

AUE Annual Conference 2022 – Exhibitor & Sponsor Feedback

As in previous years, evaluations were sent out via email to all exhibitors post-event and asked for honest and complete answers, as this would help AUE and YourVision Events (YVE) to make improvements for next years' events. A follow-up reminder was also sent after the conference in order to maximise the number of attendees that filled out the evaluation form.

We have included below a summary of the key elements of the conference and planning, with patterns identified based on the exhibitors' responses. Finally, suggestions for potential changes have been recommended.

The feedback survey was completed by 40 exhibitors out of the 121 that attended the event, which equates to a response rate of around 33%. However, there were 47 exhibiting companies in total, so if each response was from an attendee from a different company that would mean that just over 85% of the companies in attendance responded, although as the surveys are anonymous, we cannot be sure that each response came from a different company. Consequently, it is clear that although a good representation could be formed based on this response rate, it must be taken into consideration that the general patterns might have varied if a higher response rate was obtained.

Overall (Q1-Q3 and Q39)

Overall, the feedback from exhibitors at this year's conference was extremely positive, with 95% of respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing that they enjoyed the conference and 92.5% agreeing or strongly agreeing that the conference was a good use of their time (with just two respondents saying they 'neither agree nor disagree' and one saying they 'disagree'). When asked if overall the conference delivered value for money 87.5% agreed or strongly agreed (with four respondents saying they 'neither agree nor disagree' and one saying they 'disagree').

Further comments on the AUE Annual Conference 2022 included:

- *Fantastic, best one Camfil have attended to date, thank you!*
- *What a FABULOUS Professional Organisation the AUE is and what a FABULOUS Conference Event. LONG MAY IT CONTINUE! Thank You*
- *It was the best event attended this year (we have been to 10 so far)*
- *Great overall and we'll be exhibiting again next year*

Plenary Sessions (Q4-Q5)

Most respondents (67.5%) said that a representative from their company did not attend the plenary sessions which is a slight decrease in exhibitor attendance in plenary sessions from the previous conference (62.79% didn't attend in 2019). When asked if they feel the opportunity to attend sessions was worthwhile for them as an exhibitor and if they would like to have the opportunity to attend sessions at future conferences, 80% responded with 'yes', with two responding they were 'unsure' and six responding that they hadn't attended a plenary.

Delegate Exposure (Q6-Q8)

When asked to rate their length of time with/exposure to delegates, 55% rated it 'just right' and the remaining 45% rated it 'too short'. When asked for any further comments on time with delegates, exhibitors responded:

- *Enjoyed the conference and the interaction with the delegates. I would have appreciated more time scheduled in the exhibition hall and not just in between sessions or coffee breaks.*
- *We managed to speak to interested people. Maybe the delegates could visit more stands with additional time.*

- *Delegates interacted well with exhibitors*
- *With the conference space and toilets in different location to Exhibition space, it shortened the time available to delegates for visiting stands.*
- *The ability to meet delegates not only within the confines of the exhibition tent but also at both evening meals was perfect. The mixing up of exhibitors / delegates at the gala meal was a fantastic idea. I have attended a number of events this year and this by far has excelled others. The comradery amongst the delegates was great to see and shined a new light into a sector which is often difficult to open doors with due to the size and scale.*
- *As time is limited for refreshments and exhibition visits I think a booking system where delegates were given the opportunity to book a slot to ensure very interested parties could visit a stand would be a good idea.*
- *It would have be useful to have a buffet lunch served on the Friday of the conference within the marquee in order to have 1 last exposure opportunity with the delegates.*

65% of exhibitors responded that they felt the delegate passport was a useful tool to get delegates to their stand, with 25% responding they were 'unsure' and 10% responding 'no'.

Accommodation (Q9)

When asked to rate the quality of the accommodation at the Stirling Court Hotel 17.5% rated it as 'excellent', 32.5% rated it as 'good', 17.5% rated 'fair', 2.5% rated 'poor' and the remaining 30% responded 'N.A' as some exhibitors booked their own accommodation offsite.

Conference Planning (Q10-Q13)

In terms of the information communicated prior to and during the event, a lot of exhibitors that answered the evaluation were not involved in the pre-event communications and so responded 'N/A' to the questions asked, the following percentages are without those responses taken into account.

When asked to rate the ease of using the online booking and payment system nearly 85% of exhibitors rated 'excellent' or 'good' (with 12% rating 'fair' and the remaining 3% rating 'poor'). 96% of exhibitors rated the ease of making enquiries about arrangements with YVE, prior to the event 'excellent' or 'good', with the remaining 4% rating 'fair'. 95% of exhibitors rated the quality and timeliness of advance information and notification of arrangements as 'excellent' or 'good', with the remaining 5% rating 'fair').

With reference to onsite support, when asked to rate the quality of staff support throughout the duration of the event 100% of exhibitors rated 'excellent' or 'good'.

Exhibition (Q14-Q17 and Q37)

90% of exhibitors rated the overall exhibition space as 'excellent' or 'good' (with the remaining 10% rating 'fair') and 82.5% rated the position of their stand within the exhibition space as 'excellent' or 'good' (with the remaining 17.5% rating 'fair'). The catering within the exhibition was rate 'excellent' or 'good' by 85% of exhibitors.

When asked for any further comments on the exhibition, exhibitors responses included:

- *It was a well thought out exhibition, we will love to attend again.*
- *Great overall experience. I would like to see more delegates at future events and from more universities.*

- *It was a fabulous worthwhile positive and well organised event and we would like to say probably the best organised event we attended. We would also like to say a BIG THANK YOU for the opportunity and invitation to exhibit at the event and thank you all delegates who came to talk to us and showed genuine interest in our products. We would also like to say a very BIG THANK YOU to ALL the Sponsors for the food and drinks supplied to us as exhibitors. We would definitely want to be invited to the next AUE Conference in Warwick and if possible, do a Plenary Session to demonstrate our IOT Gateway system for Lifts and Escalators to all delegates on a Big Screen in a separate Conference room at the event. Please advise how we do this. Meanwhile, we wish all the Delegates and the AUE members a successful year, until we meet again. Take Care from Exhibitors Lorraine Morgan and Paul Jackson Thames Valley Controls Ltd.*

When asked for anything that would have made the exhibition better, exhibitors responses included:

- *We felt it was unfair that some companies sponsored but did not exhibit and were allowed to attend the GALA dinner and Network.*
- *Anything listed would just be trivial. I have attended events all over the world and this is definitely one of the best events I have attended, for the quality of delegates and visitors, to food, to the friendliness of staff and location. In the top 5 for me.*
- *It's an expensive event for manufacturers and there needs to be more interaction from the delegates.*
- *More engineers from a more varied university base. Also, a split between mechanical and electrical so one venue two halls almost.*

Welcome Dinner (Q18-Q22)

The majority of respondents (76%) responded that the Networking Dinner met/exceeded their expectations, with 77% rating the food as 'excellent' or 'good'. The games were rated 'excellent' or 'good' by 28%, with the majority (49%) rating N/A.

When asked for any additional comments about the Welcome Dinner, responses included:

- *I was not aware of the additional games available.*
- *Nicely relaxed, informal.*
- *The Welcome dinner was absolutely fabulous! The food, the drinks the Networking was excellent! The service by Hotel Staff and the Hotel overall was very well organised and a great venue for it.*
- *The food did not cater for many different dietary requirements e.g. halal.*

Gala Dinner (Q23-Q31)

The majority of respondents (82%) responded that the Gala Dinner met/exceeded their expectations. 82% of exhibitors rated the catering as 'excellent' or 'good' and 85% rated the theming and room dressing as 'excellent'. The entertainment was also very popular, with the pipe band at the end of the evening, the piper during the dinner and the Master of Ceremonies all being rated as 'excellent' by the majority. Exhibitors also enjoyed the History of AUE video, with 76% rating it as 'excellent' or 'good' and the remaining responses being 'fair' or 'N/A'.

When asked for any additional comments on the Gala Dinner, responses included:

- *Gala dinner was amazing, never experienced an event like that, well done.*

- *The Gala Dinner was amazing in a fabulous setting at Stirling Castle. The lone Piper on the Castle Wall made the event so emotional (in a good way). The organisation and transport arrangements, the Networking table arrangements, the food, the drink the Speakers, the MC, the AUE History video, the Awards presentations, the Pipers and dancers all made it absolutely FABULOUS and exciting!!! We enjoyed it so much! We are still talking about it and buzzing from the excitement and the memory of it all. Thank you to all the organisers, sponsors and staff and ALL involved!*
- *Excellent dinner. Could not fault the setting or the meal.*

Brochure (Q32-Q33)

82% of respondents rated the brochure as either 'good' or 'excellent', with 80% opting for both a brochure and app to be available in future years.

Conference App (Q34-Q36)

The app metrics showing that 113 people downloaded the app (this number includes both delegates and exhibitors), 68% of the evaluation responders said they downloaded the app, and the majority rated it 'excellent' or 'good'. When asked why the remaining 32% didn't download the app, responses included:

- *Didn't feel I needed to.*
- *I probably, incorrectly assumed the app was more for delegates and found that the other forms of information provided all info required.*
- *I did not feel it was necessary given the information was on the brochure.*
- *There are more apps than store loyalty cards now. Better with the physical book, as the less time seem spent on the mobile the better, which is why the physical book is still a great addition.*

AUE 2023 (Q39)

When asked whether respondents intend on attending next year's conference, 80% of respondents answered 'yes', with the other 20% responded 'possibly'.

Recommendations for future conferences

- Based on feedback, we would recommend continuing to offer exhibitors the opportunity to attend conference sessions.
- Overall, exhibitors gave good feedback on the exhibition space, there were a few comments requesting for the conference sessions and toilets to be nearer to the exhibition space to give them the maximum exposure to delegates, as delegates would then spend less time walking from buildings and could stay near the exhibition area during breaks, if there are toilets nearby.
- There were a couple of comments about having more time in the exhibition with delegates and so this could be something we look into at next year's conference. One comment requested a booking system to be put in place, so delegates can book to visit stands they want to attend. We're not sure how this would work as it could lead to negative feedback, if exhibitors don't receive many bookings and so we wouldn't recommend this as something we implement, but we could advise exhibitors that they're welcome to put a booking system in place on their stand, if they feel it would be beneficial. Another comment said it would be useful to have a buffet lunch served on the Friday to give exhibitors 1 last time of exposure with delegates, however

we would not recommend this, due to the attendance at final plenary sessions (which we always find at conference) is always a reduced amount, we feel this would disappoint exhibitors if they stayed for this additional time, to then not get many visitors as delegates are keen to start their journeys home at the end of a conference and also, other exhibiting companies will also be keen to start their journeys home too and won't want to stay and then have to dismantle their stands after a lunch break on Friday.

- The majority of exhibitors found the delegate passports to be a useful tool to get delegates to their stand and so we would recommend continuing to use these at future events.
- Feedback shows that there were a lot of exhibitors that didn't download the conference app, one even responded that they thought it was more for just delegates. We would recommend sending an additional comms out to exhibitors ahead of a future conference, to make them aware of the benefits of downloading the app, highlighting the features the app has – for example, the delegate list, updated programme etc. However, we would still recommend having both the brochure and app available for the 2023 Conference and continue to judge whether the brochure is needed based on feedback given at future conferences as feedback shows exhibitors do like to have the physical copy of the brochure as well as the app.
- Both the Welcome Dinner and Gala Dinner were popular with exhibitors. There was feedback that some weren't aware of the games though and so we would recommend having more signage, possibly on the tables, to promote the games if they are in a separate room again next year or getting the host to make an announcement.
- Feedback shows exhibitors were grateful for the table plans to have a mixture of delegates and exhibitors on each table at the Gala Dinner and so we would recommend continuing to do this at future events, to help aid networking opportunities.