

INSPIRE 2017

connecting and
collaborating in St. Kitts



By Amber Murdock,
Executive Editor RSPA

Formally known as St. Christopher Island, St. Kitts is named for the patron saint of the most famous explorer to cross its shores, Christopher Columbus. The small island — a mere 18 miles long and 5 miles across — served as a stunning backdrop for INSPIRE 2017. Attendees descended upon St. Kitts from all over to bask in the warm sun, reconnect with old friends and make new ones.



Above: Teams wave goodbye as they head out for the Amazing Race group excursion.

Right: Colin Martin, Vigilix, LLC takes a selfie with a new friend during the excursion.

With its rich history and beautiful views, Brimstone Hill fortress served as the venue for the group dinner held during INSPIRE 2017.

The Star Micronics-sponsored Welcome Dinner proved the perfect opening to the event. More than 150 INSPIRE attendees and their guests dined on a sumptuous dinner buffet against a backdrop of ocean waves and distant mountainous cliffs. Harbortouch's Suzanne Davis captured the general enthusiasm when asked what she was looking forward to at INSPIRE 2017: "EVERYTHING! The connections, the networking, educational programs, and of course, experiencing St. Kitts!"

CONNECTING OVER IDEAS

Education is one of the top attractions of the three-day event. Billed as a "Meeting of the Minds," this year's INSPIRE featured keynote speakers Michael Mazzeo, Paul Oyer and Scott Schaefer, authors of business best-seller *The Roadside MBA*. Each morning, while partaking in the Networking Breakfasts (sponsored by BlueStar), attendees were able to chat over coffee. The event's promise that registrants would be able to "connect and collaborate" was fulfilled as attendees joined together in the morning educational session.

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Top: The groups stop to re-energize at the stately Saman Tree at Romney Manor.

Left: Attendees enjoyed a buffet style lunch at Blu Restaurant while saying their goodbyes before the official close of INSPIRE.

Right: Contacts are made over cocktails during the group dinner excursion at Brimstone Hill.

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Competing companies were often found elbow-to-elbow at tables. Two such companies were responsible for making the education come alive for attendees: Vantiv, the 2017 Thought Leadership sponsor, sponsored the keynote speakers, and Cayan provided the notebooks that attendees used during the educational sessions. Such collaboration — especially among industry rivals — makes INSPIRE special: It is a time to get to know other RSPA members casually and form connections over ideas and business concepts, removed from the high-pressure sales environment. As Rick Malthaner of Como explained when asked why he attended the conference: “INSPIRE provides the opportunity to network with the most important people in our industry.”

UNCONVENTIONAL COLLABORATION, ISLAND STYLE

INSPIRE attendees had two special opportunities to explore the island through the excursions included in event registration. After the morning’s education, attendees were encouraged to change into casual clothing, grab some sunscreen and report back to the education room for lunch. After dining



together, the decidedly more casual crowd was given a set of rules for the upcoming excursion, dubbed the “Amazing Race.”

Gathering in groups of 15 to 20, attendees, guests and RSPA staff were given a Sudoku puzzle to solve. The first to finish it correctly were able to depart in Jeeps awaiting them outside the hotel. Driven by local drivers, each team was given a list of Kittian-related questions that could only be answered by completing a giant scavenger hunt, which took the groups all around St. Kitts. The Amazing Race gave INSPIRE attendees the chance to experience all aspects of the island — the people, the sights, the wildlife (including some of the more than 40,000 vervet monkeys that inhabit the island) — as well as get to know each other better. The groups



Left: With sand beneath their feet, and the sunset serving as the perfect backdrop, registrants kicked off INSPIRE 2017 with a welcome dinner on the beach.

Right: Attendees hold discussions while dining during the first evening of INSPIRE 2017.

included old friends and new acquaintances working together to win the race.

On Tuesday, the annual INSPIRE group dinner also took attendees away from the St. Kitts Marriott property. Buses transported attendees and guests back in time to the magnificent Brimstone Hill, a fort that took more than 100 years to build. Brimstone Hill is now a UNESCO world heritage site, and a popular attraction for visitors to the island. The 45-minute ride from the hotel to the site allowed attendees to chat and even sing songs on their way to the dinner. Attendees were greeted by servers with signature rum punches, delicious hors d’oeuvres and the stunning 360-degree views of blue waters and serene mountain slopes. A huge tent with dining tables and a buffet that included local food brought the attendees together for an evening of casual networking. Sponsored by EPSON, the INSPIRE group dinner provided a dramatic backdrop and another unique experience for attendees to get to know one another. **C**

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RSPA

People You Need to Know to GET CONNECTED

RSPA's Canadian Community



Justine Terlon-Bohonis,
Chairman of RSPA's
Canadian Community

By Stephen Gift,
RSPA Member Services

RSPA's Canadian Community remains one of the most active committees in the Association. Recently, the Community met during INSPIRE 2017, and during that time, RSPA asked a few questions of the Community's chair, Justine Terlon-Bohonis:

What are some of the industry topics getting a lot of buzz within the Canadian Community?

JTB: Canada's Anti-Spam Legislation (CASL) and how VARs can better inform retailers on good record keeping practices. Another one of the challenges that we raised based on industry topics was the difficulty in hiring.

Some members of the Canadian Community recently had a chance to catch up at INSPIRE 2017. How was that discussion?

JTB: It was nice to see so many Canadians could join us at INSPIRE. We were pleased to have 4 out of 12 Canadian [Community members] participate for the first time at the conference. We gathered for a lunch after a second day of great learning. Since the Canadian community keeps growing, and we keep welcoming new members, we took the opportunity this time to go around the table and introduce ourselves. We talked briefly about the upcoming event in Canada in May, hot topics, current benefits to the Canadian members (UPS vs another courier company in Canada), and discussed having our members act as ambassadors representing RSPA during Canadian industry events. Additionally, we talked about getting [member] information translated to French to recruit more members from Quebec.

You mentioned that the Canadian Community is holding a networking event in May 2017, in Toronto. What is the target audience for that event?

JTB: The target audience for the Canadian Community event is any technology provider in the Point of Sale ecosystem. We will more specifically be looking for those providing solutions to the retail, hospitality, grocery and c-store verticals. We will welcome all RSPA Members as well as

non-members to this event as it will be a great way for non-members to learn about the value of RSPA.

Why should an RSPA Canada member, or prospective member, attend the May event?

JTB: There will many leaders of the Canadian Community attending this event. This is a great way to gain access to the leading minds of the industry, learn more about solutions provided by our hardware, software, payment processor and distribution sponsors, gain a greater understanding of relevant industry topics and learn about how RSPA can help your business succeed.

Can you give us a preview of the event agenda?

JTB: The details of the agenda and exact location/date are still a work in progress. We are aiming to host the event the first week in May in Toronto, Ontario. We will have a handful of table tops available to our sponsors during the networking portion of this evening event. We will also look to provide some kind of panel discussion to address some of the identified industry hot topics. More details to come, which will be available at <http://www.gorspa.org/canada>. You can contact membership@gorspa.org to receive an invitation to attend this event and join the RSPA Canadian Community. **c**

Some Canadian Community members gathered at INSPIRE (clockwise, from left): Bruce Mann, Paul Leduc, Christine Leduc, Colin Martin, Gilles Beauchamp, Michel Sirois, Jim Roddy, John Morgan, Justine Terlon-Bohonis, Andre Nataf and Lora Coggins



Hot takes from RSPA INSPIRE 2017



By Jim Roddy,
Reseller & ISV
Business Advisor
for Vantiv's
PaymentsEdge
Advisory Services

While I wouldn't have thought to use Chris's terms (I've been married for 12 years), he's exactly right about INSPIRE's incomparable networking opportunities. Soon after my arrival, I'd already had in-depth talks with C-level executives from reseller, ISV, vendor and distributor companies. Here are some of the tips I picked up at INSPIRE 2017:

HIRING TOP-NOTCH SALESPEOPLE

Resellers and ISVs often struggle to find and hire good salespeople. An ISV and I had discussed that problem the day before I boarded my plane to INSPIRE. Establishing that a candidate has the necessary sales skills is difficult, and asking them to sell you a pencil isn't an effective test. One reseller shared a tip: Ask sales candidates to prepare and present a PowerPoint on themselves. It's a perfect opportunity to learn about candidates and see their organizational and communication skills at work. If they can't sell you on their talents, they probably couldn't sell your product either.

SERVING MERCHANTS BETTER

I'm also always on the lookout for ways that solution providers can better serve their customers. In my list of "Guiding Principles for Growing the Value of a POS Reseller," we refer to this as continually obsessing over client satisfaction. One POS reseller told me that giving everyone on his team access to real-time messaging tool Slack has greatly enhanced their service. "Service calls get routed there, and our response time is 10 times better than before," he told me. "It's generally now a five-minute response time. It's great to watch how quickly issues are resolved."

"I'm talking with many people I never thought I'd have a chance to. I'm dating up — and it's awesome!"

— Chris Rumpf of Rumpf Computer Solutions on the RSPA's INSPIRE Conference

COMPENSATING SALES REPS IN THE SAAS MODEL

Another reseller struggle is determining the best way to compensate sales reps given the shift to the solutions-as-a-service/recurring revenue business model. Resellers know how to pay a rep on an install where the customer pays up front, but what do you do for a \$200-a-month sale? One reseller gives all the revenue from the first two months of the SaaS sale to the rep. Yep — *all of it*, and if they upsell the customer later, they get commission on that, too. This structure pays a living wage to the rep and keeps them hungry to keep selling new customers.

Selling solutions-as-a-service was a big part of many conversations at INSPIRE. Leading POS resellers are learning lessons and adapting their business methodologies. "In the past we focused on how large we could make the sale," one reseller told me. "Now we focus on the lifetime value of the customer. We ask ourselves, 'How do we maximize our revenues over three years?'"

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Top: The room was filled with attendees eager to gain insight from INSPIRE's guest speakers, the Roadside MBA Team.

Middle: Attendees listen intently during Monday's education session.

Bottom: Kelli Stewart (Advanced Data Systems) takes notes during an education session.



Lora Coggins (Toshiba) asks a question during the session.

Michael Mazzeo, of the Roadside MBA Team, shares strategies with the crowd.



Kelly Funk (RSPA) with RSPA Chairman Tom Reichart (Vantiv) and Sharon Reichart.



During the presentation by the Roadside MBA Team, Missy Berkshire, Scott Berkshire and Dale Seefeldt (all of Tulsa Cash Register) pay close attention.

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We lay managed services on top of what we already do for them.” To that point, I’ve been counseling resellers that their prior business model was a sprint; the Goddess of Commerce now requires that they run a marathon. The sprint was selling as much hardware, software and peripherals as possible initially. In the marathon, the customer must be sold technology and services over the course of a long relationship. This marathon isn’t 26.2 miles; it’s a never-ending race.

TRANSITIONING TO THE SOLUTIONS-AS-A-SERVICE MODEL

An executive told me that recurring revenue is “not that complicated, but you have to get moving. Migrating to that model will hit your top-line sales, but the swing isn’t as deep if you manage it.” This exec’s message for resellers who worry the subscription model will affect their operations and cash flow: “Your customers need to have the choice of monthly fees or someone else will provide it. It makes no sense to walk away from those deals and get zero instead of something.”

INCREASE IN SELF-SERVICE SALES

One medium-sized reseller told me 2016 was his best year ever in terms of revenue, sparked by a sharp increase in self-service kiosk sales. He said the increase in the legal minimum wage in several states is driving this spike, and he expects that part of his business to continue to rise in 2017.

ARE YOU FOCUSING TOO MUCH ON PRICING?

ScanSource POS/Barcoding President Paul Constantine commented to me that the presentation at Monday’s general session reminded him of an important truth: Despite customers talking about it all the time, your core value proposition isn’t your price. Of course, your price must be in the ballpark of acceptability, but what truly differentiates you are the services and customer experience you provide. If you innovate to become head-and-shoulders above the competition in those two areas, you have a winning and sustainable value proposition. **c**



Paul Oyer, Roadside MBA

5 HOT TIPS from INSPIRE 2017

1. Ask sales candidates to prepare and present a PowerPoint on themselves.

Learn about them — their organizational skills, communication skills, attention to detail, critical-thinking skills and more.

2. Give everyone on your team access to a real-time messaging tool.

Enhance service by routing service calls to a tool such as Slack.

3. Give all the revenue from the first two months of the SaaS sale to the sales rep.

Keep them hungry to keep selling new customers by rewarding them.

4. Keep an eye on issues and trends impacting the verticals you service — and capitalize.

State minimum wage increases translated to increased kiosk sales for one reseller.

5. What truly differentiates you are the services and customer experience you provide.

Innovate to rise above competition in both areas, and your value proposition will be a winning one.