



Home Improvement eRetailer Summit goes virtual for 2021

*The two-day event, now in its fifth year,
helps keep the industry connected during trying times*

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The upcoming Home Improvement eRetailer Summit will be conducted as a virtual event over two days in March, and for the first time will be open to all retailers.

The decision to hold the Summit online, instead of as a physical event, was made to protect attendees and speakers at a time when the coronavirus pandemic has yet to be tamed, which makes travel and lodging more problematic. Suspending the event entirely, though, would have left a void in the marketplace at a time when ecommerce is what's keeping most retailers alive.

From July to September 2020 (the latest period for which data were available), consumers spent \$199.44 billion online with U.S. retailers, up 37.1% from the same quarter the prior year, according to Commerce Department estimates. That meant nearly \$1 in every \$5 spent came from orders placed online during last year's third quarter. When the Commerce Department publishes its fourth quarter 2020 estimates next month, the numbers are highly likely to show ecommerce capturing a sizable share of consumers' spending, especially for Christmas purchases.

It is imperative that retailers and suppliers stay on top of the latest ecommerce market trends. And in the spirit of retailers' adaptability to a health crisis that has spurred this ecommerce juggernaut, the Summit is shifting gears to meet the market's needs.

"Over its five years, the Summit has become an essential venue for information and sharing ideas," says Sonya Ruff Jarvis, the Summit's founder. "We felt an obligation to sustain the

event, and this year our delivery platform will be the Internet, which has been so many retailers' and suppliers' lifelines during the pandemic.”

Curt Vitale, account manager with Firefly Buys, one of the Summit's Advisory Board members, sees value in keeping the event alive virtually this year. “The need to continue interacting, learning and growing our businesses remains during this unusual period,” he states. “Until we can resume customary conventions, conferences and trade shows, the option to participate virtually is the avenue for remaining engaged. I look forward to seeing you, just a screen away, at the virtual Home Improvement eRetailer Summit this spring.”

Scott Sinclair, Senior Director of Ecommerce at OneStone, observes that in light of a past year that has been filled with new challenges resulting in updated processes and increased expectations, “it is more important than ever for us to share ideas, strategies, and insights. The virtual Home Improvement eRetailer Summit is the perfect environment to do just that.”

Moving online also opens the Summit to independent hardware retailers and lumber building material dealers. Previously, the conference limited its attendees invited to the physical event to facilitate the highest-level of networking and face-to-face relationship building.

The virtual Summit divides into two parts:

- On March 16, the conference section kicks off with a data-informed view of the home-improvement ecommerce channel, pre-pandemic and now.

This session will be followed by a presentation from executives of ONESTONE (which is also sponsoring the Summit) that explores how ecommerce behemoth Amazon has pivoted its business during the pandemic, and how brands and manufacturers can win at fulfillment. This session will also provide best practices on counterfeit protection.

Another conference highlight is a two-part panel discussion, moderated by retailers, on product distribution that will share ideas about supply, demand, and volume that can help lead to seamless delivery to end users. Part II of this session will focus more specifically on how distributors and digital-savvy retailers can work together to streamline their processes to alleviate pinch points that hinder moving products quicker.

The first day concludes with each of the Summit's Advisory Council members—Elizabeth Ragone of BOSCOV's; Mike Hargrave of Goedeker's; Asa Farquhar of Spreetail; Brian Fricano of Sustainable Supply; Jay Patel of Zoro.com; and Vitale of Firefly Buys—sharing experiences during the pandemic and what each has learned to improve his or her business. Michael McLarney, the publisher of HARDLINES in Canada, will moderate this session.

The conference part of the Summit will be streamed to registered participants. Companies that register three or more of their employees receive a discounted registration rate.

The Summit's second day, March 17, will sustain the event's popular and integral networking opportunities. Manufacturers can schedule virtual one-on-one meetings with selected retailers and third-party fulfillment companies.

The registration fee structure for manufacturers is tiered to encourage greater participation. There is an ala carte rate for manufacturers that just want to attend the conference or have access to as many as three one-on-one meetings during the second day. Manufacturers that choose to participate both days receive a discounted rate that gives two company representatives access to up to six meetings with retailers and third party fulfillment companies.

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.

www.eretailersummit.com