



HARBOUR GRAND KOWLOON

A Grand Gathering: Hong Kong Stakes its Claim in the MICE industry

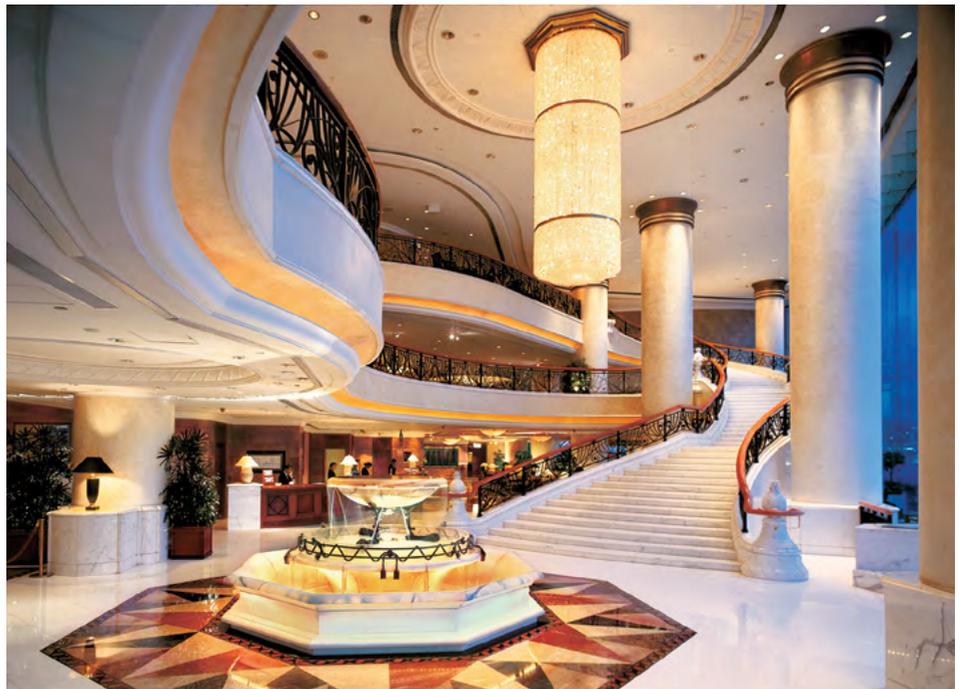
For hues and views, a glimpse at the hotel website reveals all. We go deeper to uncover the salient features which will make all the difference to your next event, by talking to YNGVAR STRAY, veteran hotelier and General Manager of the HARBOUR GRAND KOWLOON.

The demand for top-notch hospitality and hotel functionality is compounded when dealing with large groups, the defining characteristic of the Meetings, Incentives, Conventions & Exhibitions (M.I.C.E) category. This wellspring of revenue also entails a corresponding amount of hard work, months of prep (and prayer), and precise execution for all deliverables requested by a client. Should anything fall through, any minute detail that stays a customer's total satisfaction, and any chances for further business are put in jeopardy. Success affords repeats, referrals and wonders for an establishment's reputation, until a booking for the next event, and the clock is reset.

Choice of Venue

Yngvar Stray is no stranger to this cycle, nor is the luxurious Harbour Grand Kowloon, of which he has been recently put in charge. The frequency of such events has, however, grown much slimmer; given the unsettled economy, thrift and efficient spending becomes many a prospect company's policy.

Bargain-priced alternatives have been mushrooming across the landscape, much to the chagrin of the more celebrated, and more expensive, establishments. In addition, other matters make things no easier for the old vanguard of Hong



The Harbour Grand Kowloon, an institution in Hong Kong's MICE Industry.

Kong luxury hotels, some of which are not under their control.

"The competing factors start way outside the hotel ground - it starts with the choice of destination, its air and land connection, its ground infrastructure, its conference and exhibition facilities and on ground activities to do. This is an area that Hong Kong Tourism Board has over the past five years invested significantly in to better face up to the ever rising competition from the surrounding

destinations which have started to steer away the natural MICE business that Hong Kong used to enjoy in the past," says Stray.

If You Build It, They Will Come

"So once the destination is secured the selection of hotel partner is on, and among others, key for success is location, hotel facilities but perhaps most of all, the ability to instill trust in our capabili-



effectively the customer's customer, begs the question: does this hotel have the faculties and experience to deliver on its promises?

"As an event planner, one has to be certain that the partner selected is able to pull through and not create any letdowns. With Harbour Grand Kowloon being a nineteen year old hotel, we have a long list of successful events and clients to refer to, and with many of the key managers and service staff being with the hotel throughout, this speaks of confidence, combined with the hotel's location, size of guest rooms and infrastructure."

Service Matters

From a product and services standpoint, the Harbour Grand Kowloon remains a highly competitive player and a force to reckon with. It boasts an expansive guest room inventory, all units generously sized, as well as a wide range of award winning restaurants. Its harbourfront location makes it easily accessible from anywhere in Hong Kong, perfect to manage larger movements of delegations, and if that isn't enough, it houses its own private pier, allowing guests the unique experience of arriving directly by boat.

But besides its marvelous facilities, the true strength of the Harbour Grand Kowloon lies in its staffing. "[Our edge stems from] experience and investing in people who have a passion for and pride in the product they deliver. Once you are able to establish an emotional connection between the staff members and the hotel, the quality of service elevates itself from 'doing a job' to that of 'this is also a reflection of me', which drives that quest for perfection and innovation in delivering a more personalized experience for the guests."

Distinctly Professional

Stray is proud of the deeply diverse

experience of the Harbour Grand Kowloon MICE team, particularly in terms of pulling off challenging projects for demanding clients. In fact, he considers it the hotel's unique selling point.

"The event and convention sales team is comprised by a very experienced group of people and several key players have been with the hotel since it opened in 1995. The spectrum of various types of events spans from hosting heads of state to movie stars and celebrities. Corporate and social affairs, as well as outside catering on the harbour or at other more unique or remote venues are all in the repertoire of past events that have been executed by the team."

Harbour Grand Kowloon has, through the years developed a keen understanding of its guests. Such rich insight puts the hotel leagues ahead of its competition and more equipped to provide all the essentials, and virtually anything a client could possibly require. "Each request made is handled by one of our executives in the conversion services team with the aim to tailor-make each event to the needs of the client. With this mindset the value-added takeaway is that we move from being just a vendor of a site to that of a business partner that works together with the event organizer, from the planning stage through execution to post event follow up."

The demands of MICE are colossal, its market, fickle, its rewards, immense. Striving towards creating an unparalleled brand of service is the minimum for any player on the field, as their output reflects not only on themselves, but also on everyone else in the territory. As a representative of Hong Kong, Harbour Grand Kowloon waves a banner of excellence worthy of Asia's World City, and at their standards, will ensure that business keeps coming to town. ■

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ties to deliver on our service promise."

There are a slew of things for a hotel to consider, such as who is being hosted, what their organizational goals are, logistical concerns including dates and number of attendees, and with all this information, arrangements for operations, concessions and program. With MICE customers spanning from highly professional meeting planners to that of just a client company's representative, it is up to the hotel partner to serve as the one-stop shop to cater to the needs, whims, and objectives of its patron's guests.

This three-way interplay between the host, client-presenter and its audience,