai, Vice President of Global Sources Exhibitions in Hong Kong, led a session on building digital communities. Keeping communities engaged year round is a challenge for many exhibition organisers, and she shared tips and tricks to do just that.

Tom Mouhsian, Principal Analyst at Forrester Research, based in Singapore, added a global perspective on the return of global travel patterns, citing the need for collaboration amongst governments around the world. He called the decision by the European Commission to reopen its borders to fully vaccinated travellers “the first globally relevant, meaningful initiative to drive travel.”

A global panel on corporate travel and meeting trends wrapped up the day-long programme.

All sessions are still available to watch on demand for registered delegates on the Grip platform, which UFI selected as the digital platform for this event.

Kai Hattendorf, UFI CEO says: “we are pleased we could deliver a day packed with insightful information and data for our industry across the Asia-Pacific region – within the limits of a digital-only format. In 2022, the UFI Asia-Pacific Conference will return as an on-site, in-person event, and we look forward to meeting everyone face to face again, in Macao.”

Attachment:

- [UFI Asia-Pacific Conference Visual](#).

**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 83 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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