

READERS' POLL

What challenges has the industry faced in 2007?



David Barrett
Executive manager, events
Dielthelm Events, Thailand

"Political unrest, global terrorism, potential health scares and adverse weather come to mind. However, none of these top the list. The biggest challenge facing not only the MICE industry, but the entire tourism and hospitality industry at home here in Thailand, and regionally, is you!

"Yes, the human resource factor. Training and staff retention is the biggest challenge facing our industry today.

"There is a tremendous demand for skilled labour, which in turn puts pressure on organisations to look carefully at the training of their workforce."



Zulkefli Haji Sharif
Director convention division
Tourism Malaysia

"Our biggest challenge this year has been accessibility to Malaysia. We need to improve flight connections and bring more visitors directly to the destination.

"We can't get big groups here in just one or two flights at the moment. We are working closely with airlines from other countries to improve on this.

"Another aspect is that the long-haul markets are not fully aware of what Malaysia has to offer. To change this we need to meet event organisers.

"We need to have more of a competitive edge and revive their confidence in the destination."



Matthew Smith
General manager
The Extra Mile Company,
Singapore

"The biggest challenge for the MICE industry is the way in which multinational corporations are awarding incentive and conference business using their 'purchasing' department and no longer through product or marketing.

"With corporate needs to consolidate suppliers and get the cheapest price, key elements such as creativity, exceptional service and wow factors are not being recognised.

"But how many clients will remember a product launch that had no element to set it apart from earlier competitor events?"



Brett Hollis
Director
Big Stick Adventures, Australia

"The biggest challenge we face is educating incentive clients as to what a true incentive is.

"It's not simply arriving in a country and doing a range of day tours that every traveller does.

"It's about creating an exciting programme where delegates discover destinations through unique experiences in a dynamic format that the everyday traveller does not do, let alone knows exist.

"Used to help motivate a company's team to not only achieve but exceed its goals, the incentive must reflect the value of the team to the company and the value in achieving the desired outcomes."