

Exclusive interview: Michael Payne speaks out on details for Summit of the Americas show

By **Hibah Noor** on January, 23 2019 | Associations



Michael Payne, President & CEO of the International Association of Airport Duty Free Stores (IAADFS), has shared details of the 2019 Duty Free & Travel Retail Summit of the Americas, which will be held March 24-27 at a new venue, the [Hyatt Regency Orlando](#), in collaboration with South American duty free association ASUTIL.

Speaking with *Americas Duty Free*, Payne promised a series of “fascinating” executive learning sessions during the event with a top speaker line-up. And, during the wide-ranging interview, he shared an important message for the industry.

On Monday, March 25, the executive learning sessions will open with comments from ASUTIL President Gustavo Fagundes and IAADFS Chairman Erasmo Orillac.

Monday’s panel session will be called “Plotting a Positive Travel Retail Future in An Uncertain World” with Yannick Raynaud, L’Oreal, Humberto Manuel Lira, Philip Morris International, Marshall Farrer, Brown-Forman Beverages Worldwide and Rene Riedi, Dufry Americas.

“The panel sessions should be really fascinating,” said Payne. “People from each product category will talk about the industry, the opportunities, the challenges, how they are looking at the Americas, in a really in-depth exchange. And we’ll have also have an airport operator, Rene Riedi from Dufry. We’ll put this panel on for a solid hour, and let them air their views and answer questions.”

On Tuesday, March 26, Barbara Wold of Barbara Wold International will talk about some of her demographic research in a session called “Meet the Millennials: The Tourists to Change It All”.

This session will also feature Peter Mohn of m1ndset, who will speak on “Duty Free and Travel Retail Shopper Behavior and Expectations of the Different Generations”. He will reveal his research on the shopping behavior of Chinese customers and will include discussions about spending habits in the Caribbean.

On Wednesday, March 27, the subject of infrastructure development will be tackled by Pedro Helibron from Copa Airlines and Boeing (speaker to be confirmed).

More than 100 companies assigned

“I’m feeling very optimistic about the Summit,” enthused Payne. “We haven’t reached the deadline for registration yet. We’re still receiving applications for more exhibit space and meeting rooms. We have well over 100 companies assigned and we have others who are just waiting for assignment.

“I think we’re making really good progress, and I’m interested to see how it all shapes up over the next several weeks or so as we get closer.”

In a change to the event’s format, he said this year’s show would feature a combination of traditional exhibit areas and more private meeting room space.

Registration deadline is at the end of this week, be assured ASUTIL and IAADFS is focused on promoting and working to ensure that the right buyers attend. “We’ll have a lot of follow-up contacts. We have had some good help from some of the media in terms of making sure people are aware of the dates and new locations and the opportunities that the summit offers.

In terms of exhibitors, he said the core companies from last year’s show would be attending again this year.

We have some companies returning, and that’s encouraging, like Pernod Ricard, which is important for us, Monarq Group and Lindt. Pernod Ricard has not been for a couple of years so were delighted to welcome them back, and we are also excited to welcome some new exhibitors.

Perfumes and cosmetics and spirits will be the two biggest categories in terms of exhibition space.

In the perfumes and cosmetics category, L’Oreal and Estee Lauder have confirmed space, alongside with Essence Corporation, EuroItalia and other important companies.

On the spirits contingent we have all the major brands represented.

A lot of positive news

During the interview, Payne was honest about the opportunities and the challenges of organizing this year’s show. “I’m totally optimistic about the region in terms of duty free and travel retail – we’re approaching a US\$14 billion piece of that pie. Every day you read a new story about infrastructure development in some new airport or expanded airport. The number of people traveling is up, so there’s a lot of really positive news going on. I think the economy in certain pockets will be challenging – whether that’s currency exchange rates, or other economic challenges.

Payne said the Summit organizers, Asutil and IAADFS had worked hard to respond to suggestions from attendees and the supplier community changing the venue from the Marriott hotel, providing more meeting rooms in addition to the exhibit floor, and providing executive learning sessions.

One of the challenges, he said: “We’re still pulling against an economic trend that’s not going to change – and that is the consolidation and merging of the industry on the buyer side and the supplier side-that’s the reality.

We’ve got to ensure we give people the opportunity to conduct the business connections they need. Some prefer to show those products in the exhibit areas, and some prefer more private meetings. We will be examining and analysing those trends after the Summit, and react accordingly.

He added: “We just have to make sure we get the right concentration of buyers that people want.

An advocacy-oriented effort

He emphasized that all the changes the organizers had made this year had been driven by the feedback of both IAADFS show attendees and the supplier advisory board.

On the possibility of moving the show to another country, he explained: “There’s nothing from a policy perspective or a geographic perspective that’s stopping us if we want to do that, but if the meeting stays the same size, it’s difficult to find the right spot. There are a number of places you can bring 5-600 people, there are not many that can handle 2,000-plus, and also get the products in and out in an effective way. We analyzed that before we made this switch. Quite a number of suppliers have their exhibit materials and products stored in the Orlando area, or South Florida, so that’s a big consideration for us as well. You don’t want to add any excess costs. We haven’t raised the rates for a while - everybody has asked us not to. All these items are up for discussion, based on what people’s feedback is.”

Finally, Payne sent out a message to the industry on why the show is important. “I want to make sure the message is getting out to people that the tradeshow is not just about the gathering of the industry. This is about the way to fund activities that enhance and support the growth of the industry. All the work we do, ranging from allowances to liquids and gels, tobacco challenges, trying to simplify Customs, regulatory requirements, working with airport counsels in both North and South America, and working with governments on issues that affect duty free, and potential government regulatory restrictions - all that is possible because of revenue we get from this Summit, I think sometimes that gets lost on some people. I don’t think it gets lost on the big decision makers for a lot of these companies. I think they understand that this is what it’s all about - it’s an advocacy-oriented effort.

“The tradeshow is just a vehicle, a mechanism to make sure we’re getting the funding represent the industry, and I would just encourage people to continue to focus on that fact and think about ‘I should go, I need to be there’. The advantages of being there are huge in terms of efficiencies and seeing lots of buyers and suppliers over a three-day period, and we think the executive learning component is really huge, and that’s what they’ve asked us for.

“It’s hard to quantify the value of the networking, the social activities, but the real reason is this is how we are able to represent the industry, which is going to be under continued threats, and these threats are not going to go away.”