

# Operations & Services

**Customer expectations & needs in 2024: Leveraging strategic partnerships or digital solutions to enhance customer experience**

## Introduction to the Award

In today's fast-paced and ever-evolving business landscape, understanding and meeting customer expectations is paramount to maintaining a competitive edge. As we approach the year 2024, the Operations and Services Working Group is proud to introduce a new award topic that delves into the heart of this critical issue: "Customer expectations & needs in 2024: Leveraging strategic partnerships or digital solutions to enhance customer experience."

This award topic seeks to recognise and celebrate innovative approaches to customer service that either foster close cooperation with strategic partners and / or harness the power of digital solutions. In an era defined by rapid technological advancements and shifting customer preferences, this award aims to highlight the initiatives and strategies that anticipate and fulfill customer needs proactively.

## Objective

We are seeking solutions that enhanced the overall customer experience and satisfaction across various operational areas. This may have involved addressing issues such as the need for increased flexibility, managing shorter lead times, cost optimisation, supply chain resilience, and sustainability. These operational areas might include exhibitor services, food & beverage, digital signage, security, crowd management, logistics, waste management, catering, supply chain, and service partnerships. This list is not intended to be exhaustive.

## Eligibility

The application is open to all companies from the exhibition industry (organisers, venues, service providers, associations), whether they are UFI members or not. Collaborative entries, involving groups of organisations, including some from outside the exhibition industry are also welcome.

## Criteria

Entries will be evaluated based on the following elements:

- Clearly defined and measurable objectives
- The project or concept description
- The implementation timeframe
- The value and advantages delivered
- The scale of actual and future benefits.

## Application process

### Application Deadline: 13 March 2024

Please send a short summary of maximum 4 pages in English to [opsaward@ufi.org](mailto:opsaward@ufi.org) briefly describing your entry, including the following information:

- Company(ies) name and title (theme) of the entry
- Contact person(s) details
- Quick background, nature and general objectives of the programme
- Detailed description, including stakeholders involved, actions taken, and results achieved
- Conclusion: lessons learnt, next steps (if any)

Note: While some confidential data may be accepted as part of the award application process, only those applications including a sufficient level of data for public communication will be considered.

UFI will confirm your entry arrival within 3 days of receipt.

Application to UFI Awards is free of charge.

## Judging Process

The jury selects the winner of the award by following a two-step process:

1. The jury assesses all entries and creates a shortlist of finalists (the number of finalists is decided by the jury).
2. All finalists are then asked to prepare a detailed, in-depth presentation providing a description of their entry. They may also be asked to provide additional documents (to be submitted to the jury in April / May 2024 - date to be confirmed).  
The jury will organise a question-and-answer session, most likely online and select the winner (in June 2024).

The finalists and winners will be promoted on [www.ufi.org](http://www.ufi.org) and will gain significant press coverage in major international tradeshow publications, including UFI Info. In addition, the winner will receive one complimentary registration to join the UFI Global Congress 2024, where they will present their winning entry.

Entries that fail to reach the final but that are still considered as best practice examples by the jury will also be promoted unless these companies do not want to be mentioned at all.

## Contact

Please contact Anna Lawrence, Liaison of the UFI Operations & Services Working Group, for any questions and advice ([anna@ufi.org](mailto:anna@ufi.org)).