Work With Us Or Be Left Behind

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The New Realities transforming this dynamic region

The fastest growing region in the world with billions of consumers, Asia Pacific offers both significant opportunities and challenges.

Leading world research organisation ESOMAR will be addressing the New Realities faced by the region, and how these are being approached by the marketing and market research industries, at its ESOMAR ASIA PACIFIC 2007 conference in Kuala Lumpur. Professionals in research, marketing, advertising and media, representing 26 countries, will be attending.Â

Asia Pacific is a vast region with a growing middle class in a number of countries, particularly India and China, with many countries showing substantial year on year growth and emerging new life style trends. ESOMAR ASIA PACIFIC 2007 will focus on the regionâ€™s burgeoning confidence and how it is starting to play a greater role on the global stage.

The conference will be forward thinking â€“ looking at the next frontier for Asia Pacific and exploring ideas from and for the region. Conference committee chair John Marinopoulos, director of DVL Smith Group in Australia, says: â€œOur aim is to present a fresh view of Asia Pacific and the opportunities in the next 10 to 15 years. Already, the region is driving more innovation and there is a growing confidence in pan-Asian brands and culture. The power of consumers, particularly young women, is also shifting.

â€œMarketing and market research companies are looking to invest but need to understand the New Realities, including the impact of technology, changing consumer society, people resource issues and, most importantly, that Asia Pacific is not a homogenous entity.â€•

The impact of technologies such as broadband, for example, means increasing connectivity across the Asia Pacific region impacting non-urban areas, according to Marinopoulos. â€œThis will have an even larger impact on the power of Asia Pacific consumers in the forthcoming yearsâ€•.

Branding is a key theme of ESOMAR ASIA PACIFIC 2007 with a focus both on redefining western brands for Asia Pacific consumers, and the growing confidence in Asian brands in their own right. Keynote speaker Martin Roll, author of Asian Branding Strategy and a leading global business strategist, believes the next few years will see the emergence of more strategic global brands from the region.

â€œThere are very few Asian global brands, but this is starting to change as branding in Asia Pacific moves from tactical thinking into the boardroom and a key driver of shareholder value. Samsung, for example, has built itself as a global name, which other Asian brands are trying to emulate. The next 10 years will see many changes, particularly with the 2008 Olympics in Beijing taking Asian brands into billions of homes around the globe.â€•

Roll cites other iconic Asian brands such as Singapore Airlines and Banyan Tree Hotels & Resorts which he says have succeeded in capturing the spirit of the region, but have also lead the way by creating that spirit.Â Â Â

Issues addressed at ESOMAR ASIA PACIFIC 2007 will help many brands, and marketing and market research agencies trying to get a foothold in the region, particularly through mergers and acquisitions. Marinopoulos says: â€œThe days where an office in Asia was regarded as a satellite outpost are long gone. The Asia Pacific region demands a seat at the global strategic table of any business.â€•

Roll states: â€œFor western brands to succeed they need to customise to the region, be culturally sensitive, collaborate with a strong local partner â€“ even though foreign ownership is easing in many countries â€“ and take on board the community issues. Corporate social responsibility is extremely important and will grow immensely over the next five to 10 years. Businesses need to be sensitive to this.â€•

The local talent pool is also an issue that incoming investment needs to understand. Says Roll: â€œThere is a growing war for talent in the region. India, for example, is starting to change its role as just as an outsourcer and is building its own capabilities. In the past people who qualified in Asia wanted to work overseas. People are now starting to return to Asia, like the sea turtles, as they recognise the growing strategic importance of the region.â€•

The approach to marketing thinking and tools in the region is changing, too. â€œIn the past academics left Asia to work

overseas at global institutions. Many of the strategic academics at Harvard and INSEAD, for example, are from India,â€• Roll comments. â€œWithin 10 or 15 years, I expect the region will have its own academic institution on the global roster. They will also start to develop their own strategic marketing thinking and tools and not just take those developed in London or the US.â€•

Marinopoulos concludes: â€œThe Asia Pacific region is a bullet train in terms of growth. The message coming out of the Asia Pacific region to the rest of the world is strong. Work with us â€“ or be left behind.â€•

For further information on ESOMAR ASIA PACIFIC 2007, please go to the ESOMAR website: www.esomar.org