



Looking beyond the pandemic, the Summit's agenda focuses on future opportunities for online retailing

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The spread of the coronavirus has had a debilitating effect on brick-and-mortar retail sales in the U.S. that are expected to decline by 10.5% this year. The silver lining has been ecommerce, which is projected to rise by 18% in 2020 and account for 14.5% of total retail sales, according to emarketer.com.

But what's next? What will retailing look like post-pandemic? What portion of consumer spending will revert to physical stores? And what are the growth opportunities for ecommerce?

The Home Improvement eRetailer Summit, scheduled for next March 7-9 at the Aloft Chicago Downtown River North hotel, has designed its agenda with an eye toward providing insight into future market conditions and tools to help dealers plan for and respond to those conditions proactively.

"The Summit has always strived to keep its attendees ahead of the curve, and we believe our upcoming agenda will again meet the high bar we've set," says Sonya Ruff Jarvis, the Summit's Founder.

Ruff Jarvis and members of the Summit's Advisory Council will kick off the event with opening remarks and a preview of the day's speakers and topics. In helping to craft the agenda, the Council's members emphasized that the event build in time for questions and social interaction. The Summit, unlike many other industry events, is less formal, participatory, and more in the moment.

Council member Mike Hargrave, senior merchant at the discount appliance retailer Goedeker's, thinks the Summit's scale—it limits attendees to under 100 people—is what sets it apart and creates this environment. "Presentations are welcoming and interactive; you're not in the back of a giant auditorium [just] listening."

The topics on the agenda include:

- An analytical perspective, from NPD Group, of the home improvement ecommerce marketplace;
- A deeper dive into how top housewares retailers took advantage of the pandemic to capture more of their customers' online transactions;
- A session that shows online retailers what they can learn from Amazon in terms of branding, distribution fulfillment, and consumer fraud protection.

The Summit has also earmarked a session that identifies the five top retail tech trends, and predicts which are likely to be temporary and which will endure.

Supply-chain management is a pillar in any successful ecommerce strategy. To that end, the Summit will devote two sessions to this topic: one that shares best practices for seamless delivery, and the other that focuses on leveraging technology to alleviate delivery pinch points. Each session will include a Q&A discussion.

Later in the day, the Advisory Council members will retake the stage to share what he or she has learned from the pandemic, and how those lessons have helped move their businesses forward.

During the day, there will be ample opportunities for attendees and sponsors to network. "We believe our Agenda will stimulate a lot of discussion during the Q&As and networking periods," says Ruff Jarvis.

For more information about the Summit, contact Sonya Ruff Jarvis at 203-295-3385 or sruffjarvis@eretailersummit.com

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 a minority and woman-owned small business.