

ASIA CRUISE COOPERATION LUNCHEON

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CRUISE

Kenneth Wong

General Manager, MICE & Cruise and Regional Director, Europe

Harbouring Faith in Hong Kong's Cruise Tourism

“ The endorsement of our trade partners and cooperation with partnering destinations are essential for promoting the Hong Kong cruise experience – like fair winds for a smooth sailing. ”

As safety holds a high priority among cruise voyagers, the major challenge for the HKTb's cruise team in 2019/20 was to instil faith into cruise lines and travel agents while promoting Hong Kong as a safe and appealing cruise destination for their customers.

Kenneth Wong, who steers the HKTb's cruise business, talked about the importance of support from cruise service providers and partnering destinations, “Cruise development requires cooperation with neighbouring ports as popular cruise itineraries always include a number of attractive cruise destinations. And unlike other travellers who plan their own itinerary, cruise travellers rely greatly on cruise lines and travel agents to sort out their entire trip, both at sea and on land. The endorsement of our trade partners and cooperation with partnering destinations are essential for promoting the Hong Kong cruise experience – like fair winds for a smooth sailing.”

The WWOs lined up familiarisation trips to Hong Kong for Lion Travel, a Taiwanese agency, and travel agents in Western China with Royal Caribbean International, for the senior management of the companies and marketers to see Hong Kong with their own eyes. Wong elaborated, “During the familiarisation trips, the visiting travel agents explored Hong Kong as if they were cruisers. We introduced them to new points of interest in town as well as trending cultural hubs. These trips successfully rebuilt confidence in Hong Kong among the cruise trade in our source markets, and our Taiwanese partners were inspired to develop some new in-town and inter-port itineraries for different travel seasons that added unique appeal to each deployment.”

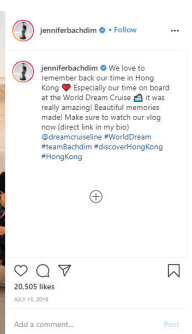


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Stepping up consumer-facing promotions

Tactically, the HKTb further helped out with the marketing costs of cruise lines by increasing its share of the matching fund as an incentive to drive the development of marketing campaigns selling Hong Kong.

Wong quoted two of the HKTb's publicity initiatives in 2019/20, "Our Southeast Asian and Mainland offices play important roles in engaging the media and trade in their respective markets for developing co-op promotions that pinpoint specific consumer groups. During the year, we teamed up with Indonesia's national broadcaster Trans TV to feature celebrity families on a cruise homeported in Hong Kong in a two-episode programme *Modern Moms*. In Mainland China, we enlisted KOLs to post videos of their summer cruise trips to Hong Kong and share insider stories on their *Meipai* and *Weibo* channels. The reach of these publicity campaigns was tremendous, achieving over 10 million views in the two markets."



The strategy of the HKTb's cruise team worked as they had envisioned it. The number of ship calls and cruise passenger throughput both showed mild growth. "It proves that Hong Kong holds a strong appeal to cruise operators and travellers alike," Wong concluded.



CRUISE KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2019/20

- 218 ship calls and cruise passenger throughput of more than 903,000 in the calendar year 2019
- Welcomed maiden call of Asia's newest and largest cruise ship *Spectrum of the Seas*
- Launched 24 co-op programmes in 11 markets
- Mainland co-op programme achieved over 9.2 million views on *Meipai* and *Weibo*
- Trans TV's *Modern Moms* achieved a viewership of over 1.6 million in total