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Connect to Hong Kong at Shanghai Expo

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Interview with Mr Richard Thomas, Chairman of HK4As

Transcript

Nick: Hello I'm Nick Waters. I am joined by Richard Thomas, chairman of HK4As which is organising a study on Chinese brands and is going to present the findings of the study at a seminar for Shanghai Expo on September 16.

Okay, Richard, could you first introduce HK4As for us?

Richard: Sure. Well the HK4As is the association of advertising agencies in Hong Kong. We represent our members' interests, and our desire is to build their profile, to support our members, and help to grow the industry here, to grow professionalism through education, through sharing best practices and through setting benchmarks and opportunities for our members of this industry to be successful.

Nick: HK4As has commissioned this huge study on Chinese Brands. What are the objectives of the study?

Richard: The study is designed to help us to find out and understand more about Chinese Brands currently, and perceptions of where they might have opportunities in the future. We have commissioned our study across the four big network holding companies, Omnicom, WPP, Interpublic and Publicis, and among other brand experts. After all, our members are brand experts, so they can provide a very good authoritative viewpoint on where Chinese brands can be more successful. So our objective is to provide Chinese companies, Chinese businesses and Chinese brands with tips and learnings to maximise their success as they enter into the global market place.

Nick: Richard, could you explain a little bit more about the project itself?

Richard: We have engaged in a survey designed to help us understand more around the subject to Chinese brands going global, and to give them success tips for now and for the future. What we have done is we have conducted the survey across over 29 countries all over the world amongst our agency members, and that has become a real opportunity for us to understand more. It is also the first in our industry to have that kind of breadth of survey. We really must thank TNS, our research partner, to enable us to have a great piece of research we can then take to the forum in Shanghai, which is co-organised by the TDC, to give some learnings and hopefully inspire some interest of Chinese companies looking at their opportunities.

Nick: What sort of reaction have you had from the Chinese companies involved in the survey?

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HONG KONG @ EXPO

Hong Kong Pavilion - "Hong Kong – Potential Unlimited", Zone A, Pudong, Adjacent to Chinese National Pavilion

Hong Kong's Urban Best Practices Area Exhibition - "Smart Card · Smart City · Smart Life", Hall B4-2, Zone E, Puxi

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Richard: It's very positive so far. People are very excited about the opportunities to really find new learnings, given that we have gone to brand experts all over the world. The learnings are very unique, and it's an opportunity for them to find new ways or understanding better ways for them to maximise the opportunities globally.

Nick: HK4As is going to present the findings of the survey at the seminar at the Shanghai Expo as a HKSAR programme for the Shanghai Expo. What do you hope to get out of this event?

Richard: We are looking to position Hong Kong and HK4As members as the optimum team to help Chinese brands and Chinese businesses as they look to expand globally. We see, of course, the rise of Chinese brands and businesses. They increasingly look to the global market place. We want to help them make the best of those opportunities because of the expertise Hong Kong businesses and Hong Kong agencies can bring in. We have decades of experience of helping international brands grow in markets such as China and rest of Asia. We see that we can be a fantastic gateway for Chinese brands as they look to go around the World now.

Nick: How do you see the results of this survey influencing the advertising companies in Hong Kong?

Richard: We hope that it's going to provide growth for those companies and our members through giving them an opportunity to open the conversations to Chinese businesses and China brands, and providing them with the expertise and the findings to make sure those Chinese companies can maximize the growth opportunities globally.

Nick: Hong Kong is already pretty strong in branding and marketing, how can Hong Kong help Mainland brands go global?

Richard: With our decades of experience bringing international brands to China and to other markets in Asia, we have established a deep understanding in how to help brands enter new markets. So what we want to do is to help Chinese companies and Chinese brands in reverse, so to speak. We want to help them as a gateway as they look to expand around the rest of the world using our expertise of bringing brands into new market places, where perhaps the brand owners are not on the ground locally, they need the expertise of someone like the HK4A members to help them maximise their success.

Nick: Thank you very much Richard. HK4As will present the findings of its global study on Chinese brands at the Shanghai Expo on September 16. Don't miss it!

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