

TFWA board excited to prepare for Cannes



TFWA President Jaya Singh would like to help the industry to stay continuously informed during this time of constant uncertainty

The overarching feeling of the TFWA Press Conference held this morning was one of barely restrained hope and excitement for the coming events, in particular the World Exhibition and Conference in Cannes but also next week's event in Hainan. Present from the TFWA board were President Jaya Singh; Vice-President Finance Frédéric Garcia-Pelayo; Vice-President Commercial Donatienne de Fontaines-Guillaume; Vice-President Marketing, Aude Bourdier; and Managing Director John Rimmer.

TFWA President Jaya Singh began by stating that TFWA is “absolutely committed to do everything we can to make the World Exhibition and Conference happen. It's not just the will and intent on our part; it is a reflection of the continuous feedback that we have got from various members.” He went on to discuss how time spent in isolation in the virtual world has produced a bit of a wear and tear and everybody. “There is a genuine desire passion to get together.”

He said, during this time of uncertainty where things are changing on a daily or weekly basis, we need to keep a high level of engagement. “I think people want to stay continuously informed, on information updates as well as developments,” he stated.

Singh confirmed information that was recently released: within three weeks of the announcement that TFWA WE will be a live, physical event once again this year, 150 exhibitors have confirmed, which equates to 8500 square meters of space. Additionally, 50 retailers have confirmed their attendance, helped in many cases by the Hosted Buyer program, which covers four days of accommodation for buyers who attend the event. “This was retailers' worst year of the century,” said Aude Bourdier. “This was a great decision taken by the management committee after heated debate — how to really be of service to our industry. We are one industry and we need to support each other. This has been extremely well received.” Applications for this aide are still open, but closing soon.

Given what has taken place over the past 15 months or so, despite current optimism, TFWA has a strong “Plan B,” which is “ready to be turned on at the switch of a button.”

The Plan B without question makes use of the new TFWA 365 platform, which the team has invested heavily in.

John Rimmer stated that this platform has three key pillars: discovery, networking and learning. It will allow for a virtual conference and exhibition, with a place for networking, a place to launch and display products and a conference area, and as the name suggests it will be available throughout the entire year as opposed to availability only surrounding events. “This platform was created following consultations with members throughout the year,” he said. “The different pillars were created with this in mind.”

TFWA 365 means that members unable to attend events will continue to have the ability to take part virtually, to hear the conferences and workshops and take part in meetings.

The press conference closed with what can almost be referred to as giddiness on the part of the board members, who are clearly excited to see colleagues in person.

In a final statement, Singh said: “The real difference this year has been the people. And I feel really privileged to be associated with that. We look forward to your continued support. It is our industry. It is our industry.”

As noted during this call, TFWA WE will be the first time many in our industry — who normally spend much of the year traveling — will be getting on a plane in more than 18 months. This is cause for excitement not only for our personal experience but for the industry as a whole, as travel begins once again.