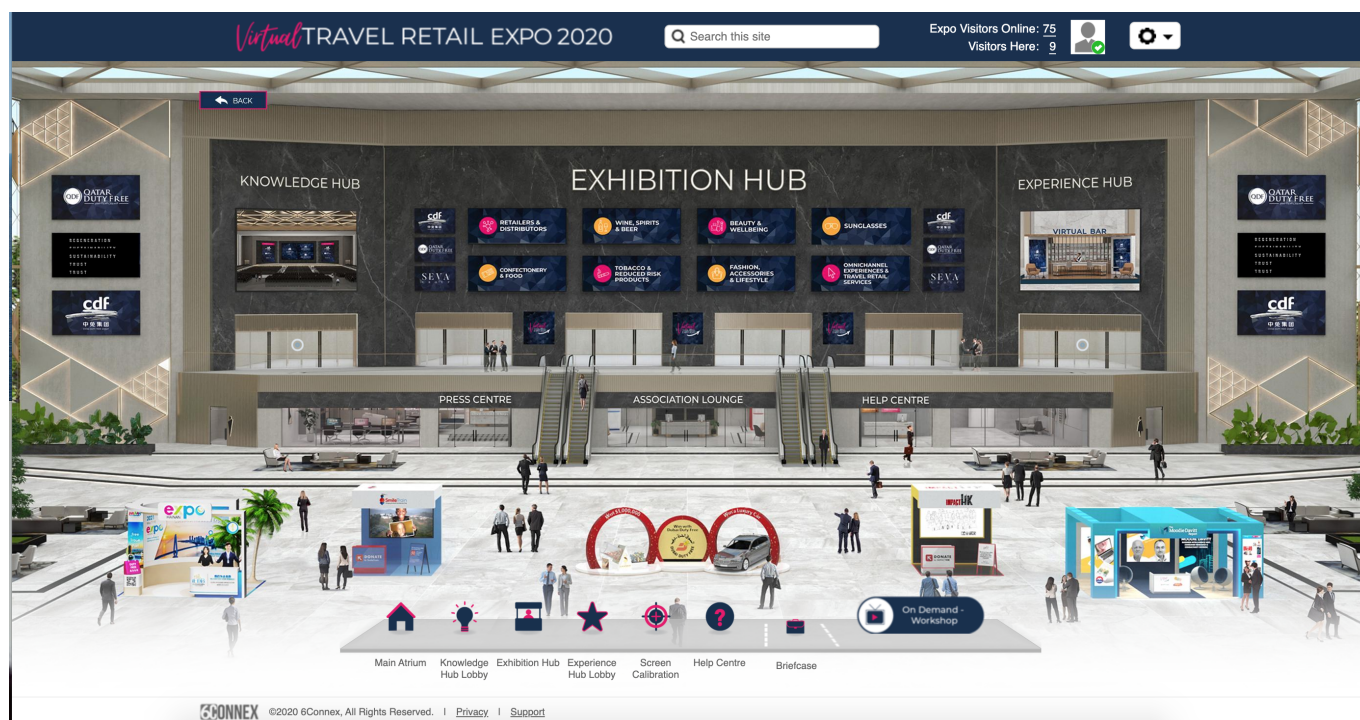
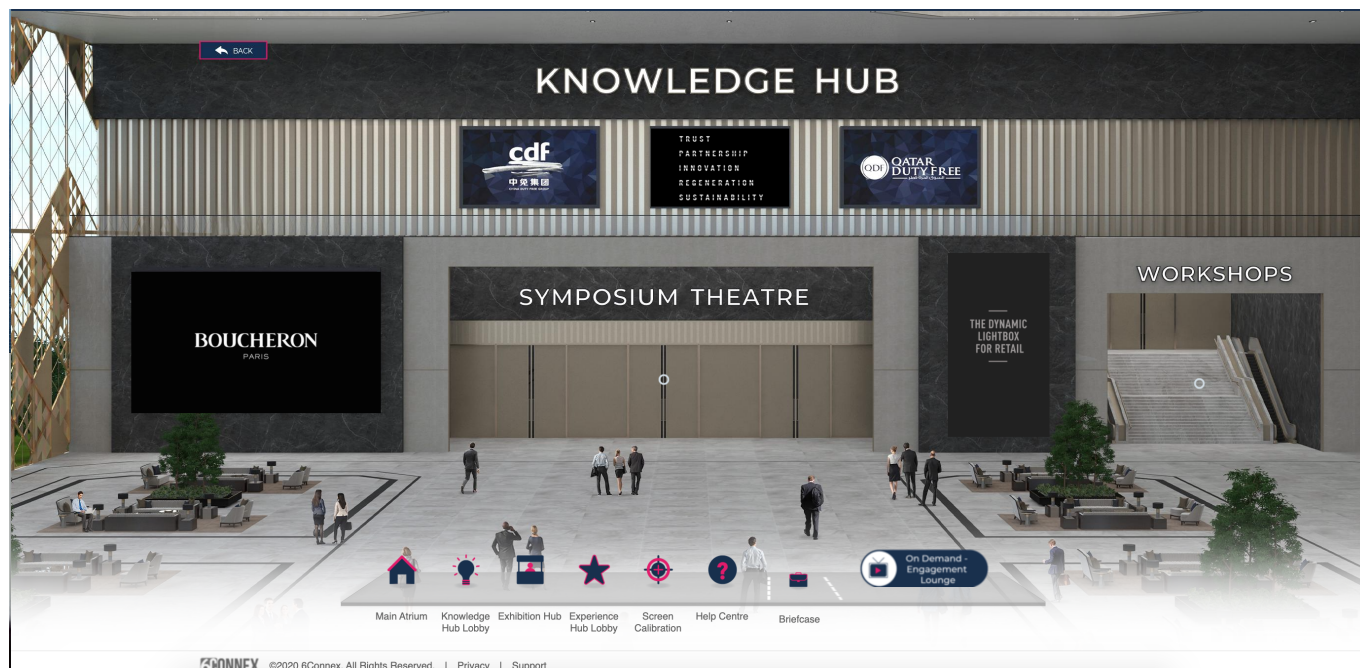


Virtual Travel Retail Expo hailed by all



Navigation from the Virtual Main Atrium was simple and user friendly

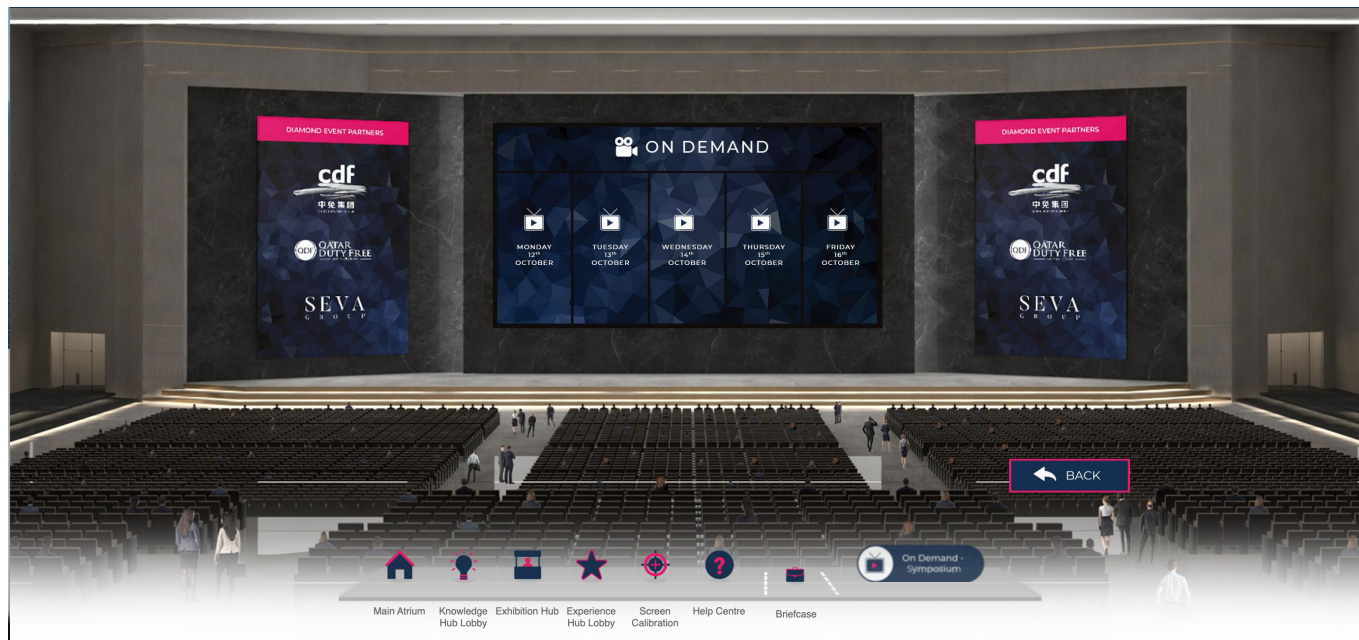


The Knowledge Hub offered a series of informative keynotes and presentations every day, still available for those who may have been too busy to listen during the week

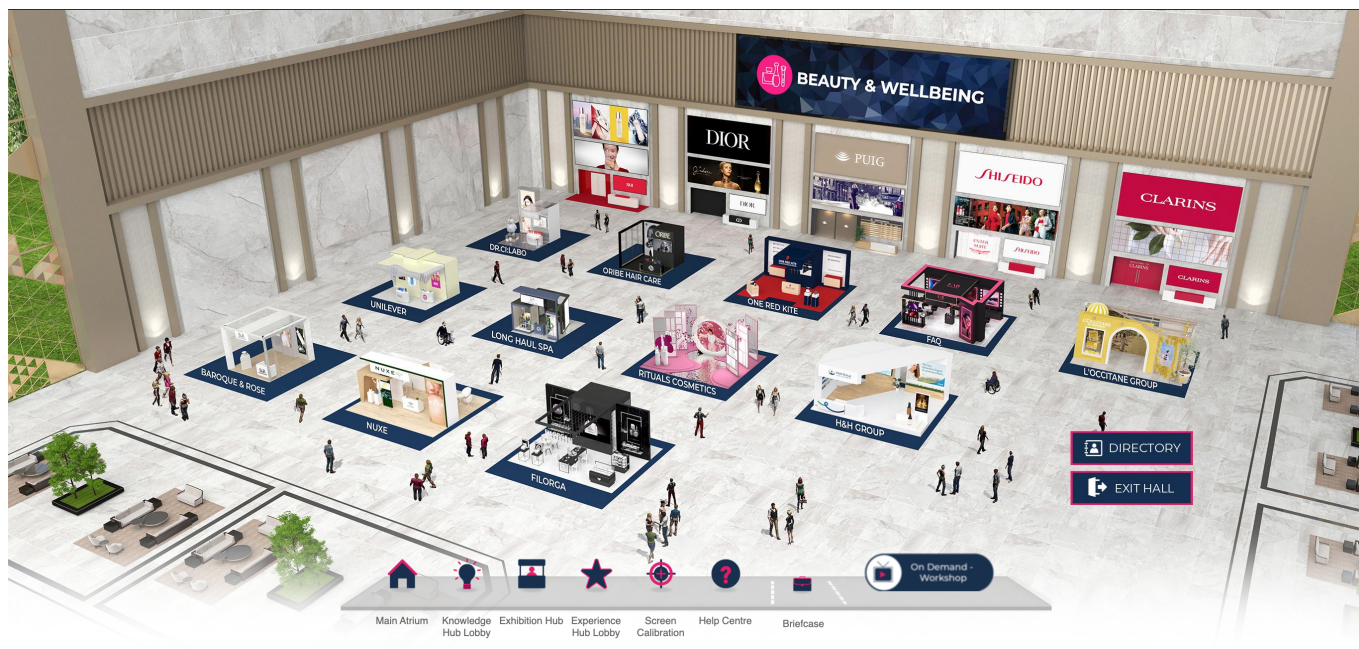
Friday marked the end of a successful week at the inaugural Moodie Davitt Virtual Travel Retail Expo. Given the difficulties faced by our industry this year, it was especially important to have a time and space where we could come together, meet, conduct business, and feel the camaraderie that comes from engaging with familiar business associates. While nothing can replace being physically in the same space as we would have been in Cannes, with the cancellation of all live events the Virtual Travel Retail Expo offered an experience as close as could be imagined.

The virtual event progressed in much the same way as the live event might have, with keynote speakers, information sessions, business meetings, product launches and even samplings, all made simple to access by the superior user-friendly design.

We at *Duty Free & Travel Retailing* magazines would like to thank *The Moodie Davitt Report* for inviting us to the inaugural Virtual Travel Retail Expo. We are sure all will agree this was a great event that was well produced, easy to navigate and easy to understand.



Superior design made the Virtual Travel Retail Expo feel as close as possible to a live event



Laid out visually like a live expo, the Exhibition Hall made finding your appointment extremely easy, and without the sore feet by the end of the day

Speakers and workshops on demand

Each day at the Expo brought a wealth of information in the Knowledge Hub. While in any year keynote speakers are engaging and thought provoking, this year it is especially important to hear how

others are managing the crisis. Speakers included some of the most experienced and knowledgeable individuals in travel retail, discussing not only getting through this difficult time but using this time of change to be in a better position when travel returns.

All eyes are on China and especially Hainan as it seems to have weathered the storm and turned the corner, at least in terms of domestic travel. The week began with Martin Moodie's interview with Charles Chen, President, China Duty Free Group, on this very subject.

But his was far from the only voice we heard; stakeholders as diverse as Sunil Tuli, President, APTRA & Group Chief Executive, King Power Group (Hong Kong), speaking on how crisis can bring about positive change; discussions of sustainability with brands JTI, L'Occitane and Rituals; to sales strategies with Heidi Van Roon, Founder & President, SPARK Group of Companies and many, many more.

One of the advantages of these speaking events being held in the virtual realm is that we can access them on our own time, even after the Expo itself has finished.

A rallying time

As Mohit Lal, CEO GTR for Pernod Ricard, put it: "It's been an extremely good experience. The Cannes event is an important event for us to meet key customers in a setting as a group. You don't get that opportunity all the time. But everyone is beginning to participate in the Expo, so it's become a meeting ground for people. It's very busy just like Cannes would have been in terms of meeting with customers, meeting with press, other things that we normally do at Cannes. In a way the rhythm of meetings and conversations in partnerships with different constituents of the travel retail ecosystem - this has become a rallying time because everyone is involved in the expo."

New top retailer in the making?

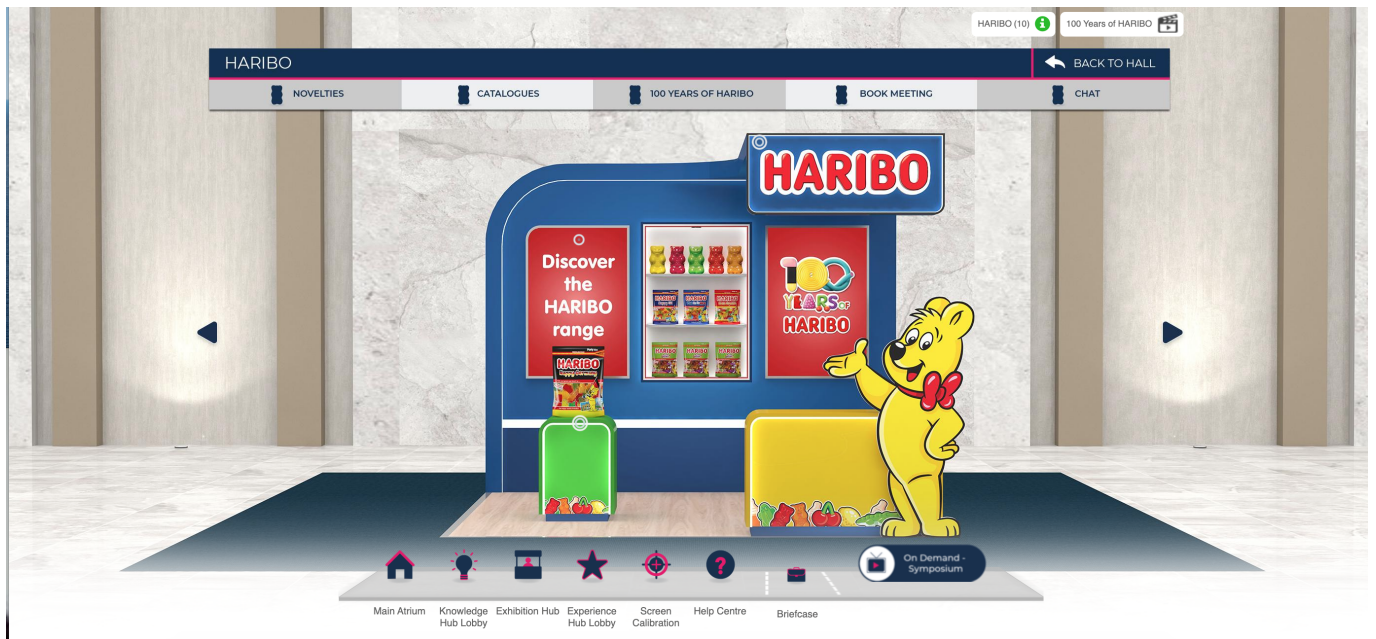
While SEVA Group is a well-known entity in travel retail, seeing the company as a Diamond Partner was a bit of a surprise. The reason became clearer when the company - already strong in distribution and as a brand owner and having opened a store in 2018 - used this virtual event as an opportunity to announce its plan to become a top-20 retailer within five years. The company also had strong presence at the Expo with its "Beyond Resilience" workshop.

Sampling and booths

Despite the limitations brought about by an inability to be physically present in each other's company to meet and sample, the Virtual Travel Retail Expo did an excellent job of providing a way for brands to present new products through its Engagement Lounge, and the stands in the virtual exhibition hall were simple to find. The virtual aspect of the event meant brands could present their offerings and marketing in an inviting and engaging manner, accessible with a click.



Mazaya Shisha “seduced our senses” with a stimulating video that allowed us to nearly taste the tobacco flavors through our screens with the company’s innovative approach to flavous and flavor combinations



Virtual booths allowed for brand-specific design with streaming and downloadable videos and PDFs, such as Haribo’s “100 Years of Haribo” logo evolution video



Habanos SA brought us to Cuba to experience the music and atmosphere of Trinidad for its new Trinidad Robustos Extra

Asian influence

Asia is in a unique position as a region for a number of reasons – as the region with the most growth and highest population, as the top region for duty free sales and as the region where travel recovery has already begun, especially for domestic travel in China. Hainan is an exciting place for this and other reasons, and thus the talk “A golden invitation to invest in Hainan,” by Han Shengjian, Director General, Hainan Provincial Bureau of International Economic Development (Hainan IEDB), was especially interesting and relevant.

This was far from the only Asia-focused speaking event. Others, such as Decoding the Post COVID International Air travel in China and India also offered great insight.

Closing off the week

The week closed on an exciting note as Qatar Duty Free Vice President of Operations Thabet Muslah joined Martin Moodie and Dermot Davitt to announce the winners of the QDF Factor competition. Making the note even more exciting was that two winners were announced.

The Virtual Expo will remain open for 30 days following the close of the event; while the engagement will end, the booth assets will still be available, as will the workshops, speaking events and the Experience Hub, which allowed brands to hold virtual tasting and beauty events.