

# The Summit - A Virtual Experience: plans, partners & need to knows



Expecting to provide participants with information to accordingly forecast their plans for 2021, SOTA - A Virtual Experience will feature keynote speakers and panels and discuss leading topics such as innovation, digitalization and consumer adaptation

This morning ASUTIL and IAADFS hosted a press conference in order to reveal more about the scheduled conference sessions and committed exhibitors of the Summit of the Americas - A Virtual Experience, which will be held on April 5 - 9, 2021.

Co-headed by José Luis Donagaray, Secretary General, ASUTIL and Michael Payne, President & CEO, IAADFS, the conference noted that sessions will feature keynote speakers and panels representing suppliers, airports, airlines and cruise lines to discuss leading topics such as innovation, digitalization and consumer adaptation.

According to Payne, the team has initiated the organization process with an early and big push to increase buyer participation. Receiving a strong response, exhibitors booked include Ferrero, Mondelez, Essence Corp, Monarq, Proximo Spirits, Duty Free Global, Zimpex, Spark and LEGO - with more soon to be announced. A primary goal of the virtual experience is to offer suppliers with information to accordingly forecast and execute their plans, strategies and tactics for the year. In connection to providing an economic overview of the situation in Latin America, the event will include the representation of the Brazilian new border stores.

In partnership with FILTR, the user-friendly digital platform will allow operators from all of the Americas to participate and conduct business with suppliers in a direct way. Allowing visitors to tune in or catch up from the comfort of their own home, in a cost-effective way, the experience will be accessible 30 days after the show. During the press conference, the team showed virtual renderings of the Entrance, Exhibition Hall, Knowledge Hub, Engagement Lounge and a series of virtual stands. Although Payne acknowledged that the digital platform is not an ideal setting for the show, he said

that it's a great way to stay in touch and learn more.

“One of the words I hear most from the exhibitors that I've talked with is flexibility. This [platform] gives them the opportunity to do what they want in a unique way and doesn't involve the complications or restrictions of erecting a physical booth,” he added.



During the press conference, representatives of ASUTIL and IAADFS shared virtual renderings of the digital platform and details of the event regarding registration, navigation, accessibility and functionality

Martin Moodie, Founder & CEO, *The Moodie Davitt Report*, was also on the call this morning. Along with his colleagues, Payne shared that Martin's team has been "extraordinarily helpful" in working with ASUTIL and IAADFS to navigate the trusted technology and it "makes sense to go down this road together." Following the Virtual Travel Retail Expo in October, Moodie said that the industry has proof of concept in regards to the digital world and technology software. With most of the retailers, operators, brands, distributors and airports within the Americas duty free and travel retail community having attended the Virtual Expo, participants will be familiar with the presentation and navigation.

Based on former experience, a virtual stand features curated content about a new campaign, promotion or product range in multi-lingual form and provides a number of digital touchpoints. Depending on the scale of the stand, the number of digital touchpoints increases. Similar to the Expo, participants will be able to pre-book meetings or drop-in and communicate on-site via the live chat function. Currently, the team is working to evolve this function to create an integrated solution and a stronger communication pipeline. Although still in the works, the advancement will act as an add-on in order to retain functionality and use of external systems.

Leading up to the Summit of the Americas - A Virtual Experience, association members will benefit from early bird registration via both AUSTIL and IAADFS. Visitor registration will be open until April 5, and exhibitor registration will close approximately four weeks before the first day of the event. Furthermore, each attending exhibitor will be provided with an up-to-date visitor list at the start of January, February and March and a final list on the evening prior to the show. Following the event,

each exhibitor will receive data analytics to determine its ROI.