

Exhibitions make a comeback

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1 June 2022 marks the seventh annual [Global Exhibitions Day](#). The day was conceived by the Global Association for the Exhibition Industry, also known as UFI, to commemorate and celebrate the exhibition industry for its role in facilitating business opportunities, knowledge sharing and cooperation, and contributing to regional economic and social development.



This year, as the world begins to recover from the damage caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, these benefits are being keenly sought out and exhibitions are making a dramatic comeback.

Making up for lost time

Justin Hawes is the MD of Scan Display, a company that designs and builds exhibition stands and event infrastructure. He says: “The South African exhibition calendar would normally see 10 large tradeshow in a year. But now, after two years of no exhibitions due to lockdown restrictions, we are seeing a rapid return. Our company has been involved in three large industry tradeshow in the past three weeks alone – Africa’s Travel Indaba, NAMPO, and Mining Indaba.”

A global phenomenon

Hawes is also the President of IFES, the International Federation of Exhibition & Event Services, and confirms that the growing number of exhibitions being held is not a uniquely South African trend. “IFES members from around the globe have also reported an upswing in the sector, as businesses are eager to get back to the exhibition floor and reap the rewards of face-to-face marketing,” he says. “For us, this reaffirms the power and value of what we do.”

In economic terms, this value is significant. [UFI’s 2020 ‘Global Economic Impact of Exhibitions’ report](#) reveals that the exhibition industry is directly and indirectly responsible for an estimated \$325bn in business sales annually, as well as \$198bn in GDP impacts, and 3.2 million jobs. It’s harder to quantify the value of the knowledge sharing and networking opportunities that these shows create, but they are no less important.

“Our sector always said we would play a critical role in helping rebuild economies and industries in the aftermath of Covid-19. And here we are. This makes this year’s Global Exhibitions Day truly worth celebrating,” adds Hawes.

Winds of change

To take advantage of new prospects emerging for the exhibition sector as the world opens up, IFES will be holding its 22 nd World Summit aptly titled the 'Winds of Change' in the Netherlands on 15-17 June. As well as a packed programme of rich content, the event promises networking opportunities with colleagues from more than 30 countries. To register or for more information, go to www.ifesnet.com/events-all/world-summit-2022-amsterdam/.

If you would like to know more about Scan Display, please contact Justin on justin@scandisplay.co.za or on + 27 11 447 4777, or visit Scan Display's website: www.scandisplay.co.za.

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