

## NextGenConnect

### Marketing strategies to engage the Next Generations in exhibitions

#### INTRODUCTION TO THE AWARD

The UFI Marketing Award's submissions will demonstrate how targeted strategies contribute to a sustainable model for engaging younger demographics, encouraging them to attend, participate, and ultimately become future leaders within the exhibition environment. By recognising and sharing these best practices, the NextGenConnect Award will inspire the industry at large to develop impactful marketing techniques that will ensure exhibitions remain essential and appealing for generations to come.

The "NextGenConnect: Engaging the Next Generations in Exhibitions through dedicated marketing strategies" Award honors outstanding marketing strategies that effectively attract, engage, and inspire Millennials, Gen Z and now Gen Alpha audiences to participate in the exhibition and trade fair industry and demonstrate impactful marketing techniques that will ensure exhibitions remain essential and appealing for next generations.

#### OBJECTIVE

As future decision-makers and leaders in the business world, engaging these younger generations is crucial for the sustained growth and relevance of the exhibition sector. This award aims to highlight best practices in targeting these digital-native, socially aware, and experience-driven generations, fostering a deeper connection to the exhibition space that positions it as a vital part of their professional journey.

This award seeks to uncover innovative and strategic approaches that bridge generational gaps in the exhibition industry, ensuring exhibitions remain relevant to business commerce and as a marketing tool for lead generation, while also being exciting and influential in the eyes of young professionals. Submissions may showcase new exhibition formats tailored to younger audiences, demonstrate how campaigns effectively incorporate diversity and inclusivity, highlight creative promotional activities that resonate with Millennial, Gen Z, and Gen Alpha values, or present activations designed to increase participation and engagement from both exhibitors and visitors.

#### 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

- **Learning Contribution to the Industry:**  
Does the submission offer valuable insights, models, or frameworks that can be shared and replicated across the exhibition industry? Are there specific strategies or tactics that other industry members can apply to attract young professionals?
- **Measurable Outcomes and Impact:**  
Are the campaign's success and impact clearly demonstrated through quantifiable metrics? This could include indicators like increases in attendance by Millennials and Gen Z, higher engagement rates on social media, conversion rates from promotional activities, or improved satisfaction and return rates among younger attendees.
- **Innovation in Approach:**  
To what extent did the campaign adopt original or forward-thinking methods in its approach to attract younger demographics? Did it introduce any new exhibition formats, technologies, or experiences that cater to the unique preferences of Millennials and Gen Z, such as immersive, interactive, or socially responsible elements?
- **Sustainability and Long-term Engagement:**  
Does the strategy demonstrate a plan for ongoing engagement with young audiences, beyond a single event? Are there components designed to build a lasting relationship, such as digital platforms, year-round youth communities, loyalty programs, or follow-up engagement content that reinforce their connection to the exhibition brand?

This award encourages forward-thinking organisations to showcase strategies that demonstrate not only how to capture the attention of younger audiences but also how to create meaningful, lasting relationships with the future decision-makers of the business world.

## NextGenConnect:

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**Submitting your entry** for UFI Marketing Award allows your organisation to showcase its innovative strategies for engaging younger audiences, highlighting its commitment to staying ahead of industry trends. Winning the Award will establish your company as a leader in understanding and adapting to younger generations' interests and behaviours.

The Award signals to partners, clients, and competitors that your organisation is setting the benchmark in modern marketing practices and looks beyond standard practices as well as builds foundation for future initiatives, leveraging this success in ongoing brand storytelling, helping keep younger audiences, i.e. future decision makers, engaged.

#### APPLICATION PROCESS

To apply, please submit a summary of your initiative (maximum of 5 pages in English) to Anna at [marketingaward@ufi.org](mailto:marketingaward@ufi.org), including the following information:

- **Company name(s)** and title (theme) of the entry
- **Contact person** details
- **Background, nature, and general objectives** of the programme
- **Detailed project description** that aligns with the award criteria, including stakeholders involved, actions taken, and results achieved
- **Conclusion:** lessons learned and next steps (if applicable).

Please ensure your submission highlights how your initiative meets the award criteria.

Organisations can apply in multiple categories, but the same project/show cannot be submitted for more than one category.

Confidential data may be included in the application; however, only entries with sufficient information for public communication will be considered. Participants must agree to share their presentations or an alternate version to support industry best practice sharing. If selected, key details of your submission will be publicly shared.

UFI will confirm receipt of your entry within three days. Application to the UFI Awards is free of charge.

#### JUDGING PROCESS

The jury will select the award winner through a two-step process:

- 1. Initial review:** The jury assesses all entries and creates a shortlist of finalists (the number of finalists is determined by the jury).
- 2. Finalist presentation:** Shortlisted finalists will be asked to prepare an in-depth presentation on their entry, which may include additional supporting documents (to be submitted in April/May 2025 – date to be confirmed). The jury will hold an online question-and-answer session and will then select the winner by June 2025.

Finalists and winners will receive prominent exposure on [www.ufi.org](http://www.ufi.org) and in leading international trade publications, including **UFI Info** as well as distinct opportunities to showcase their projects. Additionally, the award winner will receive one complimentary registration to attend the **UFI Global Congress 2025** to receive their trophy.

Entries that don't reach the final but are deemed best practice examples by the jury will also be promoted unless the entrant requests not to be mentioned.