

The Virtual Travel Retail Expo 2021



The Virtual Travel Retail Expo has a new look for 2021, embracing its digital possibilities more than staying true to a traditional event look as it did last year

Last year was a one of true global upheaval. It's impossible to overstate the disruption to virtually all areas of life, and none more so than that of travel, and thus our industry. Between valid health concerns, laws governing gatherings of people and closed borders, live events were unsurprisingly canceled industry-wide. But despite this — or even because of it — during this crisis it was more important than ever to create a space to meet, conduct whatever business was possible, learn about how others are coping and about what to expect, in addition to simply catching up with colleagues after months in lockdown.

Together with his team, Martin Moodie, one of the most well-respected individuals in the industry, created the solution: The Virtual Travel Retail Expo. Last year Moodie told us that as he realized his own events would have to be canceled, he became convinced that the larger ones soon would be too, and he was proven correct. While he and his team first looked at “webinar-type activities,” they realized these would not help him in their financial plight. They therefore identified the opportunity to create something “groundbreaking.”



Hainan was the one beneficiary to the halt of global travel last year, but will undoubtedly continue strong even after the rest of the world opens back up. With so much possibility, Hainan truly is a place for those in travel retail to consider investing

And that they did. Before long they had created a virtual event that was as close as could be imagined to a live event. Entering the Virtual Expo felt like entering the lobby of an event space. From there, delegates chose one of three places that would feel familiar to anyone who regularly attends conferences and trade shows.

First was the Exhibition Hub, a virtual trade show floor where buyer met seller. Next was the Knowledge Hub, which had a stellar lineup of speakers and thought-provoking dialogues. Finally, the Engagement Lounge featured four platforms to launch, promote and educate about products. Of course there was also a space for networking.

The biggest names in travel retail offered support as Platinum and Diamond Partners; along with the exhibitors and attendees, they helped to make this first virtual event a success.

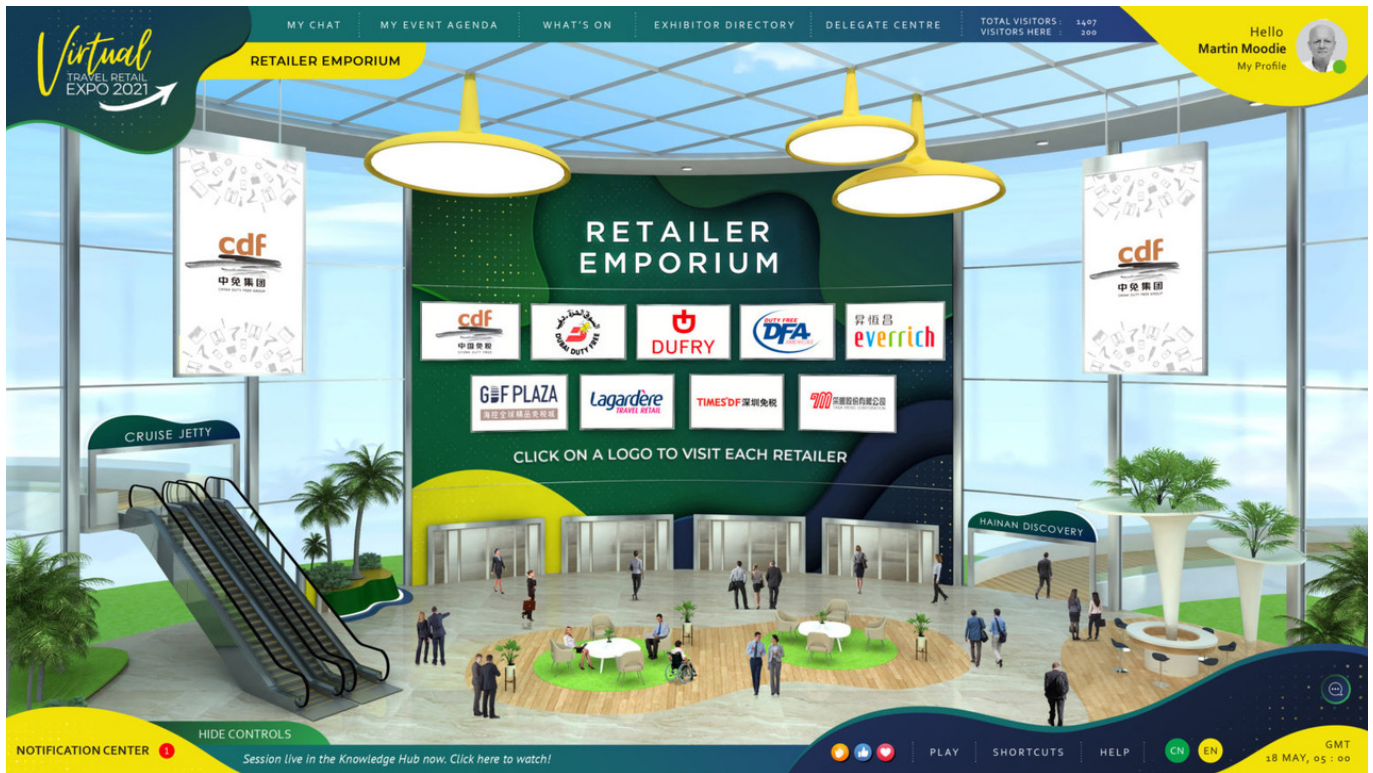


The Knowledge Hub was a popular destination last year; with approximately 75 speakers discussing virtually every relevant aspect of the industry that is sure to also be the case this year

Second annual event

While the announcement that TFWA WE would be once again taking place live in Cannes this year was welcome in a time when we are all crying for some hint of normality, still many people around the world are having difficulty traveling, whether because of border closures, slow rollout of vaccines in their country, health concerns, workplaces that are not yet embracing travel or other reasons. The subsequent support for the Virtual Travel Retail Expo again this year proves that it is serving an important purpose. Again, the event has a starry lineup of the industry's giants as sponsors. Confirmed attendees include all the biggest names in the business.

As with last year, the Knowledge Hub will be a huge draw. At approximately 75 speakers, the list is too long to reproduce, but these speakers include those who head many of the biggest travel retail operators, in addition to airports, concessionaires, consulting companies, retail analytics, travel companies and more.



APAC Dialogue

We are all aware of the increasing importance of the APAC region in travel retail, despite the temporary plunge in travel and thus sales in virtually the entire region with the exception of China.

In light of this importance, the Virtual Travel Retail Expo will host The APAC Dialogue - a partnership between the Asia Pacific Travel Retail Association (APTRA) and The Moodie Davitt Report.

This session will focus on digitisation, diversification and domestic travel retail in China, Australasian recovery and “veracity of industry research.” A highlight of the Expo, this three-segment programme addressing key regional opportunities and issues.

CDFG & The Moodie Davitt Report

In further demonstration of the importance of China as a duty free region, China Duty Free Group (CDFG) and The Moodie Davitt Report formally signed an Exclusive Strategic Cooperation Partnership agreement for the Virtual Travel Retail Expo this year. The CDFG management, buying, branding and merchandising teams will reportedly be “out in full force.” China Duty Free Group has its own dedicated virtual area called CDFG City, where it will showcase its most exciting current and planned projects, and CDFG President Charles Chen will deliver the morning keynote address in the Knowledge Hub on the first day of the Expo.



Hainan Provincial Bureau of International Economic Development (Hainan IEDB) is hosting the Hainan Discovery Zone. Present in the Zone will be multiple retailer exhibitors, Hainan IEDB and Hainan Hinews Media Co, which will showcase from a special suite while producing live coverage

Sustainability Partner

While the topic of sustainability had already been increasing in importance in recent years, the events of 2020 skyrocketed its significance. Companies are creating — and achieving — tangible sustainability goals. The Virtual Travel Retail Expo has announced a Sustainability Partner, Ocean Bottle is pledging to rid the ocean of the equivalent of 500,000 plastic bottles as a direct result of the Expo presence. That’s the equivalent of a hefty 5,000kg of ocean waste. Ocean Bottle aims to help stop ocean plastic pollution at the source and simultaneously improve the lives of millions of people.

We at Global Travel Retailing magazine wish the Moodie-Davitt team, its partners and all delegates the greatest of success, and we look forward to meeting up at the event.