

Tips for visits to the Hong Kong Fairs *by Cristal Vazquez*

As the fair season arrives in Hong Kong and China, we thought it would be a good idea to share some tips with our fellow traders so as to make their experience more efficient and pleasant.

Here is your little guide to the fairs in Hong Kong:

What to DO :

- Do take the Hong Kong Airport Express: Hong Kong has one of the most amazing, easy and cheap transportation systems worldwide. If you are arriving by plane, when you arrive to Hong Kong airport, look for the "Airport Express". It is a train that will take you downtown in only 23 minutes avoiding traffic jams and will cost a mere HK\$100. This will also help you avoid those long taxi queues at the airport.
- Do get an Octopus Card: At any MTR station you can purchase (or rent) an Octopus Card. This colorful, stored value payment card can be used at any convenience store as well as to use any public transportation (except taxis). Add value at any convenience store as you run out of credit.
- Do get some cash: You can find several banks and money changers at Hong Kong Airport. You should get some local currency as taxi drivers and most regular shops do not accept other currencies. The Hong Kong Dollar (HKD) is pegged to the USD and you should calculate the exchange rate between 7.75 and 7.85 HKD vs USD (with small variations).
- Do bring your Business Cards: Bring enough business cards. In Hong Kong, China and most of Asia, it is common practice to present yourself as you exchange a business card. Give and take the name cards holding them with both hands, this is a sign of respect to your counterparty.
- Do register to the trade fairs: To save time when you get to the trade shows, register online when you are back at home. If you did not receive your badge back at home, bring along your business card to the online registration counter or check in at the machines to print out the badge by yourself.

There are also certain things that you should avoid when coming to a trade fair in Hong Kong. These may not be as obvious as the tips above, but will certainly make your quest more efficient.

- Do not come without your documents prepared: Complete your registration forms before you arrive, and have a passport-sized photo with you so you can get your guest pass badge organized efficiently. The other option is to pick up your entry badge at one of the 30 Overseas Buyers Registration offices, set up at appointed hotels.

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- Do not waste money on an interpreter last minute: People will try to sell you interpreter services before you walk in, but in fact, everyone at the Fair can speak a reasonable amount of English. Save your money for making deals!
- Do not stay in a hotel without convenient transportation: When choosing your hotel, ensure that it has regular bus services to and from the Fair, or that it is within walking distance to the nearest subway station. Don't count on being able to get a taxi, especially after the end of each Fair day.
- Don't assume things: Don't assume the supplier understood what you want; they come across thousands of buyers. You should follow up by e-mail as very few deals are closed during the fairs. Do not use jokes to get your message across; not only will your new Chinese acquaintances not "get" any sarcastic jokes, they will probably be confused and alienated as well.
- Do not focus only on getting the best price: If your sole objective is to get the best price, then you will almost certainly be compromising on the quality of your products and service. When meeting with a potential supplier or visiting their factory, ask lots of questions. Make sure you find out what other countries they supply, where their biggest market is, as well as whenever possible who their biggest clients are. Don't let the opportunity to conduct invaluable market research pass you by.
- Do not forget to do your research before and after: Before coming to the fair, use the websites available to locate the best suitable suppliers at the fair. There can be thousands of them and you only have a few days to go about. Once you have located and negotiated with them, do not forget to do some background checks – reviews from fellow buyers, google comments, and HKTDC listings whenever available. Whenever possible, visit the factory and make sure that the capacity fits your demand as well as the quality of the products they are producing.

Here are some useful websites to prepare your visit:

[Hong Kong Airport](#)

[Hong Kong Trade Development Council – Trade fair calendar](#)

[Global Sources Website](#)

Cristal Vazquez, board member of the MexCham Hong Kong and experienced trader, shares with us some of her tips to make the best out of your visit to the Hong Kong Trade Fairs. She has been living and working in Hong Kong for over 15 years for sourcing and buying offices for companies based in Latin America.

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