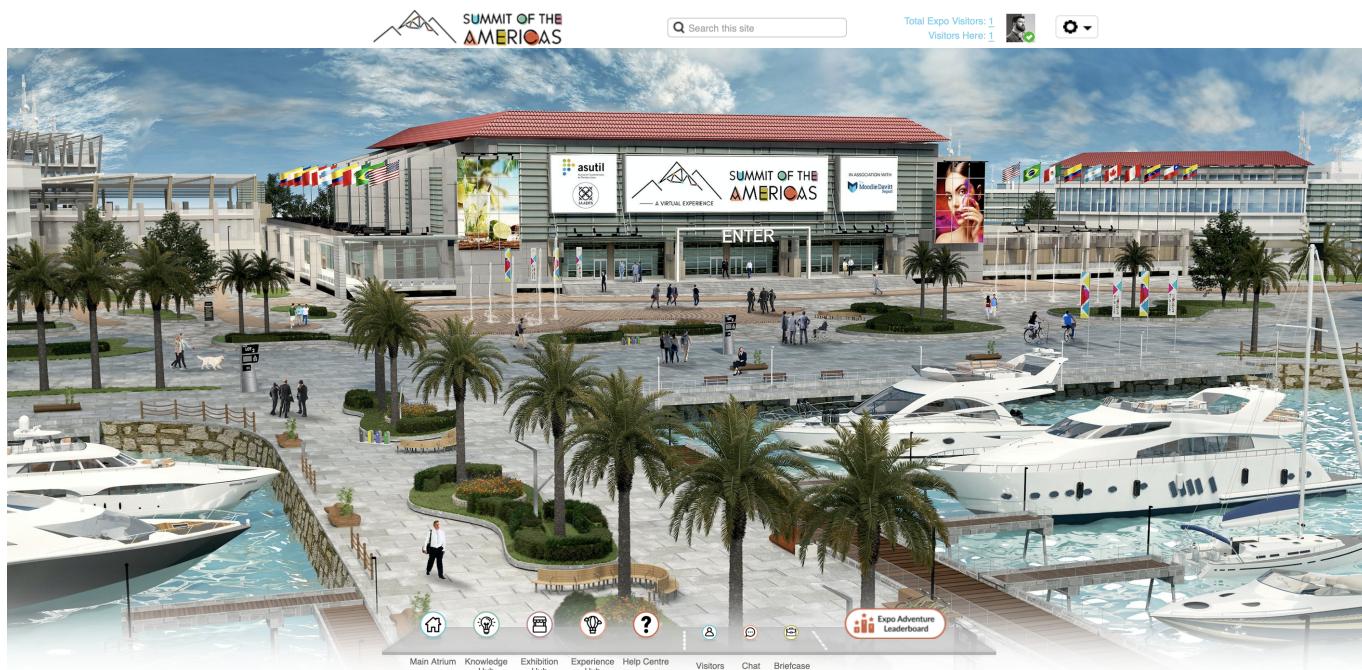


FILTR.QINGWA discusses digital innovation & Summit 2021



Taking place this week, Summit of the Americas – A Virtual Experience shows FILTR.QINGWA continuing to flex its skillsets to shape the future of travel retail

With the launch of the 2021 Summit of the Americas – A Virtual Experience, *Americas Duty Free* reached out to the team at FILTR.QINGWA for an update. As the event's exclusive Virtual Stand and Experience Partner, the integrated retail marketing & design agency is continuing to flex its internal skillsets in design, communication and digital to help shape the future of travel retail.

Looking back on the inaugural Virtual Travel Retail Expo, Alex Cook, Managing Partner, FILTR.QINGWA, says that the trade show was uncharted territory for all stakeholders —exhibitors, speakers, visitors, press and event organizers. The agency worked hand-in-hand with *The Moodie Davitt Report*, the originators and owners of the concept, to overcome a number of technical, communication and “newness adoption” challenges.



During an interview with *Americas Duty Free*, Alex Cook at FILTR.QINGWA says that the upcoming digital trade show will be a success in its own right

Elaborating on FILTR.QINGWA's desire to create an immersive experience and deliver the level of premium storytelling that is a hallmark of travel retail, Cook notes that the team is made up of instinctual storytellers with an innate understanding of the customer or "user" journey.

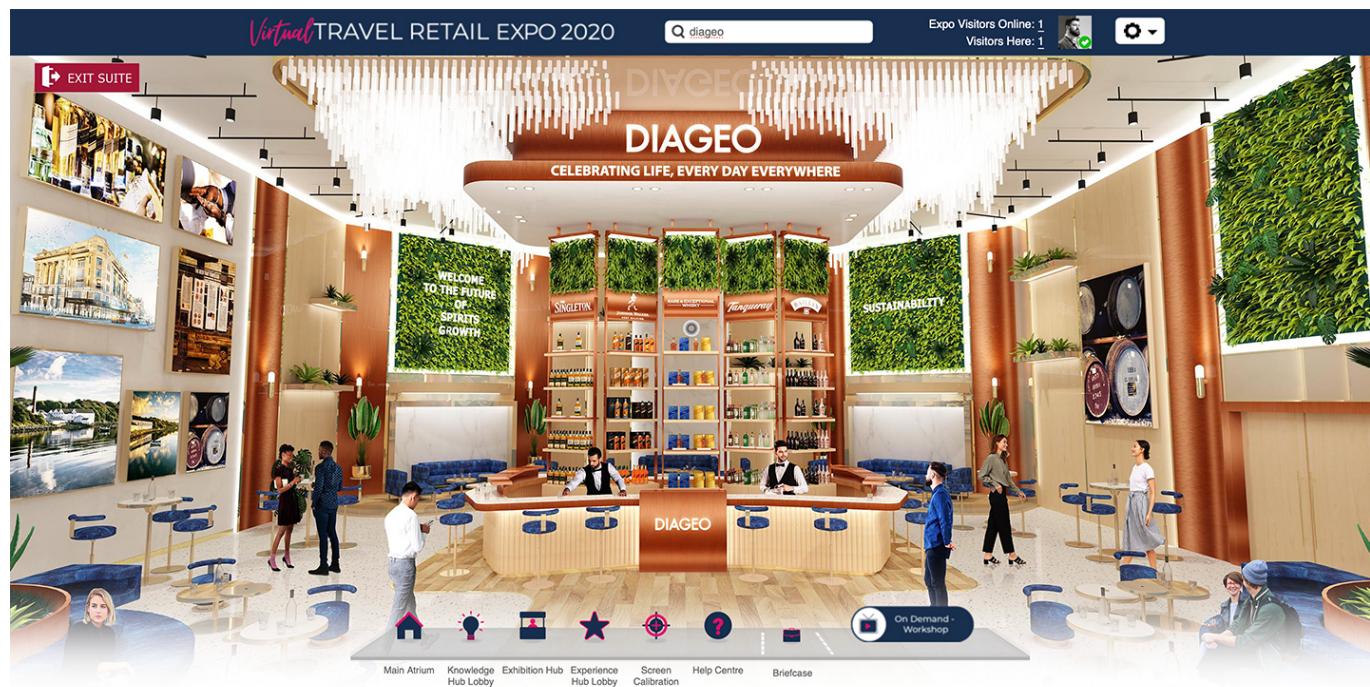
"Over months of experimenting, integrating different systems, as well as marked dedication from our account managers and designers to really capture the unique brand stories of our exhibitors in their stand design, we were able to produce a best-in-class virtual event. This unique approach caught the attention of the technology and IT world, and we were proud to be recognized by *APAC CIO Outlook* as a Top 20 Enterprise Start-up 2020," shares Cook.

Although FILTR.QINGWA created a bespoke platform for the expo, Cook points out that while collaborating with each individual exhibitor on the creative and technical set-up of their virtual stand, the team worked with the same types of companies as it does day-in, day-out, helping them to achieve similar design and communication goals, simply through a digital medium.

"This step into the unknown placed a large amount of responsibility on FILTR.QINGWA to help ensure the event was a success. Travel retail was on its knees last summer and we felt a strong global virtual event would really support its recovery. Thankfully, the expo was embraced by hundreds of companies and thousands of executives around the world and it proved a big success," he comments.



The inaugural Virtual Travel Retail Expo attracted over 4,370 unique visitors who made more than 20,000 visits to the platform; 124 exhibition stands received 183,600+ impressions and generated 179,700+ clicks



Alex is confident FILTR.QINGWA's work on Summit of the Americas will benefit from the learnings of the Virtual Travel Retail Expo and the Summit will be a success in its own right.

For a closer look at the agency, its innovative digital portfolio and the upcoming show, read the following Q&A with Alex Cook.

Duty Free & Travel Retailing Magazine: Considering the current state of the travel retail channel and change in consumer behavior due to COVID-19, how does FILTR.QINGWA help brands to reach target audience(s), build brand loyalty and allow consumers to experience a seamless experience? Elaborate on the use of KOL ambassadors.

Alex Cook: The COVID-19 situation has placed an emphasis on digital channels for consumer engagement. KOL ambassadors are one part of this ecosystem. Our role is to help brands deliver seamless experiences — end-to-end, online to offline — that reach consumers, deliver compelling content and ultimately drive purchase. With so many established and emerging technologies on the market, this can be extremely challenging for brands to stay on top of, but it's something we feel well placed to help them navigate.

DF&TR: Having recently merged with Qingwa Group, how will the integrated marketing, design and communications agency refine its unique value proposition to enhance its offering?

AC: FILTR.QINGWA is a compelling combination and sees the fusion of a lot of talented people in all departments, across four operations — Singapore, Hong Kong, London and Paris.

We're not only building our digital capabilities, but also looking at how our range of services can be more closely integrated. We can now offer end-to-end solutions for clients, spanning ideation and creative concepts all the way through to design, build and implementation, and with our digital communication capabilities we're also in the position of now being able to help brands drive engagement and footfall among consumers.

DF&TR: With the launch of Summit of the Americas - A Virtual Experience, what lessons from the last year will FILTR.QINGWA apply to improve the overall experience? Post-COVID-19, what do you think the physical-virtual movement will look like?

AC: With several virtual events now under our belts and having gained valuable feedback from participants, we have cut away unnecessary elements, refined the user journey and doubled down on the features that exhibitors and visitors drew the most value from to stimulate even higher levels of engagement and interaction.

These virtual events are neither intended to be a one-off "quick fix" nor a replacement for existing industry events, but a long-term complement to support travel retail stakeholders as we navigate a much-changed landscape. We're also excited at the potential for smaller events to be conducted virtually; the virtual communities we bring together could be particular to a single brand, for example.