

UFI announces winners of 2024 Next Generation Leadership grant programme

- Five recipients selected by international jury chaired by UFI President Geoff Dickinson
- Grantees to assess strategic and operational potential of AI for exhibition and business events industry
- NGL project to kick off in Zurich at the 2024 UFI European Conference

Paris – 25 April 2024: UFI, the Global Association of the Exhibition Industry, is proud to announce the recipients of its 2024 Next Generation Leadership (NGL) grant. This year's awardees were chosen from a highly competitive pool of applicants by a distinguished panel of international judges chaired by UFI President Geoff Dickinson.

Now in its 8th edition, the NGL grant is designed to identify and nurture emerging talent within the exhibition industry. To be eligible, candidates must have worked for less than ten years in the exhibition industry and show clear initiative for driving change in their fields.

Sponsored by Clarion Events, dmg events, Informa Markets, and RX, winners receive mentorship and support from leading global industry executives, making it the most prestigious talent accelerator programme of its kind.

The 2024 NGL grant winners are:

- **Ana Carolina Aguilera** – Institutional Affairs Coordinator, FEXPOCRUZ (Bolivia)
- **Celia Hidalgo Calvo** – Digital Strategist, IFEMA Madrid (Spain)
- **Alexander Caspari** – Manager Corporate Development & Sustainability, Koelnmesse (Germany)
- **Lesley Gurney** – Senior Marketing & Communications Manager, ICC Sydney (Australia)
- **Nadja Hutton-Mills** – Business Development Manager for Europe & Middle East, August Robotics (Germany)

The 2024 NGL mission focuses on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and those selected stood out as proactive thinkers and doers shaping the future of this emerging technology. Together, the NGL grantees will assess the strategic and operational potential of the rise of AI for the exhibitions and business events industry.

The Jury:

The jury was chaired by **Geoff Dickinson** – UFI President and CEO of dmg events – and included:

- **Damion Angus** – Group Managing Director, Montgomery Group
- **Silvia Bassino** – Director of Human Resources & Organisation, Fiera Milano
- **Kurt Gamauf** – Vice President of Human Resources, RX Global
- **Elizabeth George** – Senior Conference Lead, HIMSS Global Conference, Informa Markets and NGL Alumna
- **Kai Hattendorf** – CEO, UFI, the Global Association of the Exhibition Industry
- **Justine Kendall** – Director of Human Resources and Employee Benefits, Clarion Events North America
- **Sean Ongers** – Head of Global Learning & Performance, Informa Markets
- **Rachel Wimberly** – Senior Vice President of Corporate Development and M&A, North America, Hyve Group

“The UFI Next Generation Leadership grant is a beacon of innovation and excellence, and I congratulate this year’s recipients on this outstanding achievement. Their passion and dedication to advancing the exhibition industry are truly inspiring and are a testament to its bright future. I look forward to witnessing the meaningful and lasting contributions they’ll make for our industry,” commented **UFI President Geoff Dickinson**.

Awardees will kick off their project during an in-person workshop at the UFI European Conference in Zurich, Switzerland. They will then develop their project online over the course of seven months. The programme will culminate with a group presentation at the 91st UFI Global Congress in Cologne, Germany, providing them with a platform to showcase their vision and expertise on a global stage.

UFI congratulates the recipients of the 2024 Next Generation Leadership grant and looks forward to supporting them as they embark on this exciting journey.

For more information about the NGL Grant, visit the UFI website: www.ufi.org/ngl.

Attachments:

- [UFI NGL 2024 visual](#)
- [Picture of 2024 NGL grant winners](#)

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 more than 70 national and regional association members. More than 850 member organisations in 87 countries around the world are presently signed up as members. Over 900 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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