



In its fourth year, the Home Improvement eRetailer Summit lived up to its promise for retailers and suppliers

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 19, 2019

Contact: Sonya Ruff Jarvis, 203-295-3385

sruffjarvis@eretailersummit.com

John Bongiovanni didn't know what to expect as a first-time attendee at the Home Improvement eRetailer Summit, held earlier this month in Chicago. As it turned out, Bongiovanni, president of Pittsburgh-based Bon Tool, a manufacturer of construction hand tools, came away pleasantly surprised.

"I thought that at best-case scenario, I would be able to bump into some important contacts," he recalled. "But I found much more than that. The informational sessions were engaging and insightful, and the one-on-one meetings were tailored to give us the exact points of contacts we were hoping for, all while in a dedicated time allotment."

The Summit, in its fourth year, continued its proven track record of delivering on its objectives to provide its attendees, participants, and sponsors with robust networking opportunities, top-flight content, and curated one-on-one sessions between dealers and suppliers.

There were 104 of these 15-minute one-on-ones scheduled at this year's Summit. These meetings were on top of a full agenda of presentations and panel discussions on such topics as the utility of big data, fulfillment and delivery, and working with influencers to create authentic content.

"The summit was far beyond my expectations, especially being new to this industry," said Jay Patel, Senior Director, Project Management with Zoro, the online retailer of home-

improvement, business and property management products. “Having an opportunity to meet with suppliers in an intimate setting and hearing their challenges and wins, helped me create a framework around the Home Improvement/MRO space.”

Jimmy Barber, senior director of ecommerce for OneStone, which provides cross-platform brand management, agreed that the Summit provided “true value,” from both hearing and understanding the retailers’ point of view on numerous issues, as well as learning how other brands are leaning into ecommerce to win big in their market. “Conversations were genuine, attendees were interested in getting to know you, and you walked away with tangible tasks and contacts to adapt your business for success.”

Barber and Scott Sinclair, OneStone’s director of managed services, offered attendees strategies for converting Amazon customers to their online platforms. Involvement of tech companies in this year’s Summit was one of its big differentiators, said Sonya Ruff Jarvis, the Summit’s founder. “They brought great energy to the event. And our content this year was off the charts.” Ruff Jarvis added that keeping the gathering intimate and flexible remains one of the Summit’s singular strengths.

The Summit delivered a wealth of market data, some of it provided by Leen Nsouli, an industry analyst with The NPD Group, who pointed out that ecommerce continues to grow at a 10-plus percent annual clip, with major retailers like Amazon, Walmart, Target, and now Home Depot driving demand.

Population changes are favorable for selling home improvement products online, with at least one-fifth of all home-improvement shoppers making purchases through omnichannels of retail. And with private-label brands surging, expect more private-label ecommerce activity going forward.

David Weiss, of McMillan Doolittle, advised the audience that to succeed at ecommerce, they must provide value, convenience, and engagement, and perform at least one of these exceptionally well. “Consumers are in control,” he said, so in-store and online retail must be optimized to the consumer experience.

That experience is becoming more personalized through such technological advances as voice commerce and image recognition, said Laura Heller, a retail expert and contributor to *Forbes* magazine.

“The highlights for me were the NPD presentation of their research on the industry and the one-on-one meetings with the e-retailers,” said Stephen Swanson, Bon Tool’s director of strategy and corporate development. “But all of the educational sessions gave me something of value to take away. This was my first time attending this conference. It was educational, productive, and fun. It was big enough to be meaningful and small enough to be intimate.”

William Fanshawe, partner and manager with Vesta eCommerce Ltd., thought that the Summit “was not only a great place to learn, but a great place to make connections that, from afar, would be very, very hard to make without an event like this.”

The Home Improvement eRetailer Summit will be celebrating its fifth year in 2020. Please mark your calendar for September 30 – October 2. It will be back in Chicago, IL.

About the Home Improvement eRetailer Summit

The Home Improvement eRetailer Summit is the only face-to-face North American event that focuses on home improvement ecommerce through networking, education, and one-to-one meetings. It is designed for all types of retailers, manufacturers, distributors and industry professionals who are interested in gaining intelligence and insights on how to optimize the internet as a distribution channel to sell more home improvement products. The Summit is owned and operated by the JC Event Group.

www.etailersummit.com