

TFWA President speaks out on industry challenges and trade shows

By **Hibah Noor** on November, 25 2019 | Associations



Tax Free World Association President Alain Maingraud at the FDFA convention in Toronto, Canada

Americas Duty Free caught up with Tax Free World Association (TFWA) President Alain Maingraud in snowy Toronto during the Frontier Duty Free Association (FDFA) Convention in November to discuss major industry challenges, sector consolidation and why trade shows matter.

He was speaking in the run-up to TFWA's annual presidential election, which will be held at a Management Committee meeting in Dublin on December 6. The one-year mandate will run until December 2020.

Maingraud said he was still "very honored" to be the current President and "very grateful" for the support of the Board, management committee and also the other stakeholders across the industry.

Speaking about the possibility of re-election as President in a few weeks time, he said: "Of course I would be very pleased to be re-elected but it's up to management committee members to decide."

Maingraud was attending the FDFA Convention for the first time since his election as TFWA President

on a one-year mandate in December 2018. He hosted convention delegates for lunch on November 12, giving his reflections on October's TFWA World Exhibition in Cannes, and the wider tax free industry.

In this interview on the sidelines of the FDFA Convention, Maingreud cited three key challenges faced by the duty free and travel retail industry. The first is data sharing. "As I mentioned in my speech in Cannes [in October], the association is ready to support any initiative that can help fill the gap. We think that this is very important. The second challenge is regulation. If we tackle the first challenge, it will help to tackle the second one because we need to be able to show to the authorities what the industry represents. That's very important, and we work very closely with the other industry associations to try to help tackle the issues the industry is facing in various parts of the world."

The third challenge is sustainability, which he described as a hot topic that affected the entire industry, and TFWA itself is also mindful of its responsibilities in this area. "There are two aspects," he said. "In the long run, we want to be able to help the industry understand how to address this issue, and on a day-to-day basis we should look also at our own organization and try to improve ourselves in many different areas. For instance, we use thousands of plastic badges for industry events, so we need to find ways to limit our impact on the environment."

Turning to the subject of duty free trade shows in general, Maingreud stressed that it was "very important" for people to attend such events. Firstly, they enable industry stakeholders to deepen their relationships, paving the way for future development of their business. Secondly, these events provide the opportunity to meet a number of people in one place, reducing the need to travel, which is not only convenient, but also reduces impact on the environment.

Talking about the need for regional trade shows Maingreud stated: "It's important to have events in the various regions as well as global events because each market is different. Each has different imperatives and objectives."

Asked how he felt about the industry's ongoing retailer consolidation, Maingreud said: "I don't have any opinion on that - TFWA should continue to act, to serve and to protect the industry, whatever shape or form it takes. Consolidation happens everywhere in every industry, so it's a fact of life. We have to live with that and we have to make sure that we act to support the industry as a whole. But it's important also not to forget the smaller players because they can bring innovation, novelty and fresh-thinking to the industry."