

## IT&CM China 2013 draws local interest

More Chinese buyers, and those from association and corporate travel categories spotted at the three-day tradeshow.

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The Incentive Travel & Conventions, Meetings (IT&CM) China 2013 saw some 3000 MICE professionals converge at the Shanghai World Expo Exhibition & Convention Center from April 17 to 19.

In the official show press conference held at Gran Melia Shanghai, co-organisers TTG Asia Media managing director Darren Ng; China International Travel Service (CITS) Limited, Head Office vice-president Chen Yueliang; and MP International (Shanghai) general manager Fiona Ho

highlighted that the show saw the largest percentage of Chinese buyers to date, standing at 65 per cent out of 362 professionals from DMCs, PCOs, corporate travel and associations.

Despite rumours of corporate groups cancelling trips to China due to the recent bird flu strain, or concerns over tensions in the region causing a dent in the show, the attendance appeared healthy, with Mr Ng believing the impact hadn't been significant on the MICE industry.



Press conference at the Gran Melia Shanghai.



Meetings and Exhibitions Hong Kong booth.



Jazz entertainers at the opening ceremony.



Opening ceremony hosted by Kerry Hotel Pudong.

The spotlight was on association and corporate travel this year, with exhibitors expressing prior to the show their interest in meeting with more buyers from those categories. The educational components of IT&CM were catered to this very request. Working with industry partner MCI Group, one day focused entirely on association meetings. Federation China Trade Association & Chambers of Commerce CEO Liu Youqian delivered a keynote address to executives involved in the business on how Chinese associations currently faced an impending bottleneck growth and how governmental reforms may impact their future development.



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Association Day forum.

These delegates also participated in three other association forums specially tailored for them, with speakers including MCI Group's Nikki Walker, American Society of Association Executives Maria Tong, Australasian Society of Association Executives Simon Pryor and Tenpin Bowling Association of Queensland Ryan Xia.

The next day was dedicated to corporate travel, with a talk by MasterCard Worldwide on achieving maximum savings with innovative e-payments and American Express Meetings & Events providing insights into the risk factors and how meeting planners can mitigate them, from its 2013 Meetings Risk Mitigation Report.

On the exhibition floor spanning 7100 square metres, attendees saw new destinations such as Brussels, Dalian, Guilin, Philippines and Xiamen, while corporate brands Accor, Fujita Kanko Hotels & Resorts, JTB Group, Merci France, Memento Asia, New Century Hotels & Resorts, Nippon Travel Agency, Okura Hotels & Resorts and more saw their own booths.

Social functions being one of the highlights of IT&CM China 2013, the show was officially opened by a welcome ceremony and dinner at the Kerry Hotel Pudong of Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts. One of the official hotels\* for the show, Kerry hosted delegates in a space touted as Shanghai's largest pillar-less ballroom, treating guests to a classic Chinese literature performance "Peony Pavilion" performed by Kunqu Opera.



Dinner hosted by Seoul Tourism Organization at the Gran Melia Shanghai.



Business appointments on the exhibition floor.



Exhibition floor.

Meetings and Exhibitions Hong Kong, Seoul Tourism Organization, Genting Hong Kong and Business Events Australia were the other sponsors behind the show's hosted luncheons, dinners and cocktail receptions.

IT&CM China 2013 also allowed delegates to schedule 100 per cent of their business appointments prior to the event via the Pre-Scheduled Appointments (PSA) and Online Diary functions. This was unprecedented as only up to 60 per cent of appointments were scheduled for previous years during PSA.

According to Mr Ng, the adoption rate of the Online Diary was encouraging as more than 90 per cent of exhibitors took advantage of the facility, while "over 40 per cent of exhibitors have achieved 80 per cent completed schedules 10 days before the event".

IT&CM China 2014 is expected to take place in the same venue from 15-17 April next year. **m**

\*The official hotels for IT&CM China 2013 were Four Points by Sheraton Shanghai Pudong, Gran Melia Shanghai, Kerry Hotel Pudong Shanghai, Renaissance Shanghai Yu Garden Hotel, and Shanghai Marriott Luwan.