

THE EVOLUTION OF BUSINESS EVENTS

# M&C / ASIA

MEETINGS AND CONVENTIONS

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## THE BOOKING BATTLE

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AT HOTELS'  
DISTRIBUTION  
STRATEGIES

## LURED BY LOYALTY PROGRAMMES

HOW POINTS  
AFFECT DECISIONS

## + PLANNER'S PORTFOLIO:

- STRATEGISE  
WITH SUPPLIERS
- SAFEGUARD  
YOUR DATA

# HOSPITALITY OUTLOOK 2017

HOW DO EXPECTATIONS MATCH UP?



# West meets east

Straddling two cultures, Yuji Wendler, managing director of teamtravel premium finds the ingredient for customer satisfaction.

**Words** Esther Faith Lew

Tourism runs in the family, and Yuji Wendler knew from the age of five that he would be in the travel industry. But instead of a career in hotel management, which he had set his sights on, the door to group and MICE tourism opened up for Yuji. And that was the beginning of a lifelong career that has inspired him ever since.

In 2009, he joined his business partner to start teamtravel, a company that specialised in sports camps and events, and in 2011, he started teamtravel premium, a MICE management company.

Today, teamtravel premium has garnered a reputation for organising quality events and incentives travel. His company has recently won the Japan Incentive Travel Award 2016 for “best creative planning”, which was held in Tokyo at IME 2016, the 26th International Meetings Expo.

Yuji, who is of German and Japanese parentage, enjoys an affinity with Japanese culture and knowledge, allowing him to bridge a professional link between the two countries to provide well-designed and creative events.

Meetings & Conventions Asia catches up with him to find out more about what drives teamtravel’s success.

## What is your outlook for Asia in the next few years?

Asia is an amazing market with so many possibilities. The region is considered as the non-plus-ultra when it comes to service and hospitality. The foundation is there. Add to that the

great infrastructure of these countries and what we have are the essential criteria for successful MICE growth.

Aggressive destination marketing by NTOs over the years has reaped the rewards, and South Korea’s efforts are a good example of that. Japan will also be in the limelight when it hosts the Tokyo Olympics in 2020.

## Which city inspires you the most?

All cities are inspiring in different ways. I like international cities because of the mix of cultures. Singapore is a great place as I feel safe. And Tokyo is inspiring because I can be creative and adventurous in trying new things.

## Where is your favorite venue for entertaining clients or having business meetings?

I generally love small cosy places that the locals go to. They are ideal for meetings because the authentic setting creates a memorable experience for business partners. It can be a pub in Dublin, hawker food centres in Singapore or a nice “izakaya” in Tokyo.

## What are your benchmarks for defining a successful incentive event?

It is always about customer satisfaction.

We always try to find out from our customers what wasn’t ideal or satisfactory. We need to know how to make things better – and that feedback is used as the benchmark for making the next event even better. As Benjamin Franklin said: “If you fail to plan, you are planning to fail!”



Yuji Wendler, managing director, teamtravel premium

Besides this, I believe that human beings are mostly touched by emotions. Creating emotions makes events memorable. Guests will remember emotional meetings or events the most, and for the longest time. If we deliver an experience and touch them emotionally, I would consider the event a success.

## What are the trends you observe in clients’ demands for creating memorable events and meetings? How do you meet those demands?

As a board member of MPI Germany, we are always discussing the future of meetings. The topics of interactive meetings and delegate participation are the focus right now.

Teamtravel cooperates with suppliers who offer the technologies that realise participants’ active involvement. Some of these tools, like gaming, can be used to create unique experiences which leads to positive emotions and memories. 