

2022 SUMMIT OF THE AMERICAS

APRIL 10-13, 2022 • WEST PALM BEACH, FLORIDA



One on One with IAADFS President & CEO Michael Payne

2022 Summit of the Americas offers networking opportunities, greater flexibility and open door policy beyond exhibition space to accommodate broader base

With the 2022 Summit of the Americas a little less than two months away, questions and challenges abound as the show organizers tackle a new venue and a new format, not to mention an industry devastated by lingering effects of the coronavirus pandemic.

TMI's Lois Pasternak had an opportunity to speak with Michael Payne, President & CEO of the International Association of Airport and Duty Free Stores, which is organizing the event that is taking place at the Palm Beach Convention Center in Palm Beach, Florida from April 10-13.

This will be the first time the Summit has been held live since 2019. Registration is currently underway, with early bird discounts in effect through Feb. 25.

Lois Pasternak - TMI: Michael, can you give us an update and clarify the situation with the Summit of the Americas? Not only are we still suffering from travel restrictions due to COVID, but the IAADFS is introducing a whole new format/concept for the Summit, including a new location. With these in mind, can you give us a status report of where the event stands right now?

Michael Payne - IAADFS: Thank you, Lois, and I appreciate the chance to visit with you. Let me start with a little context first. Normally, by early fall we would be well down the road with our prospectus, with registration open and everything well on the way.

This year IAADFS did not make

the decision to have the Summit in person until late September. So we did not get started with opening a website, finalizing arrangements with the Convention Center in Palm Beach, and all the [preliminary] work that goes into planning the event until early/mid-November when we opened up registration and started exhibit sales, and then came the holidays.

So my point here is that I think that people started to pay attention to the information much later than usual, but I can see the uptick in registrations and interest in the Summit really picking up over the past week or so. I feel like we are in a good place, but certainly have more work to do.

Having said that, we made that decision in September based on

substantial feedback we had received from suppliers, buyers, focus groups that we held and surveys that we had done.

We knew that given the situation with COVID and all that associated uncertainty we had to think of a different way forward. The idea of a big trade show was simply not viable this year due to the impacts from COVID. People were unsure of revenue spend, unsure of what they could commit to – we knew all that going into it.

Based on those conversations we decided on the following.

1. We consciously took the decision to have a much reduced exhibit hall in Palm Beach.

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Instead of the normal large foot print exhibit space, we decided on a combination of traditional exhibits and meeting rooms.

We scaled back to where we probably will have 40-42 exhibitors (depending on fire marshal). This decision to limit space was based in large part on feedback from the suppliers themselves.

2. Many people also told us that they wanted to have content sessions. They believe there is a need for more educational learning sessions, so we decided to work with content partners to put on six different sessions, three on Monday and three on Tuesday.

These sessions are designed to cover an array of topics ranging from airport concessionaire relationships, to employment issues facing us all, advocacy and regulatory challenges confronting the entire industry, recent and original retail and sustainability to mention some. These sessions should be of real value for attendees and help in managing their business. Details and speakers can be found on our website.

3. *Third, we designed the meeting setup differently. We knew that exhibit space would be limited -- whether due to COVID or revenue restrictions, so we are setting up networking opportunities as well. For those without exhibit space or private rooms we want attendees to be able to meet customers, colleagues and media for example to have conversations after this long period of not much contact due to COVID.*

We will probably be using one of the big ballrooms for this networking area, where we will have coffee breaks and sitting areas, a space to meet.

We will also have three social networking events: an opening event on Sunday night, and two cocktail receptions outside on Monday and Tuesday night from 6:30 – 8.

Importantly everyone will have to be registered in order to take advantage of any exhibits, sessions and social events. We hope these various opportunities will meet the attendees' needs.

Exhibit Space. At this time (Feb. 15), the exhibit space is sold out.

We have 3-4 larger meeting rooms left, and we are looking to see if we can divide these further in order to bring down the cost of the space. But the exhibit space out in the foyer and in the first floor lobby are booked and actually have a waiting list – and we had capped it, purposely. And we do have people expressing interest in the other meeting rooms.

So this is in good shape and we are encouraged.

Registration. As I mentioned earlier, registration started slower than usual, but has been picking up for the last week.

I think that in another 2-3 weeks we will have a much better sense. I know of a lot of people who are planning to attend but have not registered yet.

The discount registration deadline is February 25 and people usually want to take advantage of that discount.

Buyers. All the major firms have committed to the event, including many of the larger operators as well as those on the IAADFS Board. 3Sixty, Motta Internacional, Dufry, DFS, International Shoppes, Stellar Partners and Aer Rianta. So the buyer community is starting to register.

We have really good participation from the spirits category, including Diageo, Pernod Ricard and Brown-Forman, Tito's and others which can be found on the website. We'll be sending out the floor plan soon. We also have representation among confectionery, tobacco, and other categories.

We still have more work to do with the perfume and cosmetics companies. While most of them are not exhibiting, some of them have still committed to attend and participate in the sessions.

Hopefully they will have opportunities to meet colleagues in the convention center. We see this trend starting to pick up through the registrations coming in. We certainly hope that local Florida companies will come up at least for one or two of the days as we have provisions for one-day pass registration.

We do have some companies who are not exhibiting but are looking for sponsorship opportunities which would be helpful.

Content Partners. We have some excellent content partners running sessions, like ASUTIL talking about the latest developments in Latin America; Hume Brophy talking about advocacy; ARRA, the Airport Restaurant and Retail Association,

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Michael Payne



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talking about concession challenges; WITR focused on employment challenges; and we are working with our media content partners like *Travel Markets Insider*, *TRBusiness*, *The Moodie-Davitt Report*, *DFNI*, *Global Travel Retail Magazine*, and *mInd-set*.

Opening the door wider. The point I want to make is that there are a lot of options for attendees and we are reaching out to these other segments of the industry.

From our feedback, we realized that we were sometimes too restrictive in the past. But of course the industry itself has changed, dramatically. We recognize that there are other components to the travel retail world who want to be engaged. This is a much more open door policy.

Again, this is the first year in a while that we have held an event, so we don't know exactly who all will register, but we think the excellent educational sessions from these content partners can help drive that forward.

So, to your initial questions about how things have changed, they have, but I think it is all for the better. The changes give people more choices, more flexibility.

Advocacy

And remember, IAADFS does not just put on a show. Everything we do is geared towards advocacy on behalf of the industry and how it does business.

We have been involved with everything from the ability to sell liquids and gels, increased duty free allowances, and the recent billion dollars in funding relief we managed to help obtain which is being administered by the Federal Aviation Administration.

There is considerable activity that directly affects the supplier side also, such as labeling or other possible restrictions on products sales that we are involved with, and the source of funding for this advocacy work has historically been from the trade show. The Summit is an important revenue source for our advocacy work on behalf of the industry.

We hope that everyone will support the Summit this year and are sincerely appreciative to those exhibitors who have stepped up to be a part of this event. We are all in the travel business and we need to do whatever we can to come together and re-focus on our industry and how to move it forward.

Finally, an important note is that we will be prepared to comply with all necessary health and safety requirements which will be communicated in advance as this situation is rapidly evolving.

For more information about the IAADFS Summit of the Americas, or to register, please go to <https://www.2022summitoftheamericas.org/>




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