



Welcome Letter

Sept. 16 - 18, 2026
Hilton Chicago/Oak Brook Hills Resort & Conference Center
Oak Brook, IL

Welcome to CSP's Tobacco Plus Forum

The 60s Buffalo Springfield classic, For What It's Worth, resonates at our CSP Tobacco+ Forum. Embrace the opening lyrics:

There's something happening here

What it is ain't exactly clear....

Well, for the backbar — the multi-generational home of cigarettes, cigars and moist smokeless — something is happening here. But what it is, is clear.

Our resets are proof that the transition talked about several years ago to heat-not-burn is finally accelerating thanks, in part, to a recent apparent course correction by the FDA to approve a growing line of modern oral and vape products.

That's the headline. The text that follows are the myriad challenges:

What's the right balance of traditional and new-age products?

For modern oral, how many skus and tiers of milligram levels are right, and how many are too much where it triggers purchase paralysis?

What about the rest of the backbar? What's the future of MST? Flavored Cigars? And, of course, cigarettes—long the top selling segment in the c-store space?

We are thrilled to welcome you to what will be a powerful three days. We're excited to introduce you to several new presenters, including **Guy Bentley** from the Libertarian-leaning think tank Reason Foundation; and senior executives **Ajay Yadagiri** and **Paul Grubbs** from Management Science Associates.

Joining them are recognized nicotine thought leaders **Bonnie Herzog** of Goldman Sachs and **David Spross** of NATO. And providing a critical regulatory update on cannabis and its derivatives is the insightful Saul Ewing Partner **Jonathan Havens**.

There's another critical layer at this event: **The Retailer**. We will consume a heavy dose of retailer presentations and positions, including our version of Ted Talks called Retailer Talks, led by category management veterans **Melissa McPherson** and **Mary Sonatore**, respectively from Delta Sonic and Refuel; a **3-member retailer panel**; and our very popular **Thinking & Drinking**, where you can bring up whatever is on your mind.

Don't sit back. Engage! And let's make this the best Tobacco Plus Forum yet.

On behalf of CSP & Informa, thank you for taking the time to spend a few days with your peers.

Appreciatively,

Mitch Morrison

CSP VP of Retailer Relations + Event Content Director