

# *Research on digital transformation path strategy of China's modern exhibition industry*

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**Abstract:** The arrival of digital times, has accelerated the speed of digital transformation of our modern conference and exhibition industry in the new era, and also provides an opportunity for our modern conference and exhibition industry to develop high-quality. Based on the analysis of the current development status of China's modern conference and exhibition industry, this paper puts forward the path of digital transformation of the modern conference and exhibition industry, and finally puts forward some policy suggestions such as building a digital system by the government, improving the construction of digital service capacity, accelerating the digital transformation of the modern conference and exhibition industry, implementing internationalization strategy, strengthening brand building and personnel training.

## **1. Development status of China's modern exhibition industry**

### **1.1. The exhibition industry is large in scale but the homogenization competition is serious**

According to the "2022 China Exhibition Data Statistics Report" released by the China Exhibition and Exhibition Economy Research Association, the total number of offline exhibitions held in 2022 in China is 2,572, with a total exhibition area of 47.21 million square meters, which is 2923 fewer than the total exhibition area in 2021, and the total exhibition area is 44.63 million square meters less. The declines were 53.2% and 48.6%, respectively. The 2021 data shows that in the industry exhibition, the number of automobile, food and beverage and leisure fashion art tourism three industry exhibitions ranked the top three, of which the number of beverage industry exhibitions reached 254, the number of leisure fashion art tourism exhibitions reached 181. See Figure 1. From the above data, it can be seen that although the number of exhibitions in China is huge, the competition of exhibition homogenization among the same industries is relatively serious.

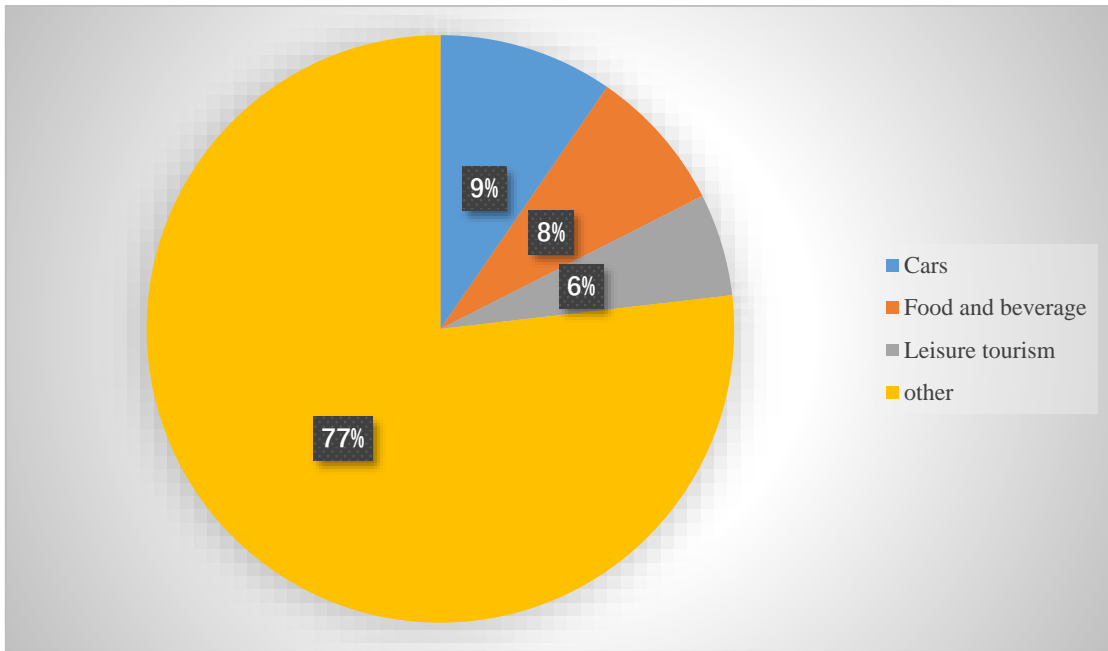


Figure 1: The number of exhibitions in different industries in China in 2021

### 1.2. The industry started late and developed fast, and the trend of digital transformation was obvious

China's exhibition industry presents the characteristics of "late start, fast development", with the growth of domestic trade and international trade demand, the domestic exhibition market capacity will continue to expand, the number of exhibitions, the scale of steady improvement. The investment and financing amount of the domestic exhibition industry in 2021-2022 is 414 million yuan and 231 million yuan respectively, as shown in Figure 2.

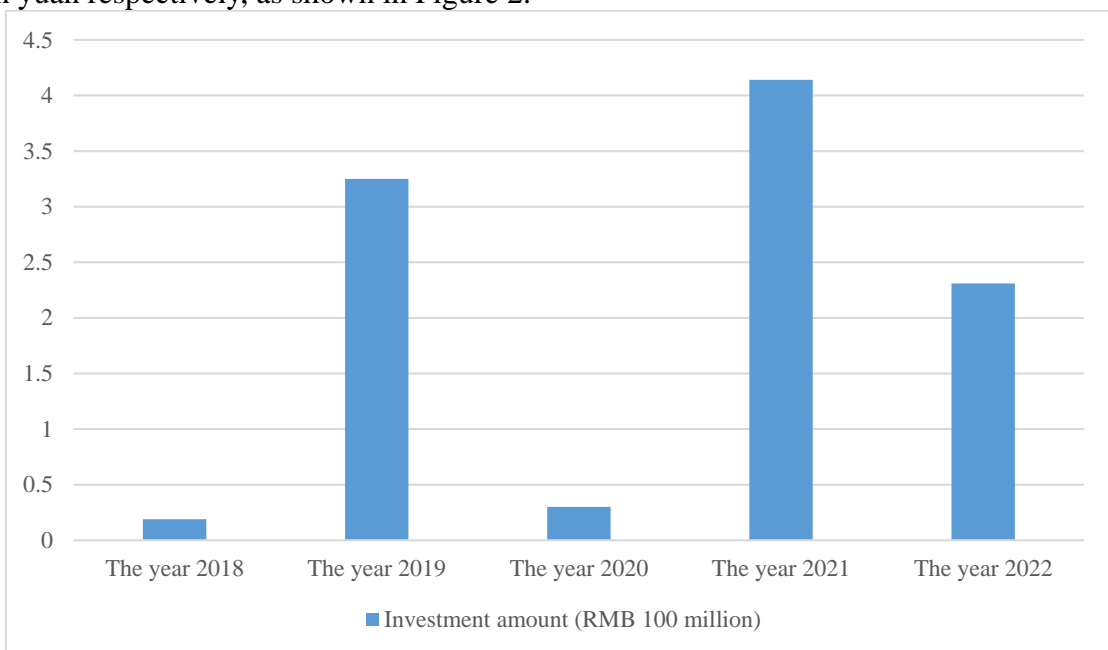


Figure 2: Investment amount (RMB 100 million)

The impact of the novel coronavirus pneumonia epidemic on the exhibition industry continues to

deteriorate, but the transformation of offline exhibitions to digital is accelerating, and major exhibition companies are actively looking for alternative models of offline exhibitions. In 2022, the exhibition industry EventX, Gotin and Zuddl three investment and financing events are all online exhibition directions. The rapid development of digital economy has made the intersection of technology and business between industries more and more close, and the progress of science and technology has brought opportunities for digital transformation and upgrading to the traditional exhibition industry, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Statistics on investment and financing of China's exhibition industry in 2022

Time	Enterprise name	Turn	Type
January 7, 2022	Zuddl	Round A	Virtual activity platform
February 7, 2022	With Gotin	Pre-round A	Online exhibition and business docking platform
February 17, 2022	EventX	Round B+	Virtual exhibition

### 1.3. The importance of government policies has gradually increased

China's attention to the exhibition industry has gradually increased, and exhibition has been regarded as an important way to strengthen the exchange and cooperation between domestic enterprises in various industries and show the competitiveness of our country in various fields. Therefore, in recent years, the frequency of relevant policies in China's exhibition industry has also increased significantly. In March 2015, the "Several Opinions on Further Promoting the Reform and Development of the Exhibition Industry" was issued, the "Qualification Conditions for Professional Exhibition Managers" was issued in September 2017, the "Notice of the General Office of the Ministry of Commerce on Further Optimizing the Administrative Services of Foreign-related Economic and Technological Exhibitions" was issued in April 2020, and the "14th Five-Year Business Development Plan" was issued in July 2021. It has been promulgated and implemented successively to play a positive role in the exhibition industry under the new pattern of double circulation.

## 2. Research on digital transformation path of China's modern exhibition industry

In the short term, digital transformation is the choice of the modern exhibition industry to cope with the current COVID-19 epidemic; In the long run, digital transformation is the future development direction of modern exhibition industry.

### 2.1. Clearly delineate the digital roadmap of the modern convention and exhibition industry, and help the digital transformation of the modern convention and exhibition industry in the new era

The government needs to accurately grasp the problems faced by the digital transformation of the modern exhibition industry, find out the key constraints and "bull nose" restricting the digital transformation of the modern convention and exhibition industry, conduct a comprehensive survey and detailed grasp of the current problems and pain points faced by the modern convention and exhibition industry, scientifically predict the industry trend and characteristics of the digital transformation of the modern convention and exhibition industry, and clearly describe the digital roadmap of the modern convention and exhibition industry.<sup>[1]</sup> Help the digital transformation of the

modern exhibition industry. The government, convention and exhibition industry associations, and social organizations should provide scientific and operable countermeasures and suggestions for the digital transformation of the modern convention and exhibition industry to promote the digital transformation of the modern convention and exhibition industry. The government uses digital marketing technology to carry out digital marketing, promote the upgrading of digital transformation marketing means of modern exhibition industry, and use wechat and other new media big data to accurately locate customer groups based on user data, capture, analyze, lock and characterize each user, and choose the best digital marketing model. Digital marketing will become a powerful driving force for the development of modern exhibition industry.

## **2.2. Accelerate the digital transformation of the modern exhibition industry stakeholders**

The realization of digital transformation of modern convention and exhibition industry is one of the main development directions of digital transformation of modern convention and exhibition industry. Digital innovation of convention and exhibition industry is necessary for the survival and development of modern convention and exhibition industry under the normalization of the novel coronavirus epidemic, and it is also an effective way for the high-quality development of modern convention and exhibition industry. The government gathers forces from all walks of life in the digital transformation of the modern convention and exhibition industry to reach a consensus, form a joint force, deeply integrate into digital technology, and accelerate the digitalization process of the modern convention and exhibition industry.<sup>[2]</sup>The digital transformation of modern convention and exhibition industry involves core stakeholders such as government, industry associations, social organizations, digital enterprises, convention and exhibition industry, exhibition and marketing parties, buyers and buyers, convention and exhibition tourists, local residents, etc. How to reach an agreement on the goals of these core stakeholders and form a joint force has become the key to the success of the digital transformation of modern convention and exhibition industry.

## **2.3. Learn from the practical experience of powerful countries in the exhibition industry, actively integrate into digital transformation, and strengthen digital income**

According to the 2021 China Convention and Exhibition Economy Research Society survey, the COVID-19 epidemic has accelerated the digital transformation of the modern convention and exhibition industry, and 31.3% of institutions agree that the digital income of the modern convention and exhibition industry is the future development direction. Modern exhibition industry organizations that have begun to try or have entered the digital transformation account for 50%; 60% of event organizers already have digital revenues.<sup>[3]</sup> However, at this stage, the digital revenue of the exhibition industry accounts for less than 10% of the total revenue of exhibition organizers accounted for more than 90%. According to the "2020 China Exhibition Data Statistical Report", the proportion of digital revenue in the modern exhibition industry is generally not high, and it is still in the initial stage of digital transformation. Hannover MESSE strengthens the integration of modern technology. In the digital age, enterprises have more choices. B2B platforms, social media, etc. help the digital transformation of the exhibition industry enterprises to focus on the digital marketing budget, with an average business opportunity of Leads15 euros, and the price has been greatly reduced. Some companies, such as BMW, invite relevant journalists, car agents and auto show sales personnel to gather in the company, through the exhibition of the latest models, to achieve the internalization of the exhibition and production exhibition and sales integration, while using digital technology to increase the extension of the industrial chain, to achieve product design, production, exhibition and sales of "one-stop" type of modern exhibition digitalization strategy. Some enterprises take the initiative to invite digital media to participate in the exhibition and sale of the company's products.

Therefore, we should learn from the practical experience of powerful countries in the exhibition industry, actively integrate into digital transformation, and strengthen digital income.

### **3. Research on digital transformation strategy of China's modern exhibition industry**

#### **3.1. Establish a complete digital operation system**

Government leading departments clarify government functions, improve relevant mechanisms, build digital platforms, constantly provide information and content, and connect the upstream and downstream of the industry. The platform can be a normal online exhibition, online periodic exhibition, online forum live broadcast, and even community, etc., giving full play to different advantages in different forms, strengthening the position of market players, and utilizing the resources of exhibition hosting. The executive branch provides a platform where supply and demand sides of the industry can find each other. Establish and improve the qualification and reputation evaluation system of modern convention and exhibition industry institutions in the process of digital transformation, establish benchmarks, benchmarks and tables that currently represent the digital transformation of the convention and exhibition industry, and introduce digital transformation indicators and industry rules of the modern convention and exhibition industry.

#### **3.2. Use digital technology to improve service capabilities**

The government uses digital capabilities to help exhibitors and professional visitors find each other more easily, to activate existing customers, existing exhibitors and visitors, to use digital marketing technology for maintenance, and to provide relevant industry information during non-exhibition periods.<sup>[4]</sup> At the same time, the government can use fine digital technology, industrial big data analysis capabilities, to find more exhibitors. Such expansion of customer channels is the key to digital services. Customers and exhibitors can communicate in a timely manner, and even achieve specific online intentions and transactions, efficient and convenient.

#### **3.3. Focus on digital talent training and strengthen brand building**

The government should implement the internationalization strategy, enhance the international brand value of China's modern convention and exhibition industry, build the international convention and exhibition industry chain through "active introduction" and "active going out" on the basis of building well-known domestic convention and exhibition cities and brand exhibitions, and strengthen brand operation in the process of digital transformation of the modern convention and exhibition industry. The joint construction of "exhibition branding" and "exhibition company branding" strengthens the modern exhibition enterprise, marketization and digital operation mechanism, accelerates the cultivation and introduction of digital talents in the modern exhibition industry, gives full play to the advantages of digital technology such as universities, research institutes and digital enterprise groups, and provides help for the digital transformation of China's modern exhibition industry and enhances the international brand value of the modern exhibition industry.

### **4. Conclusion**

In the past few years, the exhibition industry has undergone profound changes. In the future, the exhibition industry needs to focus on serving the national strategy and further deepen the integration of virtual and real. The government needs to optimize the construction of the business environment, provide digital exhibition public services, and promote the healthy development of the exhibition

digital industry.

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