

'VISIT JAPAN' CAMPAIGN IS SUCCESSFUL



The tourism industry is growing world wide and Japan is no exception. The number of Japanese people with large amounts of disposable income rises and they are willing to spend it on more luxurious life styles. The number of inbound tourists is also growing. In fact, the government plans to attract 10 million tourists a year by 2010.

The officials are running the "Visit Japan" campaign and they promote the country all over the world as well as on the Internet. This development is of course very positive for hoteliers. The hotel sector has recently seen one of Japan's largest real estate transactions. Another fact is that for the first time in 15 years, land values in Tokyo are rising. The hotel sector started to transform the country's skyline in 1960s and 1970s, with the 1964 Olympics in Tokyo, the Osaka Expo World Fair in 1970, and the Sapporo Winter Olympics in 1972. Many hotels performed very well during 1970s and 1980s as it was a time of high economic growth, increased personal incomes and robust domestic demand. Hotels became the preferred venues for weddings, corporate meetings, negotiations and banquets.

Japan's National Tourist Organization (JNTO) has also revealed that in 2006 over 7.33 million tourists arrived in Japan, which is a substantial 9 percent increase from the previous year. They claim that the increase happened also because of the "Yokoso! Japan" (Visit Japan) tourism campaign. Director of JNTO, Mr. Hidenao Takizawa said they also face some troubles. "The language barrier is still our largest challenge - though we have increased the quality of our signs and equipment," Mr. Takizawa said. A very important market for Japanese tourism industry is Australia. "For 2006 alone, 195,100 Australian tourists arrived in Japan," said Mr. Takizawa. "A majority of these tourists traveled to Hokkaido, where the powder-like snow fields make ideal conditions for skiing. Australian skiers are also growing in the Hakuba region, which is conveniently located closer to Tokyo, Osaka and Kyoto."

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