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21, 2021

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IHA Announces Updated Digital Marketplace and New Virtual Industry Events Planned for March & April

Association working in partnership with Brandwise, The NPD Group, Springboard Futures and GMDC|Retail Tomorrow to offer e-commerce, content and connectivity.

ROSEMONT, IL (Jan. 21, 2021) – With The Inspired Home Show 2021 postponed to August, the International Housewares Association has announced several new initiatives to be launched in the first quarter of the year with two new virtual events taking place in March and early April.

“By the time the August 2021 Show is here, it will have been a year and a half since the industry has been able to convene in a meaningful way,” said Derek Miller, IHA president. “All of the retailers and suppliers with whom we regularly communicate are telling us that there is an immediate need to connect in Q1 of 2021.”

Development for *Connect 365*, the 2.0 version of the current Housewares Connect 365 online marketplace, is close to final and will be released to product suppliers in early February for data population. The final site will be launched in March for use by the buying community. The new Connect 365 platform will feature an updated user interface, more refined search capabilities and e-commerce capabilities through a new partnership with Brandwise.

IHA is working with Brandwise, an e-commerce software company, to develop a new platform called *Connect COMMERCE* to facilitate sales between IHA members and buyers. Detailed information about this partnership and the Connect COMMERCE marketplace will be released in the near future.

Virtual Events Connect Buyers to Sellers

A new virtual industry event called *Connect SPRING* will debut in March, when the Show would normally have taken place. The two-week event will begin on Tuesday, March 16 and run every weekday through Friday, March 26. Working with The NPD Group and Springboard Futures, IHA created Connect SPRING, which will offer product demonstrations, educational content, industry expert consultations and one-on-one supplier/retailer meetings through five district tracks:

- **Keynotes and Educational Sessions** – Industry experts will lead sessions focusing on the information and trends that will continue to drive the home + housewares industry into 2021 and beyond the pandemic.
- **Virtual Product Demonstrations** – Select suppliers will showcase new and innovative products that address specific consumer-oriented themes.
- **IHA Market WatchSeries** – Authors of the *IHA Market Watch Report* will present products that address the overarching consumer trends of the next year.

- **Ask the Experts** – Buyers and suppliers will have the opportunity to schedule one-on-one meetings with subject matter experts.
- **Supplier Meetings** – Buyers will have the opportunity to schedule one-on-one virtual meetings with suppliers through their Connect 365 landing pages.

IHA's final industry event planned for the spring is *Connect GROCERY*. IHA is working in partnership with GMDC|Retail Tomorrow, a leading retail trade association focused on improving the shopper experiences in the non-foods grocery segment. Strategic meetings are planned between a select number of non-foods buyers and product suppliers during the week of April 19.

“The primary goal of Connect SPRING and Connect GROCERY is to connect buyers and sellers around new product innovations, education and expertise that address the evolving and emerging consumer needs from this unprecedented past year, providing direction for the road ahead,” said Leana Salamah, IHA vice president, marketing. “It is critical that the Connect 365 platform and the new virtual events not only provide actionable information, but also showcase supplier innovations in formats that allow retailers to easily discover new products and companies they would not likely find on their own by simply browsing the internet.”

Opportunities to participate in Connect SPRING are available to all confirmed exhibitors in The Inspired Home Show 2021 but product submissions must be received by Feb. 5. Details are available at TheInspiredHomeShow.com/VirtualDemos or by contacting an IHA trade show sales team member. Stay tuned for additional details on participating in Connect GROCERY.

The full Connect SPRING schedule, as well as registration for retailers, news media and other industry attendees will be available in February.

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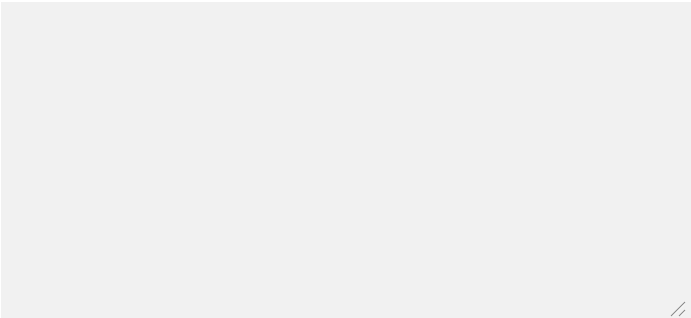
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Martin M. Pegler

1923 — 2020

Martin M. Pegler was a professor for thirty years in the Display & Exhibit Design Department at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York. A leading expert in his

field for over 60 years, Martin hosted seminars in the United States as well as in Latin America, Europe and the Pacific Rim. He authored over 80 books and his textbook, *Visual Merchandising and Display*, is used in universities around the world. Martin was presented with a lifetime achievement award by PAVE, the Planning & Visual Education Partnership that supports retail design education for students and educators. He was also inducted into the Visual Merchandising and Display Industries' Hall of Fame.

Martin worked with *gia* from the beginning of the *gia* program in 2000, as an Expert Juror, and since 2016 as an honorary member of the *gia* Expert Jury. To honor Martin's leadership role with the program, the Top Window Award was renamed the "Martin M. Pegler Award for Excellence in Visual Merchandising" in 2008. Also that year, he was presented with an honorary *gia* Award for Lifetime Achievement.

