

Gearing up for Post-Pandemic Edutainment Rebound

Merlin Entertainments launches LEGOLAND® Discovery Centre in Hong Kong, with an optimism to capture the pent-up demand for travel and entertainment after the pandemic.

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Ben Sweet
New Openings Director
Merlin Entertainments Asia Pacific



Twenty years ago, global theme park operator Merlin Entertainments came to Hong Kong and opened Asia's first Madame Tussauds at The Peak in 2000, which fast became one of the top tourist attractions in the city. Fast forward to 2021, the company has once again raised the bar of indoor family entertainment by bringing LEGOLAND® Discovery Centre to the heart of the city. Located in a flagship shopping complex in Tsim Sha Tsui, LEGOLAND® Discovery Centre Hong Kong is a 30,000-square-foot large creative space that contains different themes including interactive zones, rides and creative builds, providing a combination of education and entertainment for children and families.

A resilient consumer market in Hong Kong

According to Ben Sweet, Merlin Entertainments Asia Pacific New Openings Director, Hong Kong is one of the few gateway cities where the company did not have multiple attractions, and there are many reasons for Merlin to open the LEGOLAND® Discovery Centre. “First, the brand of LEGO is well-known in Hong Kong. With 98 percent prompted awareness, we are confident that it will receive good market traction. Second, Hong Kong consumers have very high expectations of visitor attractions, and they want high quality edutainment experiences that deliver fun for all family members, and we are here to do that. This is where our opportunities lie.”

“The impact of the COVID-19 has been felt across the travel and tourism sector, but Hong Kong is very resilient as we have seen in the past,” Sweet remarked. “Our number one priority is to ensure a safe environment for our employees and for our guests. So during the pandemic, we pulled together well-established plans in order to follow the government's restrictions. We've had to adapt and implement the highest standard when it comes to the welfare of our guests and employees. All the actions we've taken have been well communicated, and have made visitors more comfortable about coming back to our attractions.”

He added, “Consumer spending in Hong Kong actually had grown year-on-year up until around 2019. And now, Hong Kong's retail and businesses are slowly recovering, and everybody is getting used to the new normal. Recoveries from the pandemic are going to be positive, and we are definitely seeing pent-up demand for all those activities that people couldn't do during global lockdown.”

Tapping regional tourism market

Hong Kong serves as a regional office of Merlin with some 100 staff members managing its two main business lines in Hong Kong, as well as the operation of its APAC offices. Merlin also looks beyond the city for expansion and continuous investment, especially in the neighboring Greater Bay Area cities. Sweet remarked, “within a two-hour drive from us is Shenzhen, where there's an untapped family market,

particularly for our newest attraction. The Guangdong province also represents a fantastic opportunity, and we intend to capitalise it when the borders open, and we see those tourists coming back.”

“InvestHK has been hugely supportive of helping us make the right connections to get this business over the line. With their assistance, we've opened the LEGOLAND® Discovery Centre, and expanded our footprint here in Hong Kong. We couldn't have done it without them,” he concluded.

Merlin Entertainments Asia Pacific

- Merlin Entertainment currently operates 130 attractions, 20 hotels and 6 holiday villages in over 25 countries
- Its regional office is located in Hong Kong with main functions including on-site operations, human resources, finance, accounting, and business development

 legolanddiscoverycentre.com/hong-kong/

Watch the video:

