

Airlines, airports gear up for cautious re-openings

Airports and airlines in some major countries are getting ready to emerge from lockdown, even as the world reached the unimaginable milestone of 5 million confirmed cases this week. More than 328,000 people have died to date and the real number is likely much higher. The World Health Organization on Tuesday reported the largest single-day increase of infections –more than 106,000 – with about 40% of them in the United States.

In a tragic development, Latin America is now the most affected region, reported *Mercopress*, with the largest number of new daily cases. Brazil and Peru are the most affected countries. On Wednesday, Brazil's Health Ministry reported 888 new deaths and nearly 20,000 new infections in a single day. According to a projection, nearly 90,000 Brazilians will die in the epidemic, but this count could be even worse as President Jair Bolsonaro is pushing supporters to go back to work. Brazil is now third in the number of cases, behind only Russia and the U.S.

Here follows a round-up of stories related to travel trying to open up:

SFO Resumes Flights to Europe in June

San Francisco International Airport (SFO) has announced the return of nonstop air service to Europe in June 2020.

Canada-U.S. border to remain closed to non-essential travel for another month

Canada and the United States will keep the border between the two countries closed to all non-essential travel for another month, it was announced Tuesday, May 19.

The extension on the existing agreement maintains border restrictions until June 21, even as parts of both countries begin gradually reopening. The agreement currently exempts the flow of trade and commerce, as well as health-care workers who live and work on opposite sides of the border. Tourists and cross-border visits remain prohibited.

See related story on Blue Water Bridge Duty Free on page 3.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, SFO has had no flights to Europe since April 1, 2020. The Airport also expects additional service to Japan next month.

SFO reports that All Nippon Airways (ANA) plans to begin operating three flights per week to Tokyo-Narita on June 1 using Boeing 777 aircraft. ANA originally planned to operate one daily flight to Tokyo in June 2020.

Swiss International Air Lines plans to begin operating one weekly flight to Zurich on June 1 using Boeing 777 aircraft. Swiss originally planned to operate one daily flight to Zurich in June 2020.

Lufthansa plans to begin operating three flights per week to Munich on June 16. The aircraft type has yet to be determined. Lufthansa originally planned to operate one daily flight to Munich in June 2020.

Delta invests in customer assurance

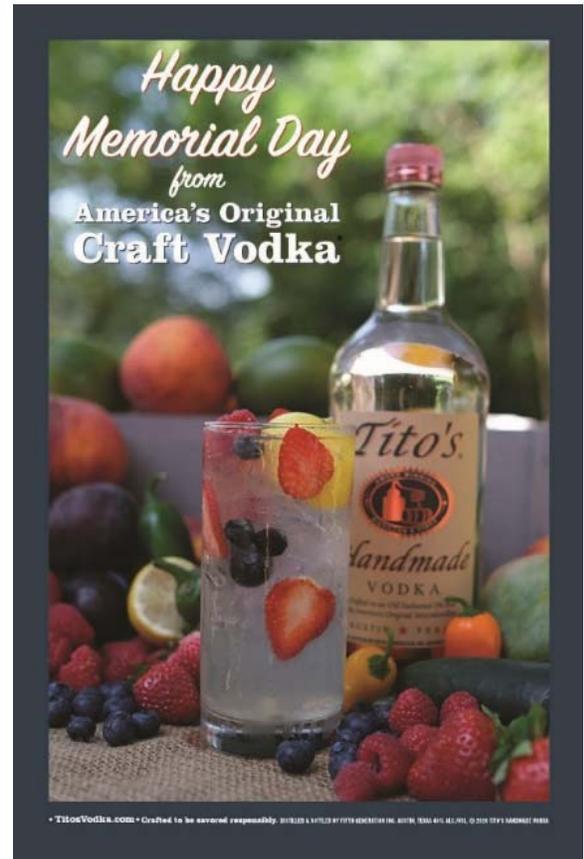
Delta Airlines CEO Ed Bastian, who has been doing an excellent job of communicating with customers since the crisis began, on Tuesday issued an update designed to instill confidence among passengers and staff. In it, Bastian committed to capping capacity of every flight at 60% and blocking middle seats (a concept that IATA has pushed back against as too costly.) JetBlue has also committed to keeping middle seats free.

The Delta CEO also says that the air on all aircraft is completely recirculated 10 to 30 times per hour with fresh, outside air or through industrial-grade HEPA filters with similar performance to those used in hospital operating rooms, and that crew will take the time when deplaning to create distance for those ahead to exit.

Delta has also unveiled custom Plexiglas safety barriers that it says will be installed at all check-in lobbies and departure gates at Delta's U.S. hub airports by June 1 and at all U.S. locations in the weeks following. The carrier was also one of the first to institute deep cleaning procedures.

TMI understands that Delta will resume flights to Amsterdam, Paris and Israel from JFK starting in June, as well as flights from Detroit to China and to London, and Seatac to China.

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PEOPLE

Bacardi Global Travel Retail has named **Ignacio Vázquez** as Global Head of Marketing, Global Travel Retail, effective July 1, 2020. **Vázquez** will report directly to Vinay Golikeri, Managing Director, Bacardi Global Travel Retail, and will be based in London.

Since joining Bacardi in 2015, **Vázquez** has most recently served as Vice President of Marketing for Latin America & Caribbean. He has also held various marketing and leadership roles including Global Brand Director Martini.

Welcoming **Vázquez** to the team, Vinay Golikeri said: "Ignacio brings a wealth of strategic, brand and customer experience across many consumer sectors and a range of geographies in complex and challenging markets. A natural, broad-thinking leader with a strong track record of delivering significant commercial success through disruptive, consumer-centric strategic programs, I'm confident he will bring a results focused, fresh perspective to shopper engagement."

Before joining Bacardi, **Vázquez** was a management consultant for Bain & Company and worked in several local, regional, and global marketing roles for leading consumer brands.

Airlines for America launches “Fly Healthy. Fly Smart.” awareness campaign



FLY HEALTHY. FLY SMART.
The safety and wellbeing of passengers and employees is the top priority of U.S. airlines, and we are committed to instituting multiple layers of protection throughout the travel experience – from check-in to touchdown.

AIRLINES ARE HELPING YOU FLY HEALTHY.

- Requiring face coverings.
- Using HEPA filtration systems.
- Sanitizing counters, kiosks and gate areas.
- Sterilizing with electrostatic sprayers and foggers.
- Disinfecting surfaces like arm rests and seat buckles.
- Reducing touchpoints like beverage service.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO FLY SMART?

- Wear a face covering over your nose and mouth.
- Wash your hands often for at least 20 seconds.
- Cover your face when coughing or sneezing.
- Use your smartphone to check in.
- Avoid touching your face.
- Stay home if you are sick.

U.S. carriers meet or exceed CDC guidelines. To learn more, visit AirlinesTakeAction.com. 

Airlines for America (A4A) – the industry trade organization representing U.S. airlines – has launched a new public awareness campaign, “Fly Healthy. Fly Smart.”

Aimed at educating travelers ahead of the Memorial Day weekend, the campaign includes multi-media outreach showcasing the enhanced cleaning and procedural changes U.S. airlines are implementing as well as reminding the traveling public of steps they can take to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

The campaign includes an infographic, video, blog posts, social media engagement at the updated AirlinesTakeAction.com webpage.

Airlines Take Action

A4A’s member airlines are requiring passengers and customer-facing employees to wear a face covering over their nose and mouth throughout the journey, check-in,

boarding, in-flight and deplaning.

At check-in counters and gate areas, travelers may see agents sanitizing counters and kiosks.

Some airlines have installed plexi-glass shields over the counters to provide additional protection and some have marked the floors to ensure appropriate distance is maintained.

All A4A member airlines have aircraft equipped with HEPA filters, which help generate hospital-grade air quality. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) report that how air circulates and is filtered on airplanes, “most viruses and other germs do not spread easily on flights.”

U.S. airlines have implemented intensive cleaning protocols, in some cases to include electrostatic cleaning and fogging procedures.

Carriers are sanitizing cockpits, cabins and key touchpoints such as tray tables, armrests, seatbelts, buttons, vents, handles and lavatories,

with EPA-approved disinfectants. Airlines have also increased the frequency of deep cleaning procedures for both domestic and international flights.

Airlines have also implemented a range of policies including back-to-front boarding and adjusting food and beverage services, to help allow for social distancing.

As an additional layer of protection, A4A’s member airlines have encouraged the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) to begin conducting temperature screenings.

Travelers are urged to stay home when ill, frequently wash their hands and to wear a face covering throughout their air travel journey, consistent with CDC guidance.

New Data Points

As stay-at-home orders and travel restrictions are lifted, communities are slowing reopening, and more people are choosing to travel by airplane. While some

travelers may experience full or near-full flights, data from the most recent week of operations shows that the **majority of U.S. airline flights (73%) are less than 50% full.**

For added protection, airlines are attempting to leave some seats open for distancing between travelers when feasible, but not all circumstances allow for that.

Some airlines are working with passengers to make accommodations when possible, but notably **only 8.5% of U.S. airline flights are more than 70% full.**

Last year TSA recorded a record number of travelers, screening nearly 2.8 million people at airports on May 28, the Friday prior to Memorial Day. This year TSA is screening 91% fewer people. More than 50% of commercial aircraft in the U.S. are parked, and of the planes flying, airlines are averaging 31 passengers per domestic flight – an 83% percent decrease in capacity compared to last year.



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Blue Water Bridge DF stays open for essential travelers even as border business is “decimated”

While most of the Canadian land border stores have closed their doors during the COVID-19 pandemic, Blue Water Bridge Duty Free in Point Edward, Ontario has remained open to essential traffic.

But Blue Water Bridge Duty Free’s business over this period has been “decimated,” Tania Lee, Vice President, tells *TMI*.

“The worst case scenario for any duty free store is the closure of the bridge or the border. If you look at the traffic crossing our bridge the cars are down 97-98%. Commercial truck traffic over the bridge has decreased around 45% year over year,” says Lee.

“The core business for us is derived from car traffic, because they can buy everything. Commercial traffic has a lot of restrictions on it: they can’t buy liquor for example. They would normally be the smallest portion of our business. But the commercial traffic is now our main business.”

Lee says at first they were not sure they should stay open, but realized that the commercial truck drivers needed the services that Blue Water Bridge Duty Free could provide.

“When we decided to stay open we knew that only essential traffic was allowed to go through, which would be predominantly truck traffic and essential cars. We soon found that since everything was closed the truck drivers were not getting any services: they could not go through any drive-thru, no restaurants are open, and washrooms are closed,” says Lee.

“Truck drivers are using our restrooms, having some food, making a purchase. It has become really important for us to stay open for our commercial business.”

Commercial truck drivers are restricted from purchasing liquor, but they are buying cigarettes and a few toiletries.

“Tobacco is the bulk of the business. We have seen some of our deodorants and deodorant sprays moving, which I attribute to the truck drivers, and some colognes.”

Despite the minimal traffic and sales, Lee says it is imperative that

the company keeps its staff.

“We have been in business a long, long time, since 1986. And our goal, with my dad, the founder, has always been ‘We will stay open and keep our core staff employed. We don’t lay people off.’ That was our big concern. Today our goal is still to remain open and keep our core staff employed. And it has become more and more apparent that we need to provide the needed services to our commercial traffic,” she says.

“We are cognizant of minimizing our expenses. We are seeking relief from any of the government sources that we can. We have our staff to pay. We have our bills to pay. We have our overhead to pay. We have worked with some of our suppliers to return product and they have been really good partners.”

Border closing extended

With the announcement this week that the US-Canada border will remain closed to non-essential travel for at least another month, Lee does not know when her store will be open for all customers.

“At first I thought this would last for a few weeks. Now I am thinking more like the end of July, the end of August. And July and August are our two busiest months. If we go all the way through into August we lose all of our summer months.”

Lee says they are looking at how Blue Water Bridge Duty Free can “hit the ground running” when it is allowed to open when the border finally opens.

“Once the authorities say our stores can open fully, how do we stimulate our business right off the bat so that we can come back quickly?”

Blue Water Bridge Duty Free will be carrying the most relevant products when it opens to all traffic, says Lee.

“We have placed a huge order for masks and have reached out to see if we can get more sanitizers. We were fortunate that we had installed an ozone water system in our store, which allows us to sanitize very quickly. This ozone sys-

tem is effective at sanitizing for 24 hours at a time.”

Catering to different customers

Blue Water Bridge has classified returning customers under three pillars.

“First are those wanting curbside pickup. We think that first customers will be so used to click and collect and curbside pickup that they will expect the same from us,” she says.

“Then there is the ‘dash in and dash out’ customer, grab and go. We are seeing it now with the truck drivers. They come in quickly, they grab what they want, known brands, and they run, because they don’t want to have any contact with people.

“The third tier might be our traditional customer, which will probably be the smallest tier until a vaccine is found. They will come in and interact with our sales staff.”

When customers return, Blue Water Bridge Duty Free will have new safety rules in effect.



Tania Lee

“The customer also will have to cover their faces, wash their hands, and maintain social distancing from all our staff. We have queues ready with markings on the floor showing where they have to wait in lines six to eight feet or more apart. We also have shields in place at our cash registers,” says Lee.

“We have to keep our employees safe. And we have to make our customers feel safe when they come in to Blue Water Bridge Duty Free.”

The Ambassador Bridge pays tolls for essential workers

Essential workers who cross the U.S. border with Canada using the Ambassador Bridge will no longer have to pay tolls during the COVID-19 pandemic, beginning on May 21.

Ambassador Bridge chairman Matthew Moroun said the cost of passenger vehicle tolls will be covered by the Canadian Transit Company, a company owned by his family.

“We appreciate the men and women on the front lines who are working to keep us safe. We wanted to take this action to try to alleviate some of the stress of a daily commute for essential workers who cross our bridge every day. This is a small thing we can do to show that we see your daily sacrifice and we are grateful,” says Mouron.

The Ambassador Bridge, which connects Windsor, Ontario in Canada to Detroit, Michigan in the U.S., has been closed for non-essential travel since late March. Only those workers who were crossing to perform essential services related to the COVID-19 pandemic are allowed to cross. Last month, workers crossed the bridge an estimated 52,000 times.

“This is the right thing to do under the circumstances. Nurses and other critical infrastructure employees need all of the support we can provide at this time,” says Ambassador Bridge President Dan Stamper.

In another thank you to the essential workers crossing the border, Ambassador Bridge Duty Free has partnered with Khalsa Aid to provide free fresh meals to all the truckers, healthcare workers and border employees who pass by each day. Khalsa Aid, an international Sikh organization, sets up food distribution each Thursday and Sunday from 12pm -2pm outside the Ambassador Bridge Duty Free store.

Industry responds as airlines, airports gear up for cautious re-openings *Continued from page 1.*

ACI & IATA issue “roadmap” for aviation restart

On May 20, Airports Council International (ACI) World and the International Air Transport Association (IATA) jointly issued a paper laying out a pathway for restarting the aviation industry, proposing a “roadmap” for resuming operations that reassures the traveling public that health and safety remain the overall priorities.

The joint paper proposes a layered approach of measures across the entire passenger journey to minimize the risk of transmission of COVID-19 at airports and onboard aircraft, and to prevent aviation becoming a meaningful source of international re-infection.

Such measures should be globally consistent and subject to continued review, improvement, and removal when no longer required, to ensure an even recovery.

“There is currently no single measure that could mitigate all the risks of restarting air travel but we believe a globally-consistent,

outcome-based approach represents the most effective way of balancing risk mitigation with the need to unlock economies and to enable travel,” said ACI World Director General Angela Gittens.

Europe issues guidelines

On May 21, the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) of the COVID-19 Aviation Health Safety Protocol released guidelines for the safe restart of air transport in Europe.

Global association IATA welcomed the announcement, as did travel retail groups DFWC and ETRC, although they both voiced disappointment that inflight sales will be restricted at this time.

As IATA says: The EASA and ECDC guidelines are aligned with recommendations provided by both the airline and airport sector for a layered approach of temporary measures to protect public health while allowing viable air services to help drive the European economic recovery. But the guidelines will only be effective if all European states deliver harmonized implementation and mutually recognize each other’s efforts.

Key measures in the EASA guidelines include:

- *Physical distancing at the airport and terminal infrastructure, such as with baggage drop and claim, and at security, should be optimized to prevent queuing
- *The wearing of masks at all times in the airport and on board is recommended, as is appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) to staff
- *Enhanced cleaning procedures in both the airport and aircraft are recommended, especially for frequently-touched surfaces
- *Where allowed by the passenger load, cabin configuration and mass and balance requirements, airlines should ensure

physical distancing among passengers. Family members and individuals traveling together as part of the same household can be seated next to each other.

In a statement accompanying the Protocol, EASA explained that the recommended measures will be regularly evaluated and updated in line with changes in knowledge of the risk of transmission as well as with development of other diagnostic or preventive measures.

DFWC: guidance signals restart in sight for duty free retailers

Duty Free World Council President Sarah Branquinho comments on the EASA guidance (excerpted):

“We are pleased to see that under the EASA guidelines duty free shops should expect to be able to trade again as airports and airlines return to normal scheduling in the second half of 2020.

“These measures are a welcome step forward that will enable travel retailers to begin rebuilding their businesses, which have been among some of the most heavily impacted in the world by the COVID-19 outbreak... the value of non-aeronautical revenue for a healthy airport sector has never been clearer, and travel retail’s essential role is apparent.

“We are disappointed that the guidelines have included a recommendation to temporarily restrict inflight sales which is not in line with our industry position. We will continue to advocate in support of the entire duty free industry and seek the lifting of this restriction.

“The Duty Free World Council is engaging with the International Civil Aviation Organisation, and organisations around the world, to work constructively and quickly to develop common standards and guidelines that will ensure the world can get back to business, and passengers back in the air.”

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Distell International and Delhi Duty Free join APTRA Board

Asia Pacific Travel Retail Association has appointed two new board members. **Distell International**, represented by **Luke Maga**, Managing Director, Global Travel Retail, will now represent the alcohol category and **Delhi Duty Free**, represented by CEO **Philip Eckles**, becomes an additional retailer member for the region.

Commenting on the new appointments, APTRA President **Sunil Tuli** said: “I’m pleased to welcome the expertise and best practices of Luke and Philip to the APTRA board. India is such an important and fast-moving market and Delhi Duty Free is a market leader in shaping the future of travel retail in the country.

“We will benefit greatly from Philip’s understanding of the dynamics of the Indian consumer, the political landscape and the challenges of developing a retail business at pace. Earlier this year, Delhi Duty Free was a proactive advocacy partner with APTRA in protecting alcohol allowances in India,” he said.

“The broad range of brands within the Distell portfolio covers just about every category in spirits, wines, liqueurs, beers and ciders and so Luke brings a great understanding and insights of both mature and emerging categories and their opportunities within travel retail across Asia Pacific. Distell has been a hugely enthusiastic supporter of APTRA over the past four years and we welcome Luke’s energy and enthusiasm for the region.

Tuli thanked departing board members **Andrew Gardiner** of **Melbourne Airport** and alcohol industry specialist **Ryan Hill**, for their commitment and time given, and noted that **Julia Bauer** from **Imperial Tobacco Group** has been appointed as APTRA Secretary.

Given the current challenges for airports and additional responsibilities in his role, Andrew Gardiner and Melbourne Airport decided to step down from the board and APTRA is currently in discussion with other airports to fill the airport seat.



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CircleSquare challenges travel retail industry to be ready when trading opportunities emerge

London-based CircleSquare is calling on the travel retail channel to be “ready to start the race” when consumer spending returns in airports post COVID-19.

The experiential marketing, brand activation and consumer engagement specialist works with retailers such as Dufry, DFS and Gebr. Heinemann and a wide range of international travel retail brands including Diageo, Mondelez and L’Oréal.

The company’s executive creative director and founding partner, Philip Handley, says that brands and retailers should be looking to hit the ground running with retail activations and experiences that will capture the attention of air travelers who are likely to be cautious and safety-conscious as the industry gradually gets back to its feet.

Handley says that brands and retailers should spend this enforced downtime from COVID-19 developing ideas and plans for an eye-catching comeback when traffic starts moving again:

“They will be the early winners post –COVID,” he says, warning that companies that “put the brakes on” could miss the chance to “access a significant share of the consumer spending” when people can move freely again.

“There are going to be a lot of people who are not going to be ready to start that race... more agile brands could make huge gains over competitors by acting now and preparing properly.”

Handley notes that there are signs of a rebound for consumer spending in China, with COVID-19 cases down to manageable numbers and the domestic flight market starting up again. The travel retail industry in countries where the coronavirus pandemic is still at its peak, such as many in Europe, need to track activity and be ready, as their recovery is likely to follow a similar pattern to China and other Asia Pacific countries, he says.

These recovering countries are experiencing what Handley describes as “Revenge Consumption.”



A CircleSquare activation at Cancun International Airport for Diageo.

He comments: “Most of the best retail experiences we create for brands take between three and six months to execute, from strategic planning and conceptualization to

fabrication and installation in store. That means brands and retailers need to start briefing their creative agencies now to be ready on time. CircleSquare has been offering clients a free planning service: “We have the proven ability to create activations that drive footfall, increase dwell time and change the focus away from a product’s price and onto a product’s experience – this is what you will need to succeed in winning the early business when it becomes available,” says Handley.

He adds that even if budgets are on hold, travel retail directors should start planning now, testing new ideas for retail space without sacrificing revenue so that they can be ready to move quickly when the time comes.

Duty Free Dynamics adds Thule brand of bags and luggage to outdoor portfolio

Duty Free Dynamics (DFD) has expanded its outdoor portfolio with the addition of Thule, a global premium brand of backpacks, duffel bags, luggage, laptop briefcases and camera bags.

Thule was established in Sweden in 1942, and its products are currently available in 140 countries. Last year Thule was granted two Red Dot Awards, one for the “Best of the Best for Brands & Communication Design” and the other for its Thule Revolve hardside luggage, with the perfect balance of modern form and function.

“By incorporating Thule, we have accomplished another milestone in broadening our outdoor brand portfolio which now allows our current and future operators to reach a wider array of outdoor enthusiasts, requiring high-quality products for all type of environments,” commented Alejo Lopez de Armentia, Brand Manager of DFD’s outdoor cluster.

DFD’s outdoor cluster also includes Osprey packs and Hydro Flask insulated water bottles.



Thule Revolve Red Dot winning luggage.

For more information, go to www.dutyfreedynamics.com or contact alejo.armentia@dutyfreedynamics.com

PORSCHE DESIGN

Porsche Design and BRIC’S partner on new line

Porsche Design and BRIC’S have entered into a long-term partnership to bring a new line of bags, luggage, and small leather goods to the market. Capitalizing on the companies’ histories rooted in a family business and unique heritage, the new collection combines the best of the two brands and features a fusion of design, function, and craftsmanship.

Porsche Design was founded in 1972 by Professor Ferdinand Alexander Porsche - the designer of the legendary Porsche 911. His credo “if you analyze the function of an object, its form often becomes obvious,” and the associated design philosophy can still be seen in all Porsche Design products.

BRIC’S, established in 1952 by Mario Briccola, is a family-owned

business. The Italian travel brand is known worldwide for its travel and fashion accessories with more than 65 years of industry expertise, history, long-standing regional roots, and passion. BRIC’S stays true to the *Made in Italy* culture and philosophy, which is evident in every detail and production site.

The collaboration fuses Porsche Design’s functional design and engineered mindset with BRIC’S fine craftsmanship and manufacturing competence.

The new range features a selection of hard- and softcase luggage, bags, backpacks, and small leather goods, ranging from business to leisure-inspired products, with a commitment to high performance.

The new Porsche Design bags & luggage collection will be available end of 2020 worldwide in Porsche Design stores and BRIC’S stores and online at www.porsche-design.com and at www.brics.it as well as in selected luggage stores worldwide, including the Travel Retail Market.



Industry responds as airlines, airports gear up for cautious reopenings

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ETRC welcomes EU guidance to restart aviation industry

Commenting on the announcement of the harmonized measures, Nigel Keal, President of the ETRC, said (excerpted): "... The guidance shows a clear path to reopening of travel retail and duty free shops as people return to air travel.

"We now urge EU Member States to support this coordinated approach and work with Travel Retailers at local level to implement these high standards which allow for shops to reopen safely. This will enable European airports to generate important non-aeronautical revenues which will be key to their recovery following this sustained period of disruption.

"We advocated strongly for a resumption of all duty free services, including inflight sales, and are disappointed that this temporary restriction is proposed in the guidelines. We will continue to voice to the relevant authorities our position on this and hope this is removed soon," said Keal.

U.S. travel industry loses more than half of workforce

In the U.S., travel-related unemployment has hit 51% in the weeks ahead of Memorial Day, reported the U.S. Travel Association on May 19.

More than half of the 15.8 million travel-related jobs in the U.S. have disappeared since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic—driving an unemployment number (51%) that is more than twice the 25% rate the country as a whole experienced at the worst of the Great Depression, according to data released earlier this week.

Though there is evidence of pent-up demand for travel, U.S. Travel Association President and CEO Roger Dow said that the public should expect travel to look and feel different for the foreseeable future, as travel businesses embrace practices aimed at promoting the safest possible environment for their customers and employees. USTA projects that travel spending in the U.S. will tally just a third of last year's levels—\$4.2 billion this year versus \$12.3 billion in 2019.

Essence Corp keeps BAs engaged through Zoom trainings

Miami-based fragrance distribution company Essence Corp has adapted to remote working while the city is shut down during the coronavirus pandemic, reports Essence Corp Vice President Patricia Bona.

"While many of our client duty free stores are closed, as a distributor we are always busy," she tells *TMI*. "Some stores have begun to open up and we have to plan what to do when the others open. We are deciding how to operate under the new normal with no testers, no spraying."

The company is also doing everything that it can to retain staff. "We need to keep our good people. We stand by our staff," she promises.

Last week, the company held a major "zoom" training session attended by 40 Beauty Advisors from throughout North, Central and South America. The BAs "met" with the Essence teams that included two trainers, the Americas Commercial Team, Essence Corp Executive Sales Director Antoine Bona and — as a special guest at the conclusion of the session -- Vice President Patricia Bona.

"The purpose of the training was to keep the Beauty Advisors engaged, giving them precaution measures for when the POS will reopen, and cheering up the team!" says Bona.

"During the meeting, we encouraged the Beauty Advisors to stay positive and to get the best out of this situation, by learning and enriching their knowledge through the tools and virtual trainings provided to them by the company," explains Maria Ninfa Alvarez, Essence Corp Senior International Trainer TR Americas.

"We also reviewed work matters, ranging from doing a refresh on their job priorities to learning best practices, along with safety measures and

hygiene they should implement when going back to the field.

"It was also a way to make them feel part of the Essence family," said Alvarez.

Essence Corp's staff of more than 60 people has been working from home for two months now, and Bona notes that "remote is working."

As of now, the company does not plan to have employees return to the office until mid-June, and at that time, the staff will work in shifts so as to maintain safe social distancing, says Bona.



Tairo's Somar Distribution supplies local Caribbean markets with high demand products

Caribbean and Mexico travel retail distribution specialist Tairo International is coping with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic through its sister company Somar Distribution.

Tairo founders Robert and Tania Bassan created Somar seven years ago to service the local markets in the Caribbean with consumer products.

The client base consists of supermarkets, pharmacies, and convenience stores throughout the region.

During the pandemic, Tairo has taken the opportunity to offer

its customers high demand items such as face masks, hand sanitizers, disinfectant wipes, and consumer hair color.

"As many of our retailers cater to both the travel and local market consumers, they have seized on the opportunity to target the local market while the tourist arrivals are on hold," Robert Bassan tells *TMI*.

Tairo is in the process of producing a travel essential kit that will contain masks, hand sanitizer, and disinfectant wipes.

These will be available for distribution in the coming month, he says.

