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and **cost.** ”



Meeting Centre offers exclusiveness experience for Professional Conferences

Hosting a successful conference or convention is dependent on a range of factors, including location, quality of the venue and the calibre of the venue team. Most recently, two international organisations discovered that the people and facilities offered by Hong Kong’s AsiaWorld-Expo were key to the success of their events.

In a region with a wide selection of excellent convention and exhibition centres, AsiaWorld-Expo continues to stake its claim as one of Asia’s most versatile and professional venues. Best known for its large-scale, international trade fairs and for playing host to some of the world’s best entertainment acts, AsiaWorld-Expo also has a more intimate side.

Recently, the centre played host to two leading, specialist conventions, both attracting around 600 delegates. While the subjects discussed may have differed– knowledge management in one, and medical services in the other– the desire to host a professional event within a tight budget was the same.



AsiaWorld-Expo – Flexibility, convenience and cost

“Why did we choose AsiaWorld-Expo? It’s a combination of reasons: flexibility, convenience and cost,” explained Professor David Wai Lok Cheung, Head of Computer Science Department of the University of Hong Kong, who was instrumental in pulling together the Conference on Information and Knowledge Management (CIKM), held in early November 2009.

For Ms Antonie Jager of CongO GbmH, organiser of the LINC Asia-Pacific event held in January 2010, said their search started on a regional level.

“We were originally looking at China, and Hong Kong seemed a natural choice because of its easy accessibility for regional and global delegates and the level of English here. We visited a few venues, but I was most impressed by the team at AsiaWorld-Expo. On top of that, the cost was really competitive.”

Professor Cheung said they also looked at a number of venues. “For us, it was about flexibility. For example, we ended up having almost double the number of delegates we’d planned for. This was great, but did throw up some problems. Thankfully the staff at AsiaWorld-Expo were excellent. They immediately suggested a larger space and organised extra catering. It was very reassuring.”



Meeting and Hospitality Centre offers compact solution

With ten massive halls, visitors often equate AsiaWorld-Expo with thousand-strong exhibitor events. However, for CIKM and LINC the priority was to have a selection of smaller venues within a defined area.

"We chose the Level 2 Meeting Room area and it was ideal," explained Ms Jager. "It's all on one floor and has its own separate entrance off the main venue. It also has its own reception area, where our delegates put up their booths, and a combination of rooms for larger meetings or smaller break-out sessions."

"Most importantly, the balance was just right. The area was large enough to host our exhibitors and meetings, but small enough to keep everyone together. That's ideal for a convention meeting like ours," Ms Jager added.

Professor Cheung agreed. "We really liked the Meeting Rooms. It had a good feel to it. We liked the arrangement of the rooms, and our delegates appreciated the extra tables and chairs to relax, chat or check emails."

As a slightly larger event with almost 700 delegates, CIKM chose to use a combination of the Meeting Rooms for the conferences, the IKON Seaview Restaurant for tea breaks and the larger AsiaWorld-Summit Hall for luncheons.

"Despite using three different areas, it still felt really compact and it was easy for our delegates to move around the areas," explained Professor Cheung. "They loved that we had the exclusive use of these spaces – so were free from disturbance – and the sea views from the restaurant certainly went down well!"

Location, location, location

Located within the airport complex and alongside a range of hotel, shopping and dining options, AsiaWorld-Expo is popular with organisers who need to combine convenience with quality.

"AsiaWorld-Expo was just right for our delegates, many of whom were flying in from around the world. You fly in, go straight to the Airport Express train, and AsiaWorld-Expo is the next stop – about a minute away. Most of our guests were staying at the Hong Kong SkyCity Marriott Hotel, which is also right next to AsiaWorld-Expo. It was a perfect package," explained Professor Cheung.

“ Technology was a key issue. We had presentations that had to be broadcast live by satellite transmission from Europe, and here at AsiaWorld-Expo it's been a seamless process. ”

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Local delegates were also well looked after. “To make things easy, we arranged a direct shuttle bus, and of

course, they could also use Airport Express link which has stations on Hong Kong Island and Kowloon,” Professor Cheung added.

Easy access from the Mainland was also appreciated by delegates of the medical convention. “The China market is developing rapidly and is of real interest to our delegates from Europe and the United States. We also now have a strong contingent of medical professionals coming from within China, so Hong Kong was a natural choice,” said Ms Jager.

“Also, from a practical standpoint, we need to pack a lot of business into a few short days, so keeping everyone together and having a hotel right next door is a good solution. I know a lot of business and networking continues in the hotel. It has great facilities and is only a two minute commute on foot,” she added.

Exceptional convention facilities and services

While the location, quality and capacity of the venue are major selling points, convention organisers often point to the extra value-added services when choosing a conference centre.

“We’d certainly highlight the professional support we were given, especially on the technology side,” said Professor Il-Yeol Song, the Conference co-chair of CIKM. “One example was the WiFi connectivity. For us internet connectivity is like water. Thankfully the AsiaWorld-Expo staff went the extra mile and organised enhanced WiFi connectivity, which went down very well with our delegates.”

Ms Jager felt the same way. “Technology was a key issue. We had presentations that had to be broadcast live by satellite transmission from Europe, and here at AsiaWorld-Expo it’s been a seamless process.”

For Professor Song the F&B team also merited a special mention. “I must attend four or five international conferences every year, so I definitely have something to measure it against. What we often find is that you get speed, but poor quality, or you get high quality, but everything takes forever. In AsiaWorld-Expo we had both. The atmosphere was just right and the food was delicious.”



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Off-site activities enhance appeal

Experienced event organisers also appreciate that delegates need to let off steam at the end of the day. Located on Lantau Island and close to a number of well-known attractions, AsiaWorld-Expo is well positioned for leisure activities.

“Our delegates really enjoyed the trip to the Ngong Ping Cable Car,” said Professor Cheung. “Independently, the delegates also enjoyed the nearby shopping and dining and the easy trip into downtown Hong Kong via the Airport Express, which has a station within the venue itself,” he added.

Getting the balance right: service, facilities and cost

Ultimately, the success of any event is gauged by the delegates, explained Professor Song. “For us, the response has been overwhelmingly positive. A lot of people mentioned the convenience factor. Having the venue, airport and hotel all within walking distance is excellent. Often you have to travel at least 40 minutes from the airport to the venue, and then another 30 minutes between the venue and the hotel. Here it’s all close by.”

“ The venue was **spacious**, but not overwhelming, and the staff were **caring and responsive** to unforeseen changes. AsiaWorld-Expo was also a **cost-effective solution**, but we didn’t have to compromise on quality or service. Overall we have had a **wonderful experience.** ”

“If I had to pinpoint one aspect, it would have to be the staff,” said Professor Cheung. “They always seemed willing to go the extra mile. Without this additional support, we would not have had the successful event we did.”

To sum up, said Professor Song: “The venue was spacious, but not overwhelming, and the staff were caring and responsive to unforeseen changes. AsiaWorld-Expo was also a cost-effective solution, but we didn’t have to compromise on quality or service. Overall we have had a wonderful experience.”



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