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New concepts drive China airport commercial performance

Posted by: Admin In Asia/Pacific, Events News, Retail News September 10, 2014 Comments Off

The second and final day of the Fourth China Airport Commercial and Retail Summit began with an uplifting presentation from InterVistas vice-president commercial Johan Schölvinc focusing on "Exciting new concepts in Airport Retail," with a particular emphasis on China.

Schölvinc highlighted key Chinese duty-free and travel-retail developments such as the recent opening of the world's largest duty-free shop operated by China Duty Free Group in the new Haitang Bay Mall. He also recalled the official opening of the new luxury boulevard at Shanghai Hongqiao International on January 2013 and that of 13 new fashion stores at Shenzhen airport which began trading on March 14 2013. Last year Chinese travellers again led the way in tax-free shopping with expenditure up 13.5% to more than \$100bn according to Tax refund specialist Global Blue. Chinese visitor arrivals to South Korea also rose 45.8% in the first seven months of 2014. Chinese visitors represented 42.1% of all arrivals, compared to 16.7% of the country's long-standing dominant tourist group, the Japanese.

He then touched on several shop concepts which are becoming more evident in airport retail around the world. He said: "The biggest trend which is now the norm is walk-through duty-free right after security. It can be duty-free or duty-paid and lead to a 25% increase in performance.

"Stores are also getting bigger with more shopping square meters per million departing passengers. There are also more unique products are more sense of place in locally flavoured environments."

Next on stage was SEA Milan Airports commercial director Non-Aviation Luigi Battuello who presented the new commercial mission at Milan Malpensa International airport. The project will be discussed in more detail in the Cannes issue of DFNI. More than €30m has been invested in renovations and upgrades since 2013 to prepare for Expo 2015 in Milan and to maximise returns.

The new-look departures area will consist of 46 new retail shops spanning 23,000sq m and a 2,000sq m main duty-free shop. There will also be a special focus on Chinese consumers who will receive welcome cards and benefit from a dedicated shopping helper corner. The heart of the new commercial area will be dedicated to luxury and the new development strategy includes a Georgio Armani Boutique—the first in a European airport—and other luxury brands. Battuello said: "The terminal was opened in 1988 and had a very old design. This was okay for then but is now quite dull. The objective is to increase penetration and promote a real luxury brand experience and more comfort in the terminal."

The final presentation before the morning coffee break came from DKMA director James Ingram, who explained how improving the passenger experience is key to growing non-aeronautical revenue. "More and more airports are trying to improve passenger satisfaction with their commercial offerings," he said.

Ingram, who identified, the need for airports to prioritise, attract, convert, measure and convince in order to improve the commercial experience added: "It is about getting the basics right all the time for passengers, design processes that keep stress levels low and making airports a great place to spend time in."

Other standout presentations were delivered by LS Travel Retail China Eudes Fabre and Xi'an Xianyang International airport COO Wolfgang Weil. The former raised three important questions— How can we increase sales in duty-paid luxury airport stores when there is no price advantage compared to downtown, how can we overcome the challenge posed by electronic commerce and how can we integrate retail and food and beverage? Fabres said: "The travel-retail luxury airport sales environment needs to be adjusted to attract customers. This is not just in terms of layout, but from a service system perspective to."

Weil's presentation focused on airport retail communication in Chinese airports. "Many European airports have started with comprehensive apps for mobile phones covering retail, food and beverage and parking. All of this available in China, but hardly works.

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In terms of other kinds of communication Weil added: "If a media company works hand in hand with a duty-free operator this can assist in terms of display. Singapore Changi, for example, uses empty counters to show there is something commercial related. Existing facilities can be used to communicate."

The event concluded with a panel discussion on how airports, concessions and brands can leverage technology to increase commercial opportunities while improving the passenger experience.



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