

Irish Minister joins leading industry representatives celebrating DFWC Academy

By **Jas Ryat** on November, 21 2019 | Industry News



From left: Mr. Derek Hughes, Managing Director, Institute of International Retail, Mr. John Rimmer, Managing Director, TFWA, Mr. Frank O'Connell, Outgoing President, DFWC, Ms. Sarah Branquinho, President, DFWC, Mr. Vincent Harrison, Managing Director, Dublin Airport

An impressive networking event took place at Dublin Airport on Monday, November 20, celebrating the creation of the Duty Free World Council (DFWC) Academy and the enrolment of the initial student cohort. The Minister of State for Higher Education, Ms. Mary Mitchell O'Connor, represented the Irish Government and spoke of the priority placed by the Government on further education. The Minister stated she was proud that the DFWC had decided to partner with an Irish company, The Institute of International Retail (IIR), in the creation and management of the global academy. She noted that it was also fitting given that the duty free industry has its origins in Ireland.

The ARI hosted event was attended by duty free retailers and brand owners, as well as leading figures in the world of education. Mr. Martin Carpenter, General Manager of ARI Ireland, comments: "Duty Free originated here in Ireland back in 1947 so it is fitting that another first for the industry should be

held here. As a member of the Academy Advisory Group, ARI have worked alongside other retailers and brands on the development of this course. Our team members that have been involved have responded very positively. Constantly raising standards is one of our main priorities and this course will provide our team with additional tools to do so.”

Ms. Sarah Branquinho, recently elected President of the DFWC, spoke of the role of the Council as the voice of the duty free & travel retail industry on the world stage and the important advocacy role it plays on behalf of the industry. She went on to highlight the emphasis the DFWC places on raising standards in the industry and the key role the Academy will have in fulfilling this objective. She acknowledged the leading role Mr. Frank O’Connell, the outgoing President, played in establishing the Academy and welcomed his commitment to continuing to guide the Academy’s development. She also noted the hard work done by the IIR in executing the course and the input of various research and retail experts, many of whom were present, for their contribution to producing a world class certificate course.

Mr. Derek Hughes introduced the Institute for International Retail (IIR), an expert in retail and training. He spoke of his pride in the achievements of the Academy to date and gave details of the Professional Certificate course, which launched at the end of September. He is delighted by the positive industry response, with 22 companies having registered students to date.

This course is the first of its kind and is accredited by the Continuing Professional Development Standards Office. All graduates of the Academy will receive a qualification jointly awarded by the DFWC and IIR and accredited by CPD Standards Office.

Mr. John Rimmer, Managing Director of TFWA, the largest trade association in duty free & travel retail, spoke next and focused on the specific challenges retailers face in a travel environment, from the complexity of understanding the needs of a very diverse customer base, to the challenges of operating in one of the most highly regulated retail markets in the world. “[TFWA is an enthusiastic supporter of the Academy because we believe it will complement and enhance the training programs that brands, retailers and airports already undertake and it will help our industry to harness the human skills that are crucial in creating satisfied customers,]” he says.

Rimmer thanked those companies that are part of the DFWCA Academic Advisory Group that has helped IIR shape the content of the courses, notably Brown-Forman, Dufry, Lagardère Travel Retail, L’Oréal, Mondelez, Dubai Duty Free and ARI. He concluded by citing the example of one of the leading spirits suppliers, Brown-Forman, who will in future induct its entire travel retail staff in the Academy as a very positive indication of its relevance for brands.