

TFWA WE & Conference kicks off road to recovery - Snapshots from event



TFWA World Exhibition & Conference in Cannes is both familiar and strange this year. Without the opening cocktail or the usual array of cocktail parties, launches and lunches, the event does not have quite the same frenetic pace, to be sure.

But the refrain you hear over and over again is how nice it is to travel again, and how wonderful and even exciting it is to see familiar faces.

Yes, we only missed one event in Cannes, but with all the other events and, indeed, travel itself canceled for close to two years, we have not seen one another in any number of circumstances we once would have, and it goes to show just how important travel is — not only for visiting friends and relatives or for leisure but also for business.

Without face-to-face, real-life interaction, business does not have the lifeblood that it needs. We all need human contact.

While some aspects of this week might be different, some are decidedly familiar. The opening conference was one such event.



TFWA President Jaya Singh opened the session, offering his opinion of where we currently are and where the industry is headed.

DFS' Benjamin Vuchot discussed investments in luxury during a time when people are not traveling, and IATA Vice President Europe Rafael Schwartzman gave some sobering statistics about past slowdowns and recoveries, suggesting certain strategies for recovery.

In good news, Jane Sun, Chief Executive Officer of Trip.com offered a great deal of insight into the Chinese mindset when it comes to traveling.

Last but certainly not least, Jay Richards, founder of Imagen Insights, discussed the wishes and expectations of Gen Z, and what companies need to do in order to reach this emerging important cohort.

After the conference, the meetings began.

While the booths might be fewer and the trade show floor may not be as crowded, the people who are here are here to do business. There is a strong air of positive optimism, with the word "recovery" barely being used; instead, most companies are focused on moving ahead, growing, increasing footfall and attracting new customers.

In all, the week has been extremely valuable. Sure, there are still challenges to overcome such as inventory and supply chains, but it's fair to say that virtually every person in Cannes is happy to be doing business again, happy to work with existing and new partners, and ready to grow the business in 2022 and beyond.

For snapshots from Cannes see below:



















