

2017 Summit Recap Call
September 20, 2017
1:00 pm EDT

Fred Volcansek: First of all, on behalf of all of us at SelectUSA, say thank you for taking the time today to be with us. We are very excited about the prospects for 2018. We certainly hope that you enjoyed the 2017 SelectUSA Investment Summit. It was a great success thanks in large part to all your efforts and we greatly, greatly appreciate your support.

Our SelectUSA team has been going over all the survey results and working to improve on our efforts for this coming year. We announced at this year's Summit that the 2018 SelectUSA Investment Summit will again be held at the Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center in Maryland on June 20 to 22.

During this call we will provide a Summit overview of 2017, some changes we are working on, and the two Call for Proposals that are currently live. With that I will turn it over to my colleague Bill Burwell to go over the 2017 stats. Again, thank you for being here today.

Bill Burwell: Thank you, Fred and good morning or good afternoon folks on the line. I'll run through the PowerPoint and the agenda today. We sent the PowerPoint out via e-mail this morning so please feel free to follow along with the presentation as we go through it on the call today. The slide numbers are in the lower right-hand corner of each page for reference.

We'll also be referencing the Summit website and I did want to highlight that the URL is the same as last year which is www.selectusasummit.us. With that I'll head to Slide 3 which is the Summit recap page and as Fred mentioned, the 2017 Summit was a great success. Thank you all for making it successful together.

We had more than 3,000 registered participants from 64 markets and we were happy to welcome more than 600 representatives from the economic development community across 51 states and territories.

We had a very large exhibit hall this year with 155 exhibitors, and 26 U.S. government agencies were represented in the U.S. pavilion, so thank you all for making such a significant investment in your displays and pavilions. It was really impressive to be part of that and to see that take shape.

There were five cabinet secretaries, two governors and two lieutenant governors in attendance this year as well. The event was filled to capacity and we expect a similar level of interest for 2018. We do have some information that we collected through the surveys so thank you all for filling-out the survey and the excitement and enthusiasm for 2018 looks very strong.

SelectUSA is happy that we'll be able to satisfy many of the objectives of our attendees; however, we're always looking for ways to improve. Moving to Slide 4 we'll highlight some of those from the survey results. 73% of the audience participated in the matchmaking platform and 65% of the Summit registrants were new Summit participants this year.

On Slide 5 you'll see that we are taking your comments we collected through the survey seriously and there's a few things that we called-out that were very important themes for comments. First is we got the message that we need to increase time for matchmaking and networking.

We also got the message from your comments about limiting program content on Tuesday and also keeping the exhibition hall open as much as possible during the Summit. These points were very well-made in all of your collective comments from the survey. We also heard about the importance of

industry and market intelligence and data presentation, the balanced dialogue for the programming.

We are looking to develop new and more data programs using stakeholder input such as survey data, feedback sessions, and input from our teams and we are refining the training in support for the new matchmaking tool and platform.

So we heard a few comments about the matchmaking which as you know from several years we've tried different platforms and different approaches. I think we're getting a little bit closer to having one that works well for all of us but we see room for improvement.

Going-on to Slide 6, we are also focusing efforts on increasing the amount of non-programming time that will be available for matchmaking as I mentioned earlier and the SelectUSA and event production team are committed to working to build a schedule that will keep the exhibit hall open as much as possible.

And if you know the venue when we have the event this year, again we're back at the Gaylord and we will be using the same space or similar space. We have a few extra places in the hotel that we're looking forward to using for the Academy which will help us expand.

We also want to get some additional feedback from all of you if you want to reply to the survey or didn't have a chance to, you can reach us at SUSAevents@trade.gov.

(Jacqueline): Thanks, Bill and thank you all again for joining and if you're joining the call today then that means that you also received the exciting news about the launch and notice about the call for presentations and topic ideas.

We'd like to thank all the individuals who submitted ideas during the 2017 call for proposals. We think it was quite successful and we're sincerely grateful for all of your input as it's helped to shape the programming of the event in 2017. We launched a similar call for proposals this year and are collecting either full-panel or workshop ideas for the Summit from all of you.

The goal is for the Summit programming is directly related to the feedback that we've received, again to include more industry focus, market intelligence, and data presentations. If you're following along on the slides, we're going to move to Slide 8 and this is the steps to filling-out the call for presentations or proposals.

This is also on our website, that's www.selectusasummit.us. Please take some time and make sure that you read this full page either here on the PowerPoint or on the website and that your proposal is as complete as possible.

We are also accepting simple ideas - for example if you want to suggest a speaker and a topic but you do not want to do the presentation yourself, but you think it would be highly relevant and related to investment and FDI in the U.S. then we will absolutely accept those ideas as well. At this time on Slide 9 you're going to see the criteria that we are using to review these proposals.

Every submission is based on whether the proposal is complete and how relevant it is to our client audience. All proposals need to be geographically neutral so they shouldn't be based on one state or directed at one market because we're trying to reach the entire Summit audience.

You can read more about the criteria here on the PowerPoint or on the website. The deadline for submissions is November 1st this year which gives you about six weeks to send-in your suggestions.

The reason we're starting this process earlier this year is to send-out confirmation by the end of January and we would like to have the agenda posted online as early as possible, so the sooner you can get those ideas in, the better.

We hope that you look at some of the suggested formats and limitations found on Slide 10. Due to the competitive nature of the selection process, we are encouraging submissions to be as comprehensive as possible. If you have any questions at all, then you can reach-out to SelectUSA and e-mail us at SUSAEvents@trade.gov.

In addition to the call for presentations we launched a call for spin-off events this year which we're very excited about and Bill is going to talk a little bit more about that now.

Bill Burwell: This past year in 2017 we had a handful - about a dozen or so - spin-off events that took place in different locations around the country that were tied or at least anchored by the SelectUSA Summit. To be simple and straightforward about this, our goal is to get as many of the 1000 foreign businesses who are attending the Summit to go to your states, regions, and locations to learn about these places first-hand.

And we think it's important to have folks go beyond Washington, D.C. and to get to build relationships with you in your communities and as such we are

going to make a significant effort this year to create opportunities with you as partners for these firms to take advantage of.

On Slide 11, we're kicking this off in this call for proposal fashion where the Summit this year is a Wednesday to Thursday format and we believe these dates provide a perfect opportunity for the EDO community to host spin-off events the week following the Summit, June 25 to 29.

This will give international attendees ample time to travel over the weekend. It will be possible and feasible for us to work with you in cooperation as well as our U.S. Commercial Service field colleagues to help craft and support these programs in your communities and we're prepared to proactively market and make these things available to registrants when registration begins.

We know this ask is coming nine months before the event; however, it's really important to get this out early. We've heard from a number of our overseas colleagues at posts and embassies that often times opportunities come to light too late for planning for delegations and we really want to make an effort to get this going.

Ideally we'd like to announce to cities and states that are open to hosting foreign participants when we launch registration so as you're filling-out the proposal or working on brainstorming ideas, we've put together some suggestions which are on Slide 12. Here we are looking at some best practices to put your event on the map and draw international attendees' eye.

One agenda item the team should work on is a discussion with international firms that are currently in your area. This conversation should be as candid as possible covering good and bad, you know, real practical conversations about what it's like to be part of your community.

Slide 13 covers some information that we encourage you to think about as you fill-out your proposal on the portal. The link is on this slide; if you have trouble accessing for the spin-off, please contact us.

We know many EDOs have hosted inbound missions and site visits and have expertise with programming; however, if you're new to this sort of activity we're happy to help focus your team on ideas and share some information we have about data collected from the 2017 and 2016 Summits.

Some of this information is presented on Slides 14 through 19. On Slide 14 you'll see the top industries that were selected by international attendees. As you can see there the top eight were energy, automotive, equipment and machinery, business and professional services, chemicals, food and beverage, consumer goods, and logistics and transportation.

Similarly information about 2016 Summit can be found on Slide 15. Of that slide the top industries listed were real estate, IT, textiles, food and beverage, wholesale trade, retail trade and professional services and healthcare. Slide 16 highlights the top 10 comparisons from those years and on Slide 17 we've pointed-out the top industries attending the event as it relates to FDI stats or the largest sectors for investment in the U.S.

We have plenty of data and resources to help you understand better who has attended the Summits in the past as an indication of who might come this year. We also have lots of information available on our website including marketing trends and we're happy to help you work through all these details with you to craft your proposal.

Adding some more insight about Summit data, you can also see on Slide 18 the top industries from 2017 and 2016. Markets by sectors - so we have China and India and Romania for example in the software and IT services sector and Taiwan and Brazil in food and beverage, etc. Again we have much more details on this if you'd like to get into conversations about how best to craft the program.

Our teams will continue to target the largest sources of FDI and the fastest-growing locations. As outlined on Slide 19 here's some data that can help you get some thoughts together there about where to target.

We could probably spend 40 minutes just talking about the data side of things and our data shop is prepared to help as well as everyone at SelectUSA so we hope that some of this helps to shape your events, gives you some inspiration and ideas and just I want to reiterate before I pass it to Jacqueline that we are seriously committed to making this work this year.

Jacqueline: As Bill mentioned, we have the call for presentations, the spin-off events, and the collateral events which is also something we did last year. This is where you would submit if you need space at during the Summit for a breakfast or a reception, if you'd like to host a reception.

The collateral events are anything that happens during the dates of the Summit, typically at the Gaylord but could also just be in that National Harbor area or anything in the June 20th to 22nd timeframe.

If you're following along we're on Slide 20. SelectUSA has reserved space for any of these on-site receptions or meetings that you want to have and you should and can get a jumpstart on reserving this space right now if you know the types of things that you'd like to be doing.

More information about the timing of the calendar and highlighting these events will be made available soon, as soon as we start receiving more events and start to populate that calendar.

Please note this space is limited as it was last year and requests are not considered final until we have received official notice from the SelectUSA event staff and because it's limited again it's better to get those requests in earlier rather than later. With that quick update Bill is going to wrap-up the call here and start a Q&A.

Bill Burwell: Okay, thank you. Just a few comments about preparing for the Summit. We have our communications team always on standby - Chris Higginbotham and Steve Meyers - they're here with us now so if you have questions about anything relating to communications, they're here and we will be preparing toolkits for folks to use for either social media or other online purposes.

We encourage the use of Twitter. We are using apps like Twitter and the hashtag SelectUSASummit and the hashtag FDIintheUSA for more state-focused stats and again you can always contact anybody at SelectUSA for assistance.

The events team is always here for you and I think we will have a know-before-you-go conference call on October 19th at 1:00 pm and that's the next time we'll be talking about things with the Summit so we'll open-up the Q&A.

Jay Hertz: Hi, I'm Jay Hertz. I'm calling from Choose New Jersey. We will be exhibiting at 2018 SelectUSA Investment Summit and my question is in regards to hotels. I am trying to get a general idea of when they will be made

available. I remember the room block from 2017 wasn't open until pretty close to the show in fact but I'm just trying to get a general idea of what to expect.

Jacqueline: Thanks for your question - so it will be a similar process as last year. Once your exhibitor profile is made, you will receive a group registration link and at that time you can start securing hotel rooms for your group that's attending. Hopefully kicking that off in November/early December and so you'll start to receive those group registration portals at that time and during that registration you can pick your rooms for your group.

Murray Francic: Great, thank you very much. My name is Murray Francic and I represent a portal that showcases 500 cities of the world of business destination, then sort of platform for attracting FDI so we got like 260 U.S. cities that we are focusing on the U.S. (that's probably the nation) now so I think our interests are pretty much aligned with SelectUSA.

And I wanted to ask how could we get more involved than just being a participant as last year? Thank you.

Bill Burwell: Thank you for that question and comment. If you would e-mail me directly, I'm happy to converse with you. My e-mail is bill.burwell@trade.gov. We would be happy to discuss it, thank you so much.

Jay Hertz: Hi, thank you again. Similar to my first question, I'm trying to gauge when to expect the matchmaking system to open.

Bill Burwell: We received a lot of feedback about when the matchmaking system is available and open and we try and open it up as early as we can in the

registration process provided there are enough folks in the system for folks to start, you know, interacting with people.

So our target is March or April. First thing I'd like to have it open is soon as possible and which would lead us to March but some of this is a chicken and an egg scenario with regard to giving you folks the opportunity to interact within the system and so we're going to get it open as soon as we can and I would target March as the answer but it may slide a few weeks.

Taylor Bryant: Thank you. Yes, my name is Taylor Bryant. I'm a consultant working with a few clients who are interested in attending the Summit and I think actually some of the last question may have been what I was trying to get at.

I was just trying to understand what the timing is of Summit registration in terms of it being open and typically at what point is there a relatively full database or a list of participants and registrants.

Bill Burwell: Sure, I can give you some general sense from the past several years - so typically the bulk of registrations really start to roll-in after the holiday, January, and it picks-up in the spring to a very rapid pace within the last six to eight weeks of the event.

That's been a consistent pattern for the last several years so I don't expect it to change a lot and it doesn't seem to be a pattern that we can affect based on our efforts or marketing. It just is what it is at this point so I would have make sure your expectations are such that, you know, as soon as things are open, it's open but a lot of people register in the last two months.

Jacqueline: Particularly the foreign firms.

Bill Burwell: Yes, particularly foreign firms. That said, our timeline is that we want to open registration in November. We want to launch the matchmaking platform in March and we will be very proactive in our efforts to recruit foreign investors starting in November and we will look to change the pattern but I'm just giving you the data from the last two years as an indication.

Taylor Bryant: That's great, thank you and if I can just have a quick add-on on that, can you describe the matchmaking platform a bit more?

Bill Burwell: It will be the same as this year but we are trying to make changes so it can be accessed from either a webpage or an app. You can do it on the computer or smartphone. It is pretty open in terms of seeing who's coming. There's lots of ways to load content, videos, and materials about your locations or your company.

We have lots of resources online to walk through, it's pretty simple I think from comments from folks that it's a pretty good tool. I will tell you the thing that we encourage is that the matchmaking takes place through the platform, rather than outside the platform. That way we have ways to try and remedy situations or make sure connections take place.

Jacqueline: So essentially you can see everybody that's in the system. You can filter by whether they're state or a firm or a U.S. firm. You can filter them and look for people from a specific state or a specific country or by industry or by some other criteria and hopefully find easily find who you're looking for and select a time that you've both available.

And then on-site we have an area setup with tables so someone will direct you both to the right table when you arrive and it's pretty simple.

Mustava Aravacai: Thank you very much. Good afternoon. This is the first time that I hear about this type of service and we do represent IT technology applications and we also represent solar energy and echo-friendly technologies and we also represent a solid group of investors.

And I'm trying to understand exactly how can we contribute to the efforts that you are putting together for trading with investment and specifically now with all the destruction that the hurricanes are bringing to our country and the Caribbean, how these activities or these sessions can help us to participate more actively? Thank you.

Bill Burwell: Sure, thanks, great question and certainly timely given all that's happening. The best way to do that honestly I think would be to submit some of your ideas for capabilities via the call for proposals. This is a way that we have in the past learned about great topics and great speakers or piece together several suggestions to make one new and interesting session.

So I would encourage you to look at that call for proposal that was discussed on the call today to consider submitting ideas and even if you know you know, have an incomplete idea, just try and submit it and then we take all this information and try to piece together common themes and topics and then pull the experts that we've learned about through the process together and hopefully get people plugged into a session either in the academy or on the breakouts, things like that.

So I would encourage you to try the call for proposals and again if you would like to initiate a separate conversation, I'm happy to talk. My e-mail is bill.burwell @trade.gov.

Man: Hi, good afternoon. I'm with a consulting firm called Biggins Lacy Shapiro. We've participated in the Summit the past couple of years at the booth and everything.

I was just wondering if you're prepared yet to talk about any of the changes that you have planned for the matchmaking system. It sounds like a lot of people submitted suggestions as did I in the survey and just wondered if there were some big takeaways that you're prepared to talk about yet.

Suzanna: Sure, so we are still working with the software company to make some updates and changes so we don't want to promise anything too early, but we did read through a lot of the suggestions and I can highlight a few of the main topic areas.

One as it related to the setup of the system and kind of the engagement online pre-Summit so we are going to be working closely with the software company to narrow the filter fields and kind of make them a little bit easier to use especially for our international attendees.

And on that note we're going to be working with our Commercial Service team overseas to really help prepare them a lot further in advance and have them start setting-up kind of meetings with their delegations earlier so that they're getting them into the system a lot earlier.

So that's something that's also on our team as we're trying to prepare and setup the international attendees for success because some of the feedback that we received was that some of the states noticed that some of the international firms might not have logged-in or responded at all.

The second aspect via the system - and some of the system edits that we're trying to work-out - is related to the filter fields where you could enter a location. We know that some of the locations were general as in "see you at the Summit" or "we'll meet you by the information desk" or very general.

So we're kind of putting a lock on where exactly those meeting areas could be as well as the communications through the system so we know sometimes a message was sent and if a person's not using their app or didn't have a push notification on, some of those messages weren't received or sent back so we're working on that.

And lastly on-site we are working on developing a better matchmaking area so we know that more tables were needed. That was definitely heard. The access to the matchmaking area and where it was located inside of the exhibition hall and just access in general and the timing of things we're definitely working-on.

We know that there were some updates needed on the speed of the system and I think that's kind of related to the filter field that we'll be working with the app developer on.

Bill Burwell: To add another comment to what Suzanna mentioned, so many folks who responded to this survey from both the foreign firm perspective and the economic development communities' perspective is that the reason they come to the Summit is to make connections and to meet people.

By far that's the primary reason and so we see the matchmaking platform as critical. If that platform performs poorly, we hinder that, you know, that purpose. If it performs well we're supporting it, you know, supporting folks

to get what they are intending to accomplish accomplished so we're taking this very seriously.

We're not going to switch platforms a lot because we've done that and it only confuses people so we need to make some effort to improve as best we can and get people comfortable using a tool that is allowing you to meet people.

As Suzanna mentioned, if you can't confirm a meeting and you can't find the meeting, you're going to have a hard time making that connection so we're definitely working on these aspects in both layout and technology so we hear loud and clear that this is a critical ingredient to the success of what you see as valuable for the Summit.

Michele Cumberford: Okay, yes, that's great and the only other thing I would suggest, I mean, the system two years ago had issues with that electric - the ability to transfer electronic contact information - immediately was really beneficial. There's so many people you meet you know, you try to meet ahead of time through that matchmaking system but you definitely meet a lot just in person being there.

I don't know if there's any way to incorporate something like that into the new platform which was better in a lot of ways than two years ago but something along those lines, I'd recommend it if it's possible.

Suzanna: Sure, yes, it's definitely something that the app developers have the ability to do. It might not be the cute little hands but it's definitely a digital business part and I think we will definitely work to develop that a little bit more and highlight that on-site.

Fred Volcansek: Well, everybody, this is Fred and I just want to say thank you so very much for your participation. I enjoyed being a part of it and hearing the answers to the questions as much as you did.

And so we're working diligently and expeditiously to make this again the best Summit ever and I only know that you've got wonderful people working on this project and to the degree that you have a question, Bill left his e-mail and you can reach-out to Bill and we will follow-up so thank you very much and have a safe day.

END