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Despite Market Fragmentation, Confab Still Matters

Shift to late spring makes music schmoozefest a fair-weather friend

By Melinda Newman



CAPTIVE AUDIENCE
Industry pros trade secrets at the Palais during last year's Midem.

AS INTERNATIONAL MUSIC CONCLAVE Midem shifts from its usual January dates to June 5-8 for the first time, attendees say the Cannes confab remains a vital player, despite increasing competition.

"Midem has historically been the most important music business conference in the world," says Rich Bengloff, president of the American Assn. of Independent Music (A2IM). While he adds that its importance has lessened as the digital business has become more global and less focused on individual territories, Bengloff says, "it's the only place that gets the whole world (and) where you get the time to meet with everyone."

Tipsheet
 WHAT: Midem 2015
 WHEN: June 5-8
 WHERE: Palais des Festivals, Cannes, France
 WEB: midem.com

Geographically, 14% of all

attendees come from North America, with Europe and the U.K. representing 68%, according to Midem. Among the participants, 70% are from the music sector, 18% from tech, 7% from brands and 5% identify as artists.

David Rose Publishing COO Angela Rose White has attended Midem frequently since 1997 and finds it an essential destination. "Our digital income is tremendously affected by what's going on outside the U.S.," says the Los Angeles-based White. "There may be a (streaming music delivery company) that's only relevant to India, but they may have a channel that plays U.S. music. If there's not a lot of money to divide anymore, it's really important to find out where you can make the money."

Midem also serves as a central spot for White and some of her sub-publishers outside the U.S. to meet. The in-person interaction with colleagues from across the

globe is one of Midem's main attractions. A2IM's pavilion on the Palais des Festivals' trade show floor is among the biggest at Midem and serves as a meeting place for its independent music label members.

"They show up at 9:30 in the morning, take appointments until 5, and then we break out beer and wine (for) a couple of hours," Bengloff says.

Former Sony exec Deborah Newman, who is now a copyright/digital music attorney and consultant, will participate in the Intl. Assn. of Entertainment Lawyers programs, but is reaching out to attendees in advance and is previewing the finalists in Midemlab, the conference's competition for innovative start-ups.

"I go to stay on top of what's going on in Europe and the rest of the world," she says.

Midem, which dropped 4% in attendance in 2014, moved to June in an attempt to woo attendees with the promise of better weather. Newman and White praise the June move, but Bengloff predicts the increased expense of flights and accommodations in high season will keep some away.

In fact, Bengloff is forgoing Midem for the first time in years because it now falls two weeks before A2IM's own Indie Week Conference, but adds A2IM senior management will be in attendance.

Midem will also likely lose some attendees to Cannes Lions, a festival focused on advertising and related creative fields, which starts June 21, says Ted Mico, COO of brand integration firm Mirriad, who will fly back to France from Los Angeles to attend Lions.

While Midem was once the primary meeting point for international music business, now other digital and tech conferences put on by Re/code, CES and the All That Matters branded conclaves are significant players as well.

Mico, who is primarily attending Midem to speak on a panel, still finds it a useful place to network and expand his global contacts. "I don't need to go to France to do a deal with a U.S. company," he says.

Midem Participants

Cross-pollination is key in the digital age among those making the trek to Cannes.

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