

IAADFS: Americas Summit funds vital advocacy work

Michael Payne, President & CEO of IAADFS tells *TRBusiness*, that even though he believes IAADFS and ASUTIL have more than adequately responded to various requests from the supplier community - and from visitors to the inaugural Summit of the Americas show which took place last year - in its improvements to this years Summit (*closing today*), both associations remain open to change up the format once again next year.



Payne was also keen to highlight the importance of this tradeshow to both associations' advocacy work and how without it, a vital revenue stream would be eliminated, making it harder for IAADFS and ASUTIL to fight for the industry against very real threats.

Speaking to Payne ahead of **this week's Summit** (24-27 March), he explained how both trade associations had made some crucial changes to the programme and format of the event - as well as moving the show to the Hyatt Regency in Orlando from the Marriott World Center - but admitted that they were still experimenting with new ideas.

"So we're experimenting with a few new ideas (*this year*). If people don't like it and want it changed, we'll change it. But I think we're moving in the right direction with this...look it's a new venue so there's some guess work about how some of it's going to flow exactly. But we feel pretty good about it.

"I think in terms of what we've presented to people is in line with what everyone has asked for in surveys and feedback."



Gustavo Fagundes, CEO, Dufry Brazil & Bolivia and President, ASUTIL, addressing delegates on Monday mornings learning session at the second Summit of the Americas event.

LATAM HEADWINDS

Although the final visitor numbers for **this year's Summit of the Americas** (*the event closes today*) have not yet been issued, Payne did say that both IAADFS and ASUTIL expect a dip in attendance from South American visitors. "We're pushing a little against the headwinds from the South American economy, which is down and I suspect we are going to feel that."

"The industry has had a particularly challenging year in Argentina along with Venezuela, but we expect more buyers from Peru and Ecuador and others. My point was simply that when the economy is challenging, as it seems to be, I just think we're going to feel it."

"Having said that I know there's a number of folks from the Brazilian border signing up, so I think we may pick up some of that border business...some of them are new and planning to open up in the next month or so."

Payne was keen to praise the **high standard of the learning sessions** hosted on each morning of the exhibition, citing a 'really strong program'. "I think that's going to benefit us and a lot of people have been asking for that. We started doing the education sessions about 4-5 years ago, but these have really evolved since ASUTIL has been involved."

FIGHTING FOR THE INDUSTRYS RIGHTS

Payne was also keen to point out that this event allows IAADFS to perform vital advocacy work on behalf of the duty free and travel retail industry across the Americas.

IAADFS: Americas Summit funds vital advocacy work

“For us, this event is a revenue stream which funds our advocacy work on behalf of the industry and I’ll just keep saying it until people get it.

“This is the only way we can deal with raising allowances for duty free travellers; STEBS liquids and gels; to stop them from preventing the sale of tobacco and other products in our stores; trying to deal with labelling issues etc.

“The show enables us to do that, so it really is important and even with industry consolidation – maybe you have fewer companies, but more delegates from those companies – the end result is still the same from our perspective.

“You’ve got to have an association in some way representing the industry as opposed to a single company just trying to do it. It just doesn’t work. So from that angle this is really an important activity for everybody.

“A lot of people understand that, but plenty don’t and to them it’s just a tradeshow, but for us it’s the means to an end.

“This is not just about a tradeshow, but a much larger industry presence and impact and recognition. Look, it’s all going to change for us if we are not careful...”

TRBusiness will offer its final summary of the event in the April issue of the magazine



This years Summit of the Americas is taking place at the Hyatt Regency Orlando.