

# What is hot and what has changed?

The impact of COVID-19 on the marketing of exhibitions



# 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** – Global report on venue capacity developments.

**Economic Impact Study** – Report on the value of exhibitions globally and regionally.

**United Nations Sustainable Development Goals** – Report on the economic, social & environmental impacts of a number of exhibition industry projects.

**Status of Sustainability** – Report on the status of sustainability in the exhibition industry, including results from surveys conducted by UFI research partner Explori.

## 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 Exhibition Industry in MEA** – Overview of the exhibition market in the MEA region.

**The Exhibition Industry in Latin America** – The first comprehensive overview by UFI of the exhibition industry Latin America.

## Topical Reports



Focused reports on challenges and developments within the exhibition industry.

**COVID Related Research** – Data, reports, and standards covering the exhibitions industry.

**Global Visitor and Exhibitor Insights** – Data driven research reports on visitor feedback and exhibitor expectations.

**Best Practices Compendiums** – Case studies of successful industry developments.

**Special Industry Topics** – A wide ranging selection of bespoke reports into specific industry topics.

UFI Research Patron: **Freeman**

*Freeman is the world's leading brand experience company. They help their clients design, plan, and deliver immersive experiences for their most important audiences. Through comprehensive solutions including strategy, creative, logistics, digital solutions, and event technology, Freeman helps increase engagement and drive business results. What makes them different is their collaborative culture, intuitive knowledge, global perspective, and personalized approach.*



UFI Research is available at  
[www.ufi.org/research](http://www.ufi.org/research)

# UFI Marketing Working Group

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Trends are always important, and interesting to watch. And it is all the more relevant in these first weeks and months of the year where we have a chance to look at the post-covid world of “new normal”. So what do we see more in the field of marketing of exhibitions? What do we see less? Where are reliable constants and structural breaks? And what is new anyway? In other words, has COVID-19 changed the marketing of exhibitions?

Driven by these questions, the UFI Marketing Working Group conducted a survey among UFI members. The goal was to collect empirical evidence of whether there are relevant changes in the marketing of exhibitions comparing the pre- and the post-covid worlds.

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

# UFI Marketing Working Group

## 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.

## Members

- Are passionate experts with extensive experience in marketing and the exhibition industry overall.



**Dr. Holger Feist**

Chair

Messe München (Germany)



**Dorota Wallusch**

Vice-Chair

Grupa MTP (Poland)



**Angela Herberholz**

UFI Liaison

UFI (France)

# Study Characteristics

## Research Questions

Has COVID-19 affected the marketing of exhibitions? What has changed and what has remained stable?

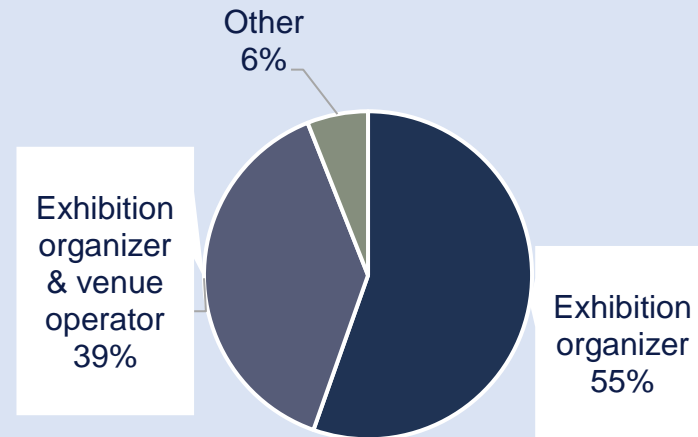
## Method

Online survey among UFI members conducted in November 2021.

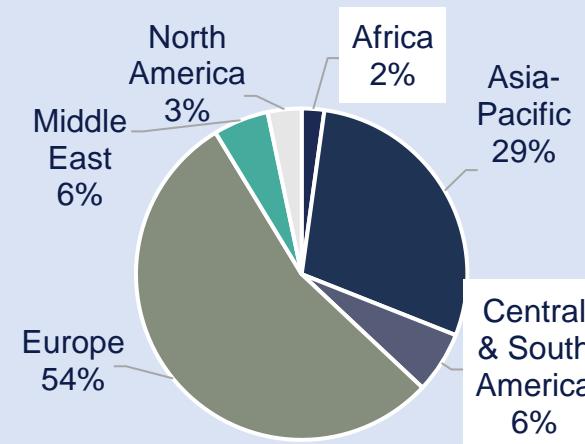
## Sample

184 participants (sample characteristics are presented below).

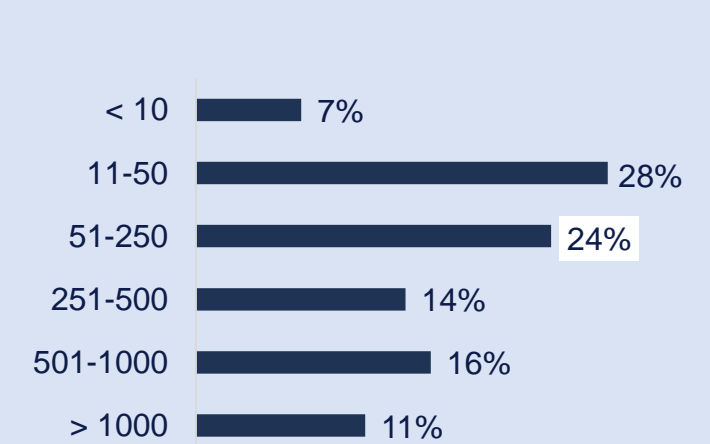
### Company type



### Region of origin

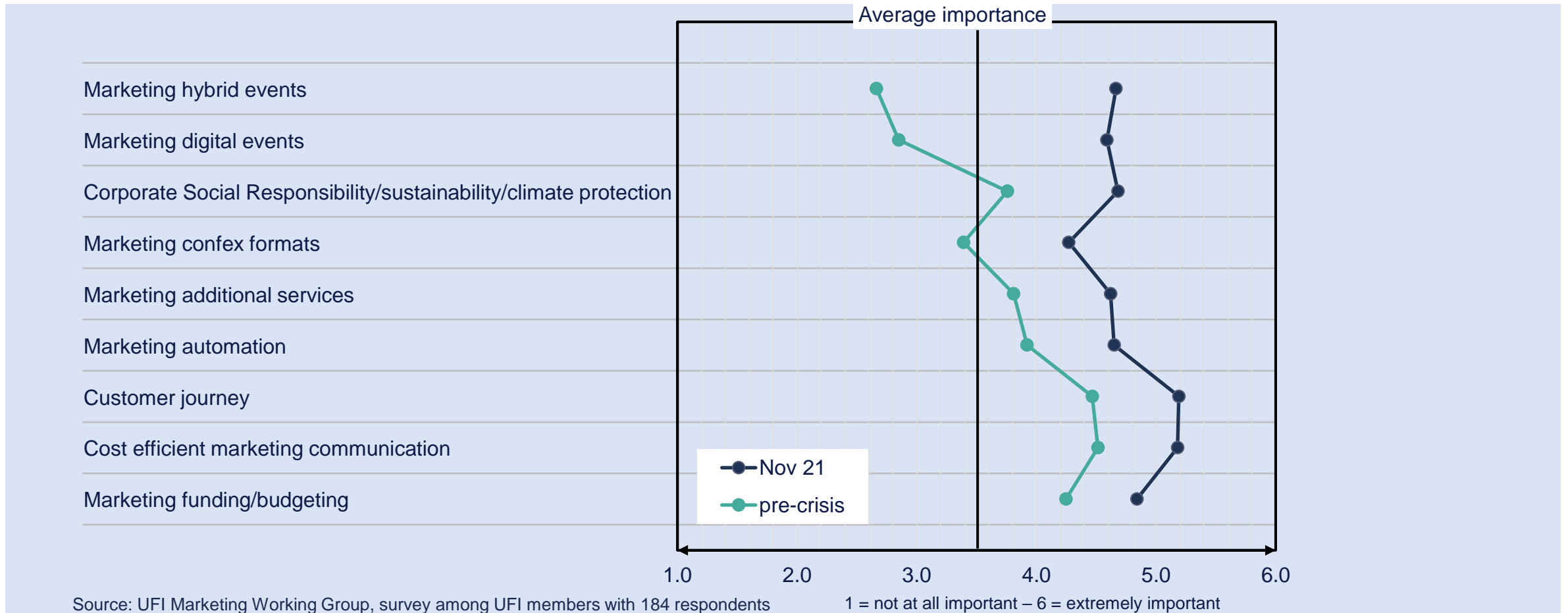


### Company size (number of employees)



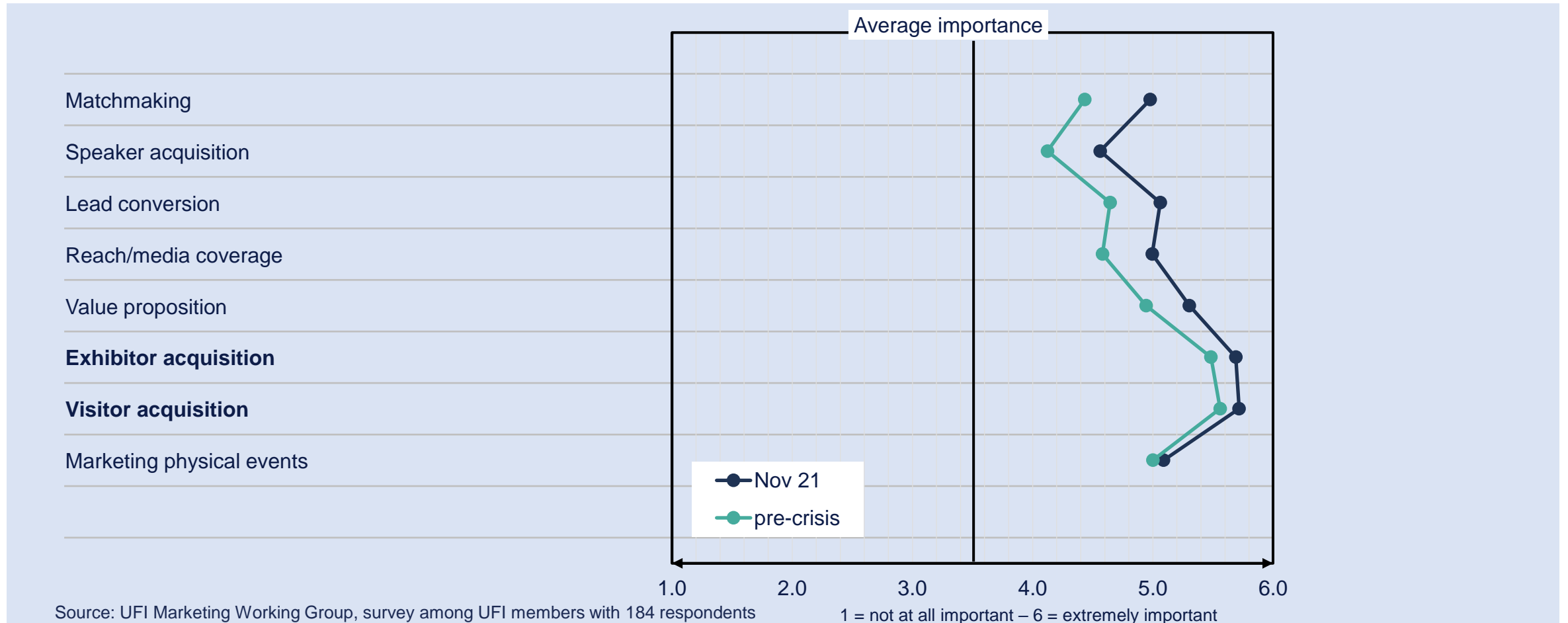
# Compared to pre-crisis, marketing hybrid, digital and confex events became significantly more important during COVID ...

Importance of marketing topics: pre-crisis vs. Nov. 2021 (part 1)



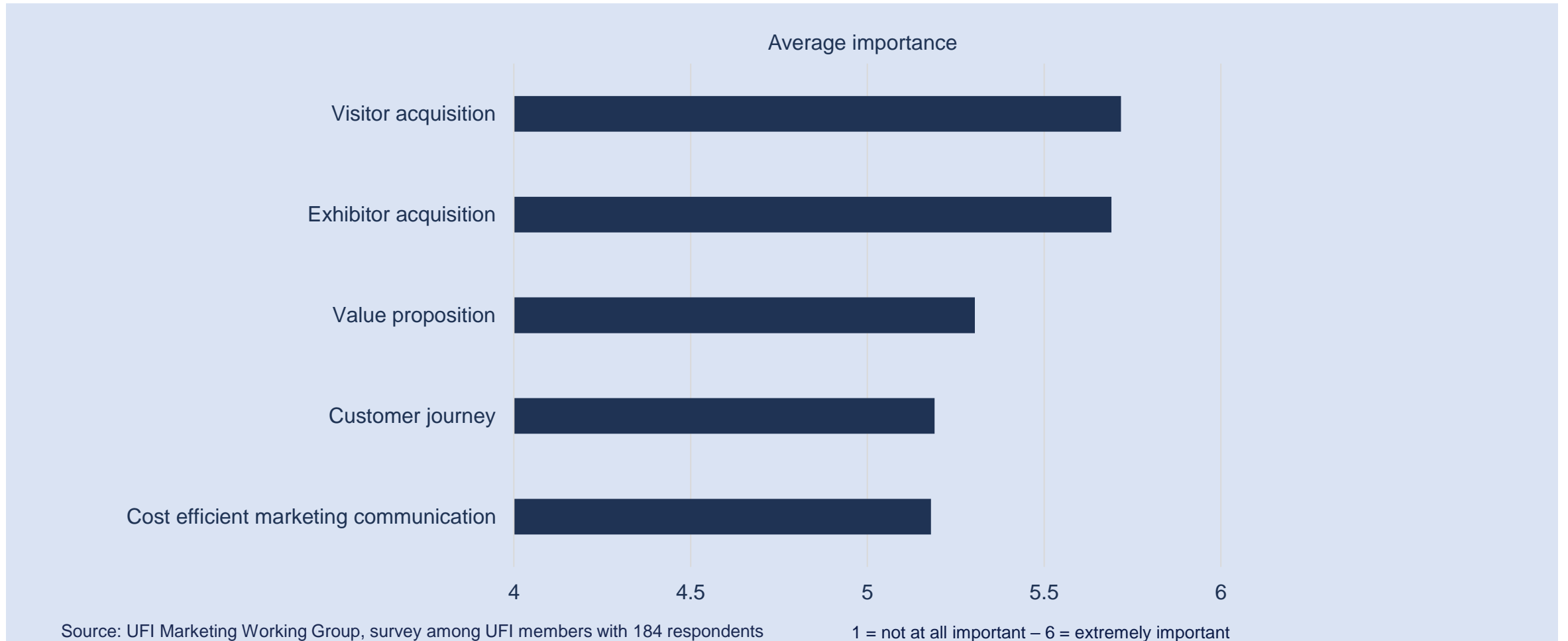
# ... whereas visitor and exhibitor acquisition as well as the marketing of physical events stayed as important as before

Importance of marketing topics: pre-crisis vs. Nov. 2021 (part 2)



# Winning customers through a clear value proposition and a convenient customer journey cost efficiently is currently key

Today's most important topics in the marketing of exhibitions

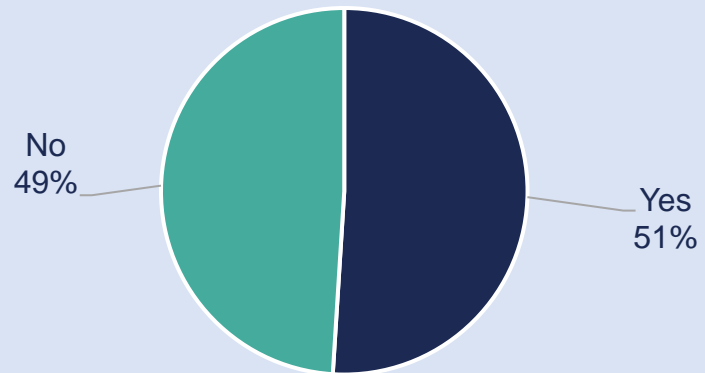




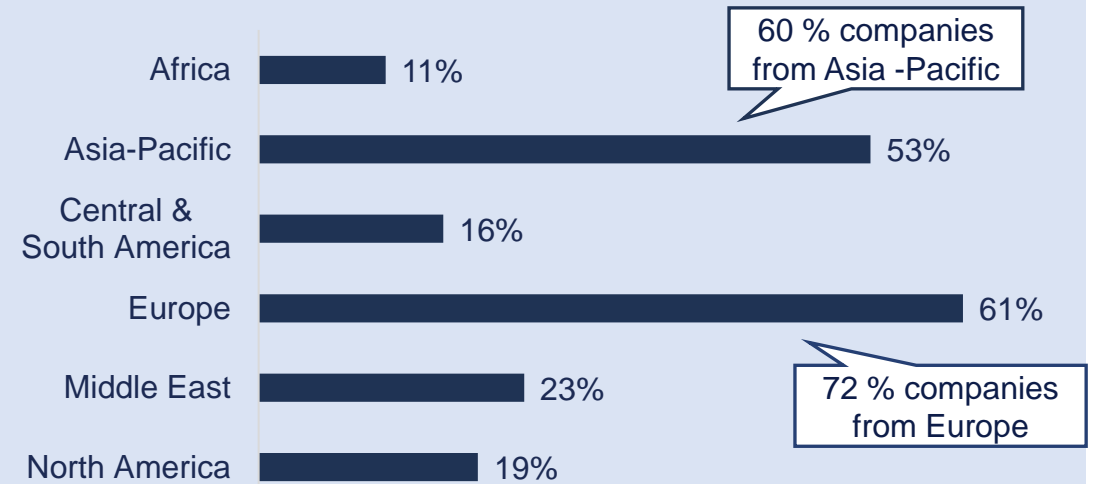
# Half of the marketers focus their marketing now on different regions, frequently concentrating more on their home regions

## Focus of marketing regions

Do your current marketing activities focus on different geographical regions, compared to pre-COVID?



Which geographical regions do you now focus on more, compared to pre-COVID?



Source: UFI Marketing Working Group, survey among UFI members with 184 respondents

# The challenges marketeers told us they are currently facing reflect this finding clearly

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## The most pressing challenges in the marketing of exhibitions

- Coping with the uncertainty and restrictions resulting from COVID
- Recovering the trust of exhibitors and visitors
- Dealing with budget constraints and cost efficiency
- Convincing international exhibitors and visitors despite travel restrictions
- Building and selling digital platforms and events
- Hiring, motivating and retaining talents
- Reaching the right target groups
- Making matches
- Competing with other marketing channels (budget shifts)
- Automating marketing

Source: UFI Marketing Working Group, survey among UFI members with 184 respondents, results present a summary of the answers to an open-ended question asking for the most pressing challenges

# Get in touch

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If you are curious about this survey and/or if you are interested to learn more about the UFI Marketing Working Group, please contact Angela Herberholz at [angela@ufi.org](mailto:angela@ufi.org).