

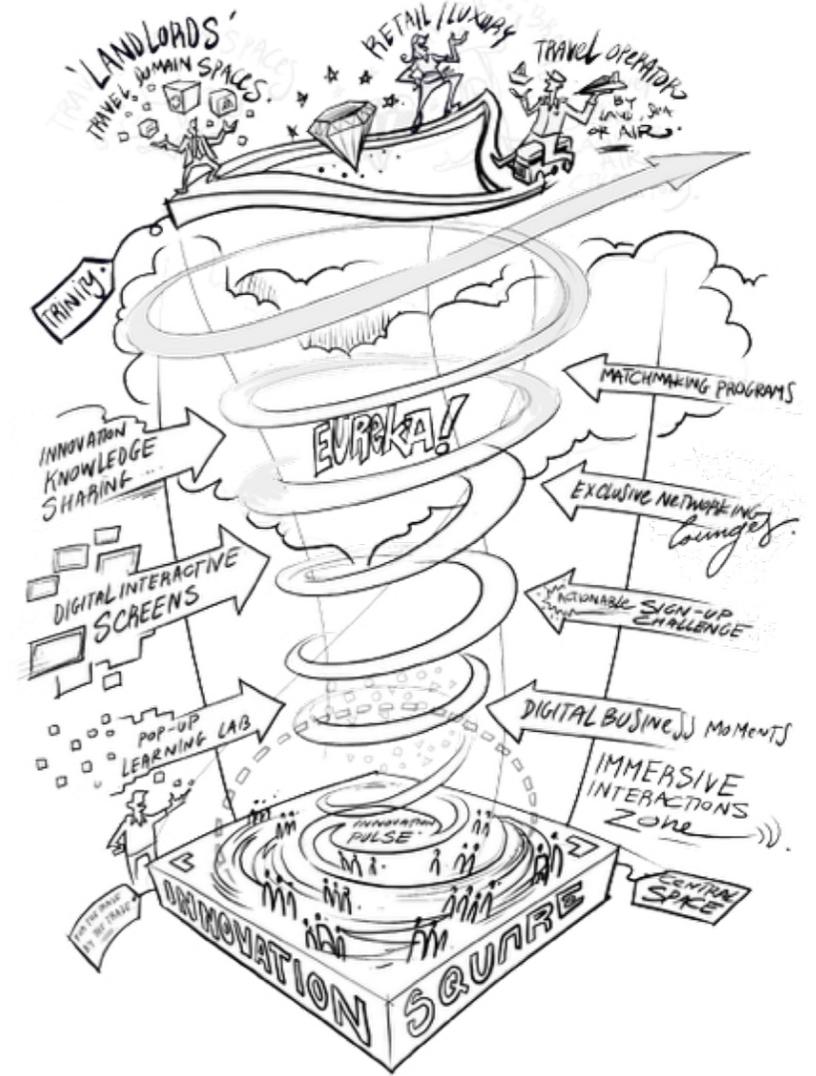
# 08 TFWA INNOVATION SQUARE CONFERENCE 2025 CASE 08

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# CASE

## ABOUT TFWA

Established, in 1984, as the leading association in international duty free and travel retail, TFWA is a global organization dedicated to supporting the industry's growth and development. No borders. No limits. Just connections, insights, and opportunity. With TFWA, brands and suppliers gain access to a dynamic business platform that fosters relationships, builds awareness, and identifies trends



to drive success. TFWA plays a vital role in representing its members' interests while providing forums for collaboration and progress. As a non-profit organization with 490 member companies—including some of the world's most recognized brands—TFWA is committed to delivering value to the industry. TFWA's mission is to identify trends, build awareness, and provide a business platform for the duty free and travel retail industry to prosper.

## EVENT CONTEXT

Innovation and technology are driving forces in travel retail, as brands and exhibitors showcase their latest developments while industry professionals seek dedicated spaces to explore key market trends. New brands also aim to introduce themselves to influential players. To meet these needs, TFWA is launching Innovation Square, a dynamic venue within the exhibition area that offers presentations, discussions, and networking in a relaxed setting. With audiovisual capabilities and F&B services, it will serve as a central hub for industry dialogue. Initially planned for Cannes 2025 with a potential full launch in Singapore 2026, Innovation Square replaces the iLab and workshops, enhancing TFWA's value proposition and boosting excellence.

## WHO IS ORGANISING THE CHANGE?

The CEO and teams in marketing, sales, and events are taking the initiative to strengthen the content of TFWA's trade shows and enhance its value proposition by providing continuous activities throughout the event. This approach aims to increase the exhibition's appeal, foster interactions, and reinforce TFWA's role in informing the industry about trends and innovations. Over time, Innovation Square could become a central feature in the event's programming and engagement.

## WHAT WAS THE CHALLENGE?

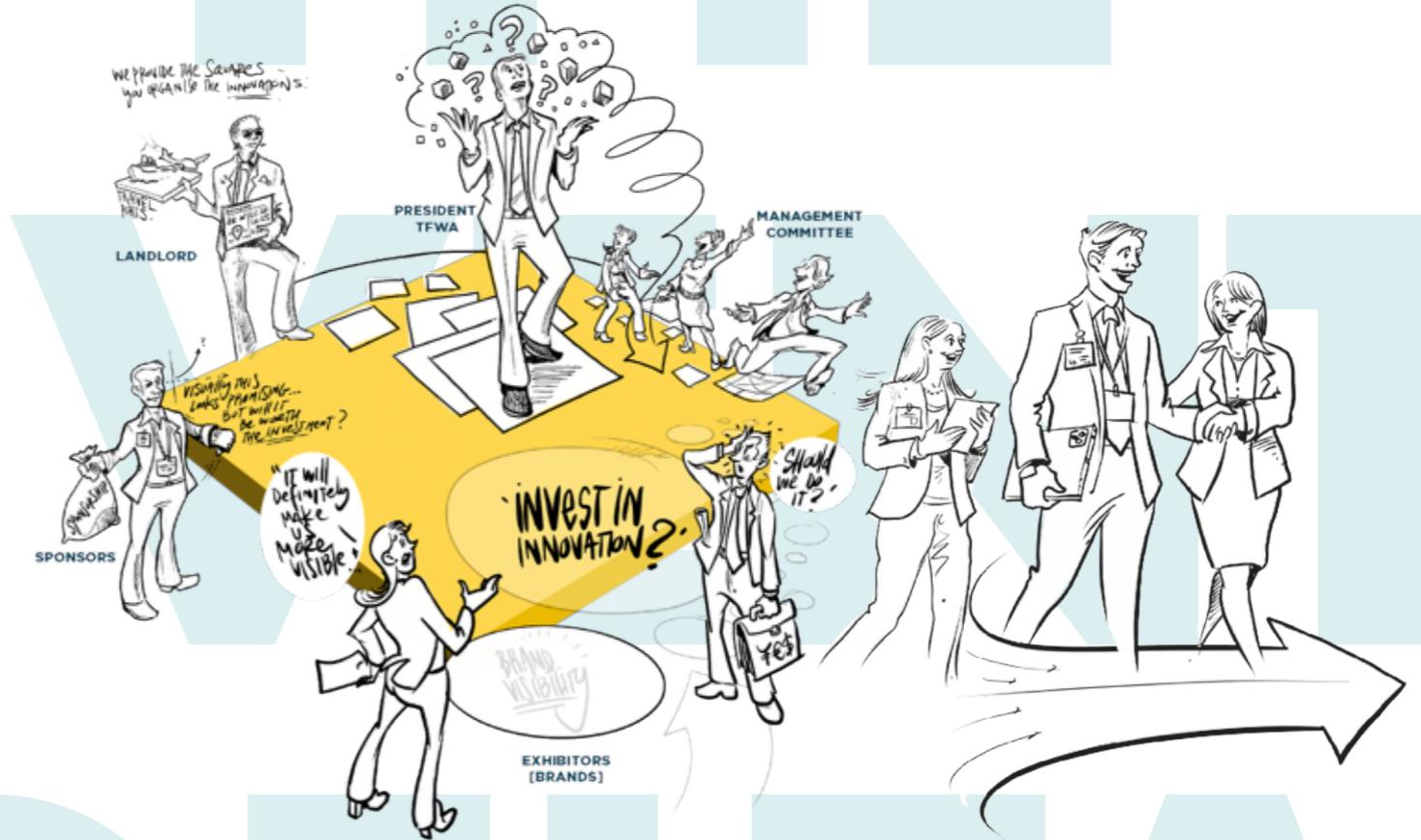
To stay at the forefront of the travel retail industry, TFWA must address the growing demand for insights, networking, and innovation. Industry professionals seek a space to exchange ideas, explore market trends, and discover emerging technologies. New brands need a platform to introduce themselves to key stakeholders, while exhibitors aim to understand future industry shifts and showcase their latest products.

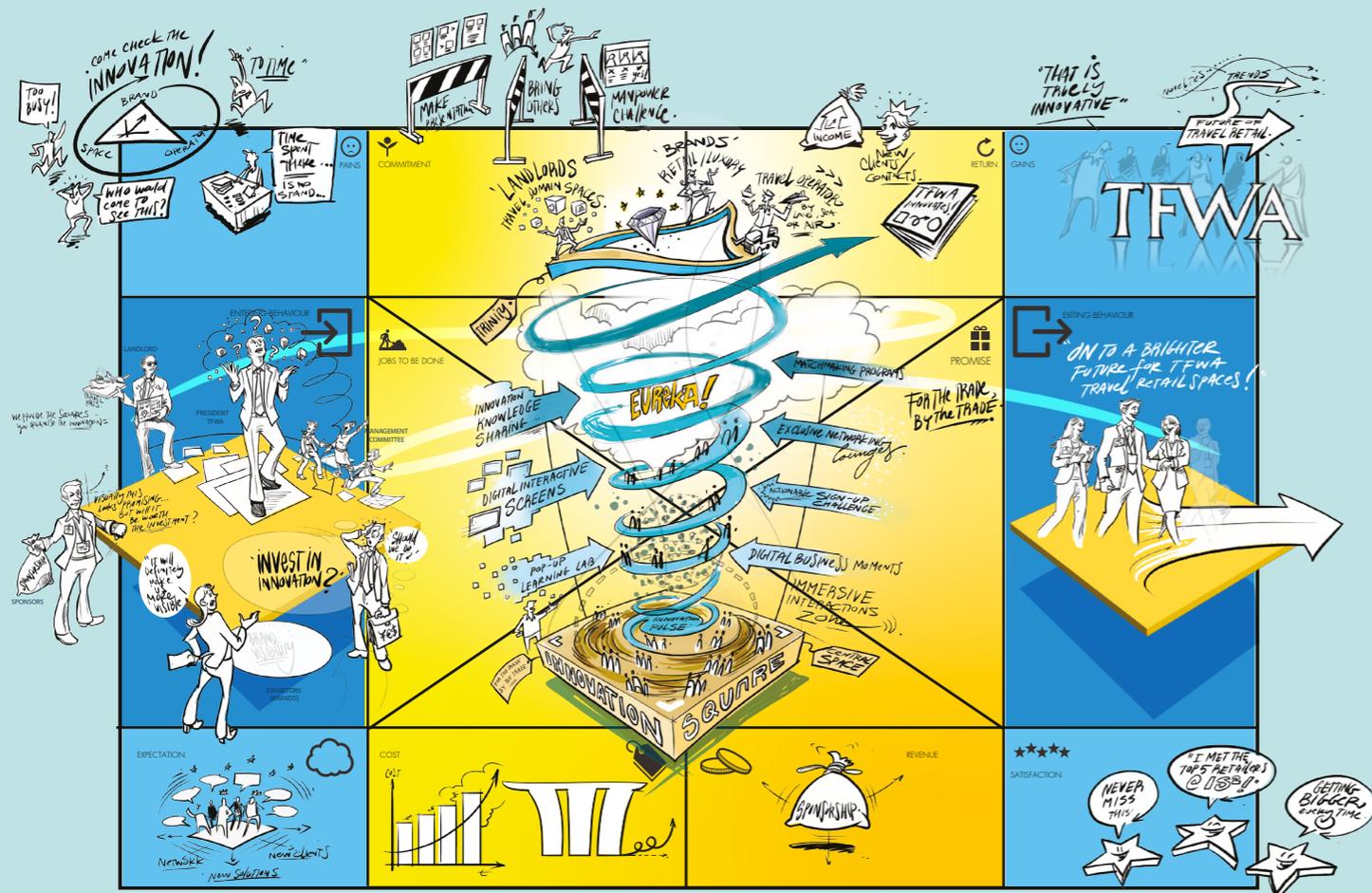
## WHO ARE THE MAIN STAKEHOLDERS?

The Event Owner is the President and Management Committee of TFWA. Beyond the internal TFWA team, the core stakeholders involved in shaping Innovation Square include Exhibitors and Sponsors. Exhibitors play a crucial role, as they seek a platform to showcase their latest innovations, understand industry trends, and engage with key industry players. Sponsors are also essential stakeholders, looking for high-visibility opportunities to align their brands with cutting-edge developments in travel retail. Using the Stakeholder Alignment Canvas, the team identified these three groups as having the highest power and interest in the project. The overarching aim is to create a new space that highlights innovation while fostering knowledge exchange and industry engagement.

## THE EVENT DELTA

Before the event, TFWA, along with exhibitors, sponsors, retailers, and landlords, invests time and resources in creating Innovation Square to foster engagement, showcase innovation, and drive industry impact. By bringing key stakeholders together, the event strengthens connections, knowledge exchange, and brand activation. Exhibitors leverage the platform to present their vision, achieve positive NPS, and commit to value investment, while preparing teams for brand activations. Sponsors engage through pre-event social media teasers, increasing visibility and investment. Sponsorship success is measured through proof of investment conversion, reinforcing long-term commitments and contract renewals. Retailers and landlords use Innovation Square to promote products, observe best practices, and exchange ideas for future events. By actively participating, they integrate new strategies into their operations. A shared commitment to innovation and market impact ensures that TFWA remains the premier platform for discovering, implementing, and advancing trends in travel retail.





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**EVENT NARRATIVE**

TFWA's Innovation Square is set to redefine engagement in the travel retail industry, bringing together key stakeholders—the President and Management Committee, exhibitors, and sponsors—to drive knowledge sharing, networking, and industry innovation. The event's success hinges on balancing tight timelines, budget constraints, and securing broad industry support while ensuring an engaging and high-impact experience.

For TFWA leadership, Innovation Square represents a strategic opportunity to strengthen the association's role in industry development and increase visibility. Expectations are high, with at least 200 attendees in its first edition and aspirations to make it a must-attend event within one to two years. A serious budget will support the venue, programming, and logistics, with sponsorships and exhibitor participation contributing to financial sustainability. Key measures of success include strong media coverage, sponsor retention, high visitor satisfaction, and industry recognition.

For exhibitors, the challenge lies in justifying their time away from their stands while ensuring maximum return on participation. Innovation Square offers a platform to showcase emerging trends, new solutions, and market insights, but exhibitors must balance staffing, financial investment, and strategic brand positioning. Anticipated benefits

include increased brand visibility, new retailer relationships, and actionable business insights, with a 15% rise in booth engagement post-event. To prepare, exhibitors will allocate additional budget, extend their stay, and engage in pre-event briefings and presentations.

Sponsors view Innovation Square as an entry point into travel retail, leveraging it to gain visibility, build partnerships, and establish themselves as industry leaders. The challenge is ensuring clear differentiation from other sponsors while achieving measurable ROI. Pre-event, sponsors will engage in PR campaigns, social media outreach, and stakeholder networking, aiming to generate six new prospects, two new customers, and a 30% increase in engagement at the event. With a minimum €50,000 financial commitment, they expect enhanced market recognition, media coverage, and strong post-event business leads. The event's impact extends beyond a single gathering—it is designed to drive long-term industry growth, foster collaboration, and position TFWA as the premier platform for travel retail innovation.

By uniting leadership, exhibitors, and sponsors, Innovation Square will serve as a hub for knowledge exchange, business opportunities, and industry advancements, creating a high-value experience for all stakeholders and ensuring a lasting influence on the sector's future.

## THE DESIGN PROCESS

After selecting key stakeholders and analyzing their perspectives, the team articulated the desired changes for Innovation Square and developed multiple rapid prototypes. These iterations shaped three core event concepts, each designed to enhance engagement, learning, and networking.

Prototype 1 envisions a black box concept with immersive light and sound effects. Upon entering, attendees receive a boarding pass granting access to three spaces: learning (led by the exhibition team), immersive innovation (managed by the commercial team), and networking (hosted by the marketing team). Windows offer real-world travel visuals for relaxation, while a digital leaderboard tracks votes and engagement. The exit zone features a feedback room and a business card scanner for seamless connection-building.

Prototype 2 centers around a large stage with mixed seating for workshops, drinks, and networking. Sessions are recorded and shared post-event via TFWA 365. Attendees can explore pop-up innovation zones, participate in sign-up challenges, and interact in data-sharing panels. A closing ceremony and digital business card exchanges further enhance connections.

Prototype 3 introduces a circular, semi-transparent tent structure featuring an interactive parcours that guides attendees through different themed zones. A central stage hosts TEDx-style presentations, while immersive learning and networking spaces create opportunities for meaningful interactions. This concept blends structured content with fluid, exploratory experiences, ensuring a dynamic and engaging event atmosphere.

## THE BRAIDING POINT

The travel retail industry is evolving rapidly, and TFWA Innovation Square is set to redefine how brands, retailers, sponsors, and landlords connect, learn, and innovate. In an industry where differentiation is key, this event is designed to position TFWA as a leader, helping stakeholders achieve meaningful business outcomes while ensuring long-term engagement and investment.

With tight timelines, budget constraints, and high expectations, TFWA leadership recognized the need for a transformative event that extends beyond traditional exhibitions. The goal was clear—deliver an industry-first experience that enhances knowledge-sharing, strengthens partnerships, and provides tangible business value. For TFWA to maintain its leadership role, this event had to showcase innovation, attract key decision-makers, and solidify its reputation as the essential hub for travel retail. TFWA's leadership envisioned an event that proves the association's value beyond exhibitions and establishes it as a trusted industry innovator. To achieve this, the event must secure high media visibility, ensure strong sponsorship retention, and generate lasting industry impact. By carefully designing an immersive and engaging experience, TFWA ensures that attendees leave inspired, informed, and ready to invest in future editions.

For exhibitors, the challenge was ensuring participation translates into business growth, brand exposure, and strong retailer engagement. Exhibitors needed more than just a platform to showcase products—they required a space where they could discover market trends, secure new leads, and build retailer partnerships. With a 15% boost in booth visits and an increased willingness to invest in next year's event, Innovation Square is designed to convert exhibitors into long-term event advocates.

Sponsors face increasing pressure to validate their return on investment, and TFWA designed Innovation Square to maximize sponsor visibility and engagement. By offering a +25% boost in media exposure compared to traditional trade shows, confirmed lead generation, and direct business opportunities, sponsors gain measurable proof of impact while positioning themselves as leaders in travel retail innovation.

For airports and landlords, the event offers an opportunity to discover high-potential retail brands and position their locations as prime destinations for cutting-edge retail experiences. Strengthening relationships with global brands and operators ensures that they remain at the forefront of the evolving travel retail landscape.

To make this vision a reality, TFWA designed Innovation Square with cutting-edge elements: a circular, semi-transparent tent structure, an interactive parcours, a central stage featuring TEDx-style content, and immersive learning and networking zones. With strategic event design, data-driven engagement, and a focus on long-term industry impact, Innovation Square is not just an event—it's a catalyst for shaping the future of travel retail.

## NEXT?

With TFWA Innovation Square set to debut in Cannes 2025, the next steps focus on fine-tuning the experience, securing industry partnerships, and ensuring maximum impact. The TFWA team is actively collaborating with exhibitors, sponsors, and landlords to refine content, enhance engagement strategies, and solidify the event's role as a must-attend industry gathering. A targeted marketing and communication plan will generate anticipation. Sponsorship opportunities will be further developed, creating high-value packages that drive measurable returns for participating brands. In addition, TFWA will implement a comprehensive feedback and data tracking system, using insights from attendees to enhance future editions and continuously evolve the event.

Looking ahead, TFWA envisions expanding Innovation Square globally, exploring hybrid event formats, deeper digital integration, and strategic industry collaborations. With a long-term goal of making Innovation Square the premier platform for travel retail innovation, TFWA is committed to shaping the future of the industry, one groundbreaking event at a time.



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