

Post-Show report

IFES – the International Federation of Exhibition and Event Services, recently concluded a successful 2009 AGM and Convention in Paris.

Over 120 delegates from 22 countries came together for the educational programme and networking opportunities, put together with the objective to help the attendees learn and succeed in a challenging year for all those in the Exhibit and Event industry.

The core objectives of IFES are to facilitate sharing knowledge and international business opportunities between Exhibit stand designers, builders and other service companies operating worldwide.

Moreno Zaccarelli, IFES President opened the event and introduced this year's main convention themes; Economy, Design and the 4 Dimensions of the Exhibit Product.

The Economy section was opened by a fascinating Keynote speech by Prof. Jonathan Story, Emeritus Professor of International Political Economy at INSEAD. Prof. Story gave the attendees the benefit of his 40 years of experience in examining the complex web of factors influencing the global economic system, causes behind the current crisis and the range of possible scenarios in the future. Of particular value to IFES members was the insight into the role of emerging markets in India and China and the necessity of staying engaged with our international networks in order to maintain awareness of new developments and opportunities.

UFI President John Shaw followed up with a presentation and discussion of the results of the most recent UFI Crisis Barometer. In addition to providing the delegates with qualified statistical input on the current global exhibition market, the session provided a valuable platform to exchange ideas between the two organisations. Both IFES and UFI share the common aim of promoting exhibitions as an essential part of a company's marketing strategy.

The topic of Design trends was addressed by Vincent Grégoire, Lifestyle Department Director of the NellyRodi agency. Mr. Grégoire gave attendees a colourful and thought provoking insight into consumer trends and their impact on both product design and purchasing. Central to the presentation was the increasing importance of ecological and socially responsible products, reflecting the discussions of many in the exhibit industry who know how crucial the issue of sustainability has become.

The programme was concluded with a panel discussion on the 4 Dimensions of the Exhibit Product, representing the Exhibitor; Geoffrey Vion, Communications Department, Renault; Organiser; Johan De Deygere, CEO, Brussels Expo; Venue; Renaud Hamaide, CEO, Viparis and Standbuilder; Claus Holtmann, CEO, Holtmann Messe + Event GmbH. The discussion was moderated by IFES President Elect, Bruno Meissner, Managing Director, Meissner Expo GmbH.

A lively and candid discussion explored many aspects of the exhibitor and visitor experience and highlighted the need for a coordinated approach between the 4 "producers" of the exhibition. All participants agreed that the group aim was to produce a memorable moment for visitors, which could not be replicated by any other marketing medium. The value of this unique communication channel to exhibiting companies was confirmed, although creative approaches will be required in order to manage cost whilst maintaining quality.

In addition to the quality educational programme, IFES delegates also had ample time to network with their friends old and new and to enjoy the chance to share ideas with their peers from all corners of the globe.

IFES would like to thank its Convention sponsors: EIE Global, Expopedia, Publicinax, Langues Assistance, Sodem System, RG Groupe and its Platinum Sponsors: JMT International, ABEX Exhibit Systems, Interfairgroup, BeMatrix, IEEC and Vision.

For more information on IFES, please visit www.ifesnet.com