

## UFI, the Global Association of the Exhibition Industry, drives the industry forward by identifying new strategies at its 74<sup>th</sup> Congress

*Paris, 26 October 2007:* Attended by a record-breaking 430 participants from 54 countries, UFI's 74<sup>th</sup> Congress, in Versailles, France, examined exhibition industry issues which will be impacting trade fairs in the years ahead. Hosted by France's FSCF (Foire, Salons, et Congrès de France), the Congress brought together the world's exhibition industry leaders to examine the strategic issues which will be confronting professionals in the trade fair sector in the future. Cliff Wallace, UFI's new President, stated, "while the tradition of trade fairs as a forum for commercial exchange dates back hundreds of years, today's changing technologies, globalisation, the explosion of available exhibition space and corporate and political governance shifts, require that we incorporate new ideas within our development strategies."

A "Think-Tank" immediately preceding the Congress brought together CEOs from around the world in a session brainstorming issues key to the industry's leading exhibition organizers, venue managers and supporting industry partners. Outgoing UFI President, Jochen Witt, moderated the discussion which focussed on the opportunities and threats facing the exhibition industry. "The discussion clearly showed two major trends in our sector. First, our exhibition industry is healthy and strong. Despite competition from other media, exhibitions remain the leading marketing tool for businesses around the world. Trade fairs will definitely continue to grow steadily in the coming years. And secondly, in step with the world economy, the trade fair industry is globalising at an incredible speed. The result is that manufacturers and buyers have the opportunity to make use of this marketing tool in a very efficient and focused way." said Witt as he later presented the group's conclusions to UFI's Congress participants.

The Congress programme called on outside experts to position the exhibition media for the future. Jacques Attali, political strategist, writer and President of PlaNet Finance's insightful Keynote evaluation of "The World's Future Perspectives and Challenges" pushed Congress participants to re-evaluate their approach to establishing "communities" among our exhibitors and visitors in the year's ahead. This was complemented by a look at the shape and style of tomorrow's company provided by Dr. James Bellini, futurist. INSEAD's Marc Beauvois Coladon presented the Blue Ocean Strategy, developed by Prof. Dr. W. Chan Kim and Ms Renée Mauborgne, which allows the creation of uncontested market space and makes competition irrelevant.

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Bringing the Congress participants back to a fundamental component within the world of exhibitions, John Shaw, UFI Incoming President 2009, presented UFI's first "World Map of Exhibition Venues." This study provided a global perspective of the world's existing exhibition venues with more than 5,000 sqm of indoor exhibition space. And, in a down-to-earth review, Thierry Hesse, President of the FSCF, Paris, reviewed the characteristics of today's French exhibition industry and its prognosis for development in the years ahead.

Prof. Dr. Oliver Klante of the Hamburg School of Business, focussed on the exhibition industry as it may look in the year 2020. Phil Goodman, President and CEO of Generation Transitional Marketing, San Diego, looked at the decision-making patterns among the youth generation. This presentation was aptly complemented by a look at how the exhibition industry can best serve the needs of aging consumers provided by Ira Kalish, Director, Deloitte Research, Los Angeles.

Wallace summarized the Congress saying, "exhibitions remain unique in their ability to bring buyers and sellers together in a face-to-face environment. Our 74<sup>th</sup> UFI Congress has provided the challenging forum required for the exchange of knowledge and ideas that will drive the exhibition industry ahead as we continue to meet the needs of our exhibitors and visitors."

UFI has announced that the 75<sup>th</sup> UFI Congress will be held in Istanbul, Turkey from November 15 to 18, 2008.

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UFI, the Global Association of the Exhibition Industry, promotes, serves and represents the trade fair industry worldwide. Via its member organisations, including the world's leading show organisers and exhibition centres, national and international professional associations and industry partners, UFI is present in 84 countries on 6 continents. UFI members are responsible for the management and operation of over 4,500 exhibitions around the world.

Additional information on UFI and its programmes is available at [www.ufi.org](http://www.ufi.org).

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