



UK

Globalisation and the Events Industry

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The findings of an industry-wide survey, conducted in partnership with Stand Out Magazine



Event professionals embrace globalisation but remain cautious over Brexit

Results of GL events UK's survey on globalisation and the repercussions of a post-Brexit industry have shown both a surprising endorsement of globalisation and a deeper uncertainty over Brexit.

PARTICIPANTS

The survey was completed by just fewer than 100 senior-level event professionals, representing both sides of the supply chain.

More than half of those who completed the survey have a high-level understanding of operating businesses outside of the UK. Not surprising, given that the global breadth of experience represented by the respondents ranged from East and Western Europe, across the Middle East, throughout Africa, into China and Asia Pacific, and included North and South America.

The survey immediately underlined the increasingly global nature of the UK events industry, as well as how well its expertise is exported around the world. The survey itself is part of a wider initiative by GL events UK to understand the future landscape of the industry; again, a subject that appears to be resonating among many in the industry.

FINDINGS

With 77% of respondents seeing a rise in the number of UK events industry businesses operating internationally in the last five years, it appears that globalisation is here to stay and its impact is all-pervasive. However, the industry appears to see more benefits than threats from a more globalised market.

67% of respondents thought that globalisation will encourage more creativity, and 53% saw it as having a more stabilising effect on the industry. Why? Because over 72% of businesses felt more confident when working with an internationally operating business.

One of the areas of most discussion within the industry is the impact globalisation will have on smaller and more independent events. However, the results of this survey showed a cautious approach for this sector, with the majority of respondents seeing it as too early to tell if it will have a majorly positive or negative effect.

“As a global business ourselves, we’ve certainly benefited from the added security we can offer to our customers, both in terms of financial stability, as well as our global experience and resource,” commented Scott Jameson, GL events UK Group Managing Director. *“Businesses like strong businesses and, with so much uncertainty in terms of economic factors, partnership with a globally represented organisation, one with a strong international footing, can be incredibly reassuring for event organisers.”*

WHILE THE INDUSTRY SEEMS TO HAVE EMBRACED GLOBALISATION, IT REMAINS DEEPLY CAUTIOUS AROUND BREXIT, WITH NO CLEAR CONSENSUS AROUND THE IMPLICATIONS THIS WILL HAVE ON THE INDUSTRY

The survey does seem to have uncovered the first grass roots of opinion developing: on a scale of 1-10 (positive to negative), just over 10% showed an opinion towards negative while over 6.5% showed clear opinion towards positive. However, the majority of respondents are still awaiting more evidence, with just under a third simply choosing ‘I don’t know’.

The ‘wait and see’ consensus appeared to slacken a little more when respondents were asked about the industry’s ability to operate outside the UK in a post-Brexit world. Here, over 10% of respondents saw Brexit as a negative influence, while 5% saw it as more positive. This trend was again mirrored by the question of how difficult it would be to grow business outside of the UK following Brexit: over a quarter of respondents saw Brexit as a negative influence, while 10% saw it as wholly positive.

"Its both surprising and reassuring how tight-lipped many within the industry remain when it comes to talking about Brexit," commented Neil Fagg, Publisher of Stand Out magazine. "This is an industry that deals in certainty, and speaks in black and white. We're not prone to speculation, and we're willing to wait until we can see evidence. This survey is certainly significant because I feel we are seeing the first signs of opinion either way coming from our industry and it will be interesting to see where this leads."

ONE OF THE AREAS MANY READERS FELT TO BE IMPORTANT TO THEIR BUSINESS WAS THE PROCUREMENT OF GOODS AND SERVICES IN A MORE GLOBALISED, BUT ALSO POST-BREXIT, INDUSTRY

When asked how globalisation would affect the procurement process; 34% said it would be positive and 20% negative - the majority (45%) saying neither positive or negative. However, over a quarter of respondents reported that they have already made changes to adapt to what they see as an evolving process.

"As ever, these surveys not only divide opinion depending on where we do our business and which side of the supply chain we sit upon; but also on the type of businesses and business owners there are operating in the industry," continued Neil. "We're seeing cautious businesses still waiting for evidence; while others have made up their minds and are taking action. We're seeing a strong and positive reaction to globalisation, but with a healthy dose of scepticism evident across the research."

THE ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT OF MANY WITHIN THE INDUSTRY LEAPT OUT OF THE SURVEY WHEN RESPONDENTS WERE ASKED ABOUT THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH

Despite the obvious caution around Brexit and its implications, over a third are convinced there is opportunity, one way or another, around the changing political landscape. Many identify growth opportunities, predictably, in countries outside of the EU and identified China, India and South America as potential targets. However, the survey also showed that many see the EU and North America as markets that still offer potential for growth, and suggests that the industry could look closer to home for its growth potential.

"We were delighted by the quality and quantity of the respondents to the survey and I believe this research has given the industry as detailed an insight as we've had in this complex debate," commented Rachel Baker, UK Group Marketing Manager, GL events. "For me, the survey revealed a cautious industry, but also one that is quietly confident about its future. In a time that is so difficult to predict, it looks like a responsible voice from the UK events industry."