



MEDIA CONTACT

Michael Bilello
Executive Vice President, Strategic Communications & Marketing
michael@wswa.org | (202) 243-7506

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

07/20/2022

WSWA WRAPS THE 2022 NEXTGEN LEADERS' SUMMIT AND COUNCIL FOR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT (CLD) CONFERENCE

The Event Hosted in St. Louis Featured 89 Next Generation and Young Wine and Spirits Industry Leaders

WASHINGTON, D.C., 07/20/2022 – Last week, the Wine & Spirits Wholesalers of America (WSWA) NextGen Leaders' Summit and Council for Leadership Development (CLD) Conference was hosted in St. Louis, Missouri. The event started on Monday, July 11 with the NextGen Summit and welcomed members of CLD on Tuesday, July 12.

After a three-year hiatus, the CLD Conference returned, providing a space for future leaders in the wine and spirits industry to share ideas, learn about our industry's hot topics and trends, develop and improve leadership skills, and network with peers in the wholesale tier.

This year, The WSWA member-planned and member-oriented event saw 89 rising executives attend on behalf of wholesalers of all sizes operating in every corner of the country.

Attendees of the conference heard from experts across a variety of topics to help them build an educational foundation of essential policy, legislative, regulatory, marketing and trend information needed to advance their careers.

"Combining the NextGen Leaders' Summit and CLD Conference provides a necessary environment for successors and rising leaders in the industry to collaborate, problem solve, and prepare for months and years ahead," said **WSWA Chairman of the Board Tom Cole**. "I know first-hand how important these in-person meetings and events are to strengthen and elevate our tier. The conversations that started at this event will continue well into the future and the relationships built will continue to flourish, making the wholesale tier stronger and more prosperous."

This year's NextGen Leaders' Summit featured:

- Fireside Chat with Rob Vitale, CEO & President, Post Holdings.
- Remarks on the impact of government policies from Representative Jason Smith (R-MI).
- A presentation on supply chain analytics and syndicated data analysis from Washington University.
- An in-depth, two-part session on family business consulting with Joshua Nacht Ph.D. and Jennifer Strom, MBA, MA, of The Family Consulting Group.

This year's CLD Conference featured:

- Matt Deegan, SVP & Chief Sales Officer, Constellation Brands, discussed how industry trends influence a modern supplier and distributor partnership.
- A look into the disruptive elements of both the complementary and the emerging adult-use cannabis space with Tara Rozalowsky, Vice President, Brand Marketing, Canopy Growth.
- A deep dive into industry disruptors, including low and no alcohol products and NFTs, Crypto and the Metaverse with WSWA's Jo Moak and Jake Hegeman.
- Questions around CBD beverages and the impacts on distribution were answered during a panel with Tanisha Robinson, Founder, W*nder and Sara Harmelin, Vice President, Digital Innovation, Allied Beverage Group.
- Remarks about best practices for hiring and retaining talent during the current business environment from Hillary Wirtz, Director, DE&I, Breakthru Beverage Group.
- An in-depth look at trends, challenges and opportunities for all three tiers of the industry was presented by Jon Berg, Vice President of Beverage Alcohol, NielsenIQ, Danny Brager, Analyst, SipSource, and Dale Stratton, Analyst, SipSource.
- A forecast of the St. Louis Federal Reserve was given by Bill Dupor, Vice President, St. Louis Federal Reserve.
- Kristen Bareuther, Managing Director, FirstBev reviewed today's beverage M&A landscape and gave insights on recent deals and investment trends.
- Chairman Tom Cole shared his experiences as a leader in the industry and WSWA staff provided a general update on the current work of the association.
- A panel of diverse supplier tier leaders provided insights from their experiences in the industry and shared their views on creating pathways for equity and inclusion. This panel included Clyde Davis, VP of sales, Equiano Rum, Chris Montana, Owner, Du Nord Social Spirits, Yira Vallejo, Associate Producer and Founder, Maiz Nation, and was facilitated by Melanie Gbowu, Founder, The Victoria Gabriel Agency.
- The CLD Conference closed with an interactive session from Coach Marc Strachan, Head Coach, Coach Marc Consulting, on the importance of Multicultural Marketing as a business strategy and integrating strategies for DE&I.
- Attendees also enjoyed: Networking receptions and dinners, a St. Louis Cardinals baseball game, morning workouts, an evening at Stumpy's Spirits – a farm-to-table distillery, and more!

[Click here](#) for a full agenda of the 2022 CLD Conference.

Attendees used the conference to make connections with wholesaler, supplier and service provider peers—as well as current industry leaders, speakers, panelists and the WSWA staff and leadership team.

This year, the conference had 18 sponsors who made the week possible:

- Blue Ridge Global
- Canopy Growth
- Dimensional Insight
- Efficiency Enterprises
- Encompass
- FORM.com
- 4 Hands Brewing Co.
- GAP PROMO
- Infuzion Solutions
- Inventiv
- LUXCO
- NielsenIQ
- Oracle Netsuite
- Pronghorn
- Provi
- Stumpy's Spirits
- 365WineTrade
- 21 SEEDS

The NextGen Leaders' Summit and CLD Conference will return in July 2023 in Milwaukee, WI.

About Wine & Spirits Wholesalers of America

WSWA is the national trade association representing the distribution tier of the wine and spirits industry, dedicated to advancing the interests and independence of distributors and brokers of wine and spirits. Founded in 1943, WSWA has more than 380 member companies in 50 states and the District of Columbia, and its members distribute more than 80 percent of all wine and spirits sold at wholesale in the United States.

To learn more, please visit www.wswa.org or connect with us on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#).

###