

## The Global Recovery Insights 2021 report published: the road to recovery

- Latest data reflects optimism in the industry as demand has recovered for live events from both exhibitors and visitors
- Impact on spend has been less severe than feared
- Visitor quality favoured over quantity

Paris / London – 19 October 2021: UFI and Explori are today releasing the third part of the Global Recovery Insights 2021 report, 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.

This latest in the Global Recovery Insights series of quantitative global survey of trade show visitors and exhibitors, carried out in the summer of 2021, collectively gained 15,000 responses in 10 languages, representing trade show participation in over 30 countries. The report focused on five key themes which build on, and can be compared with, the findings of previous Global Insights studies.

The study found that demand has returned to pre-pandemic levels for both exhibitors and visitors, with no signs of a fundamental shift away from in-person trade shows as a channel. 72% of existing visitors say they plan to attend trade shows with the same or increased frequency in future, with 62% of exhibitors reporting the same intention.

The impact of the pandemic on spend has been far less severe than feared and 45% of exhibitors expecting budgets to return to normal within 12 months.

In previous studies, exhibitors have used visitor numbers as a deciding factor, but this appears to have shifted with 86% of exhibitors stating visitor quality is a large influence on their decision to invest in a show against 67% citing visitor numbers. Where exhibitors are looking to make savings, high quality shows appear protected, with exhibitors using their previous positive experiences to inform their decisions.

Face-to-face remains the preferred channel for networking and overall experience. Exhibitors are not diverting significant percentages of the budget to digital, although it is seen as a way to test new events and has the potential to deliver content and widen audiences.

A new group was surveyed for the first time in this research which was strikingly more likely to convert from digital participation to in-person participation than either current visitors or exhibitors. Made up of senior marketing decision makers based in the US or UK who had not used trade shows as a marketing channel prior to the pandemic, this group expect digital events to remain part of their marketing mix, and intend to become exhibitors at the live editions, suggesting that the digital events that arose during the pandemic have attracted new audiences.

“The report gives plenty of reasons for optimism, including quelling doubts about a possible shift away from live events and indicating which shows are likely to bounce back quickly. At a time where physical trade shows are restarting around the world, we hope that these findings will help the industry to a fast recovery and beyond.” said Kai Hattendorf, UFI CEO.

Sophie Holt, Managing Director, Explori added: “Whilst the need for some exhibitors to make savings remains, the Global Recovery Insights reflects the optimism felt by the exhibition industry, that live events will soon return to pre-pandemic levels.

Budget cuts have not been as harsh as predicted in 2020 and spend is expected to return to 2019 levels within an average show cycle. Quality shows are likely to be protected and digital has opened up new opportunities to widen audiences convert naysayers to the power of live!”

The full report will be shared with UFI and SISO members in the coming days.

Attachments:

- [Global Recovery Insights 2021 cover](#)
- [Global Recovery Insights 2021 infographic](#)

**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](mailto:media@ufi.org) Tel: +33 (0)1 46 39 75 00 or [www.ufi.org](http://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.

[www.explori.com](http://www.explori.com)