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The Gap of event markets between the US and China Exploring application prospect of event software in China's hospitality and tourism market


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Running head: THE GAP OF EVENT MARKETS BETWEEN THE US AND CHINA

The Gap of Event Markets between the US and China

----- Exploring Application Prospect of Event Software in China's Hospitality and
Tourism Market

By

Ying Zhao

A professional paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Master of Science in Hotel Administration
William F. Harrah College of Hotel Administration

Graduate College
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
May 2010

THE GAP OF EVENT MARKETS BETWEEN THE US AND CHINA

Abstract

The Gap of Event Markets between the US and China

----- Exploring Application Prospect of Event Software in China's Hospitality and
Tourism Market

By

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This research paper compared scenarios of convention and event industry between the US and China, and explored application prospect of event technology in China's hospitality and tourism market. The study reviewed the landscape of event market in these two countries, examined performance of event software in the US, and figured out existing technology gap between the two markets. A typical application, www.certain.com was employed as sample of event software in testing tasks fit of the technology, and analyzing demand from end-users. The result indicated that there was a significant technology gap existing between event markets of the US and China. As a result, introducing appropriate event management knowledge and improved event technology from advanced region like the US will be potential trend for the development of China's convention and event industry.

Keywords: gap, event market, convention industry, application prospect, technology, event software, the US and China

THE GAP OF EVENT MARKETS BETWEEN THE US AND CHINA

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	2
Table of Contents.....	3
List of Tables.....	4
Acknowledgments.....	5
PART ONE.....	6
Introduction.....	6
Purpose of the Study.....	7
Statement of Problem.....	7
Justification.....	8
Constraints.....	8
Glossary.....	9
PART TWO.....	10
Introduction.....	10
A Few Definitions.....	10
The US Trade Show and Event Planning Industry Overview.....	11
Industry Technology Trend in the US.....	15
Typical Technology Tasks of Event Software.....	16
Application of Event Software in the US.....	18
Overview of the Industry in China.....	20
Problems Facing China's Convention and Exhibition Industry.....	23
PART THREE.....	25
Introduction.....	25
Discussion of Results.....	25
Conclusion.....	28
Recommendations	29
References.....	30

THE GAP OF EVENT MARKETS BETWEEN THE US AND CHINA

List of Tables

Table 1	Inflation Adjusted (Constant) Price in US.....	11
Table 2	Products and Service Segmentation.....	13
Table 3	Major Market Segments.....	14
Table 4	Industry Cost Structure in US (Year: 2009).....	14
Table 5	Technology Features at A Glance	16
Table 6	Inflation Adjusted (Constant) Price in China.....	20
Table 7	Major Market Segments.....	21
Table 8	Geographic Spread Based on Establishment Numbers.....	21
Table 9	Industry Cost Structure in China (Year: 2009).....	22
Table 10	Major Players and Market Share (Year: 2009).....	23

THE GAP OF EVENT MARKETS BETWEEN THE US AND CHINA

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THE GAP OF EVENT MARKETS BETWEEN THE US AND CHINA

PART ONE

Introduction

Thanks to the fast growing meetings and conventions' sector within the tourism industry, event management has emerged as a new professional in the recent decade. According to the research data for the year 2003 from Meetings & Conventions Journal, the meetings and conventions market in the US was estimated to be an industry worth \$40.8 billion. The figure was determined by the total value of output delivered to the final demand from expenditures of delegates, associations, exhibitors, corporate and incentive travellers. Along with the growth of the market, the approach of event management has been affected by technological advances. With personal computer and customized software accessible to the Internet, it is now possible for event planners to accomplish their job tasks in shorter time with lower cost. From pre-event sourcing and budget delimitation, on-event communication and customer support, and to post-event attendees' survey, web-based event software is playing an important role to help event professionals manage their events in more efficient and effective ways.

As a sample of SAAS (software-as-a-service) technology applied in event management field, event software incorporates internet technology to architect a dynamic and integrated platform for event practitioners to plan, design, and manage their events without limitations of size and genre of each event.

Since the convention and event industry is a global business involving bringing people together at a particular time, in a particular place, for a particular purpose (Julia, 2007), researching various situations of the industry as well as exploring feasibility of event technology across country boundaries obviously are valuable for industrial professionals to understand

THE GAP OF EVENT MARKETS BETWEEN THE US AND CHINA

potentials of the industry in broader space over longer period of time. Despite widespread usage of event software in the market of the US, there are relatively few research efforts on exploring the existing technology gap between different markets. With that understanding, the study laid focuses on researching the landscapes of event industry between the US and China, examined the performance of event technology in the US market, and figured out existing technology gap between these two markets.

Purpose

The study aimed at exploring application prospect of web-based event management software in China's hospitality and tourism market. In order to forecast the demand of the technology in the target market, we need to know the current situations of event market in the US and China, market performance of the event technology in house, and existing technology gap between these two markets. A typical application www.certain.com will be used to test technology tasks fit of the product, analyze the performance of the product, and prove potential demand of such an application in China.

Statement of Problem

More specifically, what is market prospect of web-based event software in China's convention and event market? To respond the question, the research should find the answers for three questions first: What are the current scenarios of event market in the US and China? What is the performance of the technology application in the US? And what is the existing technology gap existing between the two markets?

THE GAP OF EVENT MARKETS BETWEEN THE US AND CHINA

Justification

Convention and event industry is a global business involving bringing people together worldwide. Therefore, technology tools involving managing event processes should not overlook the trend of application globalization in the internet era. Currently, the event management system is mainly initiated in English-speaking countries such as the US, Australia, Britain or European Countries, who are important customers for convention and tourism products in the world. However, with the rapid economic growth in the Asia-Pacific region as well as the emerging demand for professional management skills in the China's event market, expanding event management technology to this region has become a trend for the industry development in the future.

As an international student from China, I noticed that event management comparatively is a new concept in my motherland, and the majority of event management tasks are still fulfilled manually rather than using technology applications. Since bringing in advanced hospitality management technology learned from the US to my home country is the purpose I study abroad, the research will help industry professionals understand the situation of the China's convention and event industry, find the problems facing the industry, and pursue opportunities for industrial cooperation across country boundaries.

Constraints

Since most of statistical data introduced in the paper did not come from direct collection based on random principles, there were some limitations for the study.

1. Secondary Data from the third-party's research reports, but not collected directly.

THE GAP OF EVENT MARKETS BETWEEN THE US AND CHINA

2. Great amount of qualitative analysis was employed in the study; therefore the results merely represent an informal conclusion.
3. Due to variable principles for definition of convention and event industry between the US and China, some definition used in the US market might not exactly reflect similar meanings in China's event market. As the result, using the same concepts to explain different market environments might lead to a biased conclusion.
4. The event software, www.certain.com, used in the paper was only a selected sample of typical applications and represented a general situation in the market, so the results were possibly biased.

Glossary

NAICS:	The North American Industry Classification System
SAAS:	Software-as-a-service
NBTA:	National Business Travel Association
SMMP:	Strategic Meeting Management Program
MICE:	Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions
ROI:	Return of Investment
KPI:	Key Performance Indicator
RFP:	Request for Proposal
CVB:	Convention and Visitor Bureau
PCMA:	Professional Convention Management Association
EMBOK:	Event Management Body of Knowledge

THE GAP OF EVENT MARKETS BETWEEN THE US AND CHINA

PART TWO

Introduction

In order to forecast whether the web-based event management software would be welcomed in the China's hospitality and tourism market, just as the statement in Part One, we need to know landscapes of event market in the two countries, application performance of the technology in the US, and the existing technology gap between them.

A Few Definitions

Event Management

Event management is the process by which an event is planned, prepared and produced. An event manager's job is to oversee and arrange every aspect of an event, including researching, planning, organizing, implementing, controlling, and evaluating an event's design, activities and production. (Julia, 2003)

Convention and Event Industry

The North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) defined the business activities involving event management as Trade show and Event Planning Industry (NAICS Code: 56192). This industry comprises establishments primarily engaged in organizing, promoting, and/or managing events, such as business and trade shows, conventions, conferences and meetings, whether or not they manage and provide staff to operate the facilities in which these events take place. (U.S. NAICS Manual, 2007)

THE GAP OF EVENT MARKETS BETWEEN THE US AND CHINA

Web-Based Event Management Software

Web-based event management software (event software) is an online integrated management platform applied in the event management industry. The platform provides event planners, trade show organizers and training managers with a bunch of management tools helping to manage events. Event software is nowadays mostly available as an online web service (also called software-as-a-service) to allocate the main functions including online registration, delegate management, venue selection, e-RFP, procurement/sourcing, on-site communication, content management and exhibition management, etc. (Wikipedia, 2010)

The US Trade Show and Event Planning Industry Overview

According to IBISWorld's industry research report published in November of 2009 about the Trade show and event planning industry in US, the industry is low entry barriers, high fragmented and labor intensity market with medium level of technology change. The top four operators (Freeman, GES, TBA Global and UBM) account for just over 20% market share of industry revenue in 2009. As the statistics estimated by the company, there are about 4,500 establishments and over 70,000 employees in the business, and contributed around \$11 billion revenue each year.

Table1. Inflation Adjusted (Constant) Price in US

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	
Industry Revenue	12,129	12,380	11,984	11,193	10,891	\$Mil
Industry Gross Product	5,850	5,936	5,811	5,376	5,198	\$Mil
Number of Establishments	4,911	4,965	4,860	4,632	4,576	Units
Number of Enterprises	4,431	4,479	4,389	4,213	4,171	Units
Employment	78,400	79,262	77,994	75,108	73,907	Units

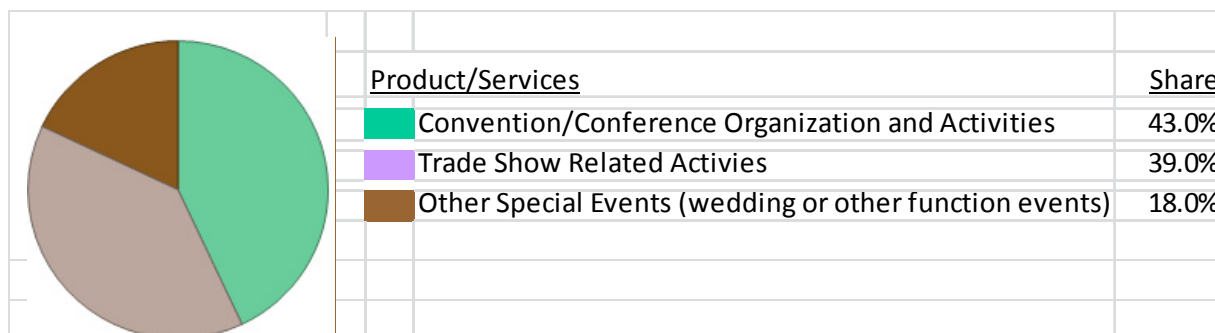
THE GAP OF EVENT MARKETS BETWEEN THE US AND CHINA

Total Wages	2,826	2,847	2,819	2,757	2,729	\$Mil
Index Net Sq. Feet	123.5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Units

In general, the industry makes money based on selling its super services, satisfying clients' requirement of one-stop shopping for all necessary event planning activities, as well as offering skilled and experienced personnel, who will work within the time, budget and the specific requests from the clients for their events. The majority of event planners in the US are associations and industrial institutions, who produce original event ideas and do most of planning works, and then outsource the rest of non-core operation tasks to the third-parties. The contractors take advantage of scale economy effects and accumulated resources long term in the market to bring out the best solutions for each single hospitality functional area including accommodation, transport, entertainment as well as any pre and post event tours, etc. They also take care of all events related activities during the period, such as arrivals, registration, arranging transportation for delegates' pick-up/drop-off at the airport as well as conducting post-event surveys and acquainting delegate's satisfaction. The operators save clients both time and use of valuable internal resources in organizing these functions in-house. The most crucial issue is that they usually can garner attractive prices from their business partners to achieve an wonderful event project. (IBISWorld, 2009)

THE GAP OF EVENT MARKETS BETWEEN THE US AND CHINA

Table2. Products and Service Segmentation

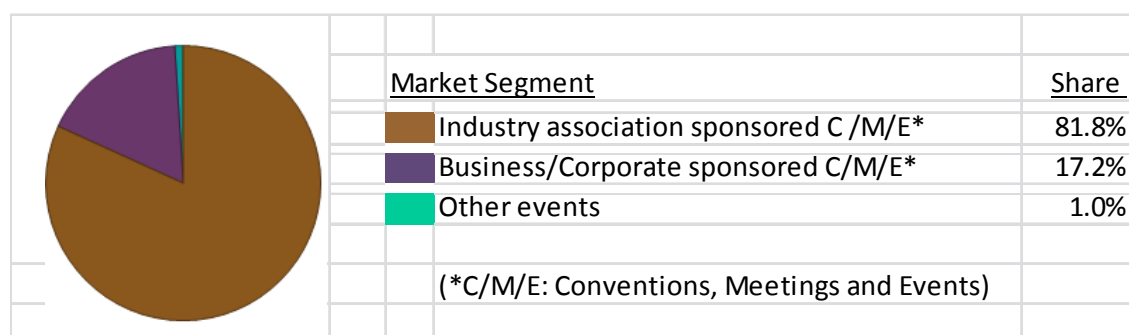


According to the latest information available from Expo Magazine, for trade shows and exhibitions only, the major industries involved were: Manufacturing (18.6% of total expos); Retail trade/distributors (15.8%); Consumer (11.0%); Medical/Health care (10.3%); General business (8.3%); Engineering/scientific (7.7%); Food (7.0%); Communications (5.3%); Education (4.6%); Computer (4.6%) and Other (5.5%).

A different profile applies for international meetings, that is, events that have a significant portion of delegates from overseas. According to the data for 2007 of International Congress & Convention Association, 41.4% were held at hotel meeting places, 32.7% at purpose-built conference and exhibition centers, 16.4% at university and 9.5% at other venues. The top three subjects for international meetings are medical sciences, technology and science, in general, which account for about 45% of these events. (IBISWorld, 2009)

THE GAP OF EVENT MARKETS BETWEEN THE US AND CHINA

Table3. Major Market Segments



Various factors that stimulate or reduce demand from services supplied by this industry include Economic situation and travel, Household disposable income and other non-economic factors such as flight security, Bird Flu or Swine influenza, that have an impact on travel demand and movements, both domestically and internationally.

The level of competition in this industry is high due to the large number of small operators, low barriers to entry, and low net income margins. Given the client service nature of the industry, with a high degree of direct labor input, the major cost is wages, with other costs associated with the purchasing of other services and suppliers to ensure a successful trade show or convention. (IBISWorld, 2009)

Table4. Industry Cost Structure in US (Year: 2009)

Item	Cost %
Wages	24.6%
Purchases	4.3%
Depreciation	3.3%
Rent	2.7%
Utilities	2.0%
Other	57.1%
Profit	6.0%

Industry Technology Trend

With the background of weak economic situation as well as responding to corporate's requirement of consolidating travel and meetings expenditure in tighter financial environment, the concept of Strategic Meeting Management Program (SMMP) comes to an important position to promote technology change in the industry.

The concept of strategic event management originally came from a knowledge framework program developed by National Business Travel Association. The SMMP (Strategic meeting management program) is defined as the strategic management of enterprise-wide meeting related processes, spend, volumes, standards and suppliers to achieve quantitative cost-savings, risk mitigation and superior service (NBTA whitepapers, SMMP executive summary,2008). In this paper, I apply this systematic framework to broader "event" level including meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions --- MICE industry. Since event management practically is a work involving process controlling, in my perception, strategic event management can be interpreted as optimization of event planning and process control by employing appropriate resources.

In order to advance strategic management and increase competitive advantages, event planners extensively employed web-based technology to all facets of organizing an event, from delegate registration, booth allocation, accommodation and transport arrangement to provision of meals, tours and entertainment etc. Many large organizations now have web sites which provide details of venues and other locational attributes which attract conventions. Meanwhile, their online event software helps manage registration, communication and payments by delegates, etc.

THE GAP OF EVENT MARKETS BETWEEN THE US AND CHINA

Some larger organizations also use computer programs to design trade show layout and booths, banners and other promotional materials and information, to ensure consistency and integration of all event activities.

Typical Technology Tasks of Event Software

Generally, event management software is a systemic IT architecture built by bricks of several modules serving single function. In the other words, modules can be separately integrated into different combinations satisfying diversified demands from clients. Among various event applications, www.certain.com is an overall solution providing eight modules covering all main areas of event management. No matter corporate meeting planners, trade show organizers or workshop trainers can easily find optimal solutions there for their events. Table5 displayed specific features of each module.

Table5. Technology features at a glance

1. Strategic Meetings Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Track Estimates and Budgets • Easy Online Approvals • Spend Consolidation • Email Automation • Automatic Budget Estimator • One-Click Reporting • Intranet-linked Approval Forms • Branded Web Request Portals
2. Sourcing & Procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global Supplier Database • Customizable RFP Management • Submit RFPs to Specified Contacts • Track Supplier Contacts • Supplier-friendly RFP Response Tools • Track Concessions & Cost Savings • Simple Email Automation • Fast & Powerful Reporting

THE GAP OF EVENT MARKETS BETWEEN THE US AND CHINA

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convenient Cost-Calculation Tools • Client Portal for Proposal Coordination
3. Marketing & Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing Data for All Attendees, Participants, and Staff • Attractive Invitations and other Email Communications • Consistent Branding Throughout Communications • Timely Reminders to Inform Attendees • Email Templates for Later Reuse • Integrated Tools to Manage Sponsorship Opportunities • Mail Merge Fields for Personalized Communications • Custom Fields for Better Audience Segmentation
4. Registration & Attendee management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact Information and Personal Preferences • Online Registration • Intelligent Registration Forms • Configurable Date-Based Fees • Registrant Payment Processing • Registrant Segmentation by Type, Payment Status • Badges and Confirmations • Agendas and Function Attendance • One-Click Reporting • Gather Feedback With Surveys
5. Accommodation & Travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Room Blocks and Group Travel • Attrition Reduction with Built-in Hotel Reservation Process • Participant Housing and Travel Preferences • Professional Hotel Reports and Travel Itineraries • Secure Collection of Room Guarantee Information • Real-time Synchronization with Travel Systems • Reservation Change Communications to Suppliers • Selective Online Access for External Suppliers
6. Speakers & Exhibitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conference Program • Resources, Rooms, and Instructors Allocation • Speakers, Authors, Chairpersons, and Reviewers Communication • Secure, Streamlined Online Papers Collection • Online Reviewing and Scoring of Speakers' Abstracts • Speaker Checklists, Bios, Session Allocations and Rooms • Exhibition Space Sales and Exhibitor Registration • Exhibitor Payments and Payment Schedules • Schedule appointments between exhibitors and attendees • Manage Exhibitor Checklists • Exhibition Guides and Product Directories
7. Financial & Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Powerful Single-Click Reports • Expenses and Income • Customized Graphical Report Layout • Data Export to Common Formats such as Excel and PDF • Reports Access via URL or Web Portal

THE GAP OF EVENT MARKETS BETWEEN THE US AND CHINA

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Ledger for Event Expense and Income • Forecasting Tool for Budget Scenarios • Track Budget, Variance, Profit, and Loss • Display, Fields, Filtering, Grouping, & Subtotal Configuration • Journals Export to External Accounting Systems
8. Continuing Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course Schedules and Classifications • Resources, Rooms, and Instructors Allocation • Resource Conflict-checking • Powerful Course Classification • Online Course Registration and Payment • Grades and Attendance Tracking • Web Portal for Students & Instructors • Powerful Course Credit Management • Professional-looking Transcripts and Other Documents

Cited information from www.certain.com

Application of Event Software in the US

According to a recent study by Evocos, an event management company, the use of event software in the convention industry has experienced significant growth. The result shows that event planners are employing various technologies to help plan and manage their events. The research was conducted online at November of 2009. The online survey asked participants to rate what type of event technology they use on a regular basis. The four most popular tools were 1) Email Marketing 2) Online Registrations 3) Online Surveys 4) Event Reporting & Analysis.

13% of respondents reported that email marketing was now one of the main event tools they use to communicate event information and manage their events. Email marketing was very convenient to deliver advertising to target customers pre-event, send customized invitations and exchange ideas on-event, as well as manage delegate surveys post-event. Over half of all respondents of the survey (56%) said that attendee management system allows delegates to

THE GAP OF EVENT MARKETS BETWEEN THE US AND CHINA

register online was very important characteristics of modern event management. Through using automatic attendee registration module, event manager thus can remove their focus from registration management to more productive areas such as onsite coordination or customer communication, etc.

Besides the pre-event administration support and on-site registration management, event software also can help event organizers to conduct the post event analysis. Whether getting a high ROI is critical metrics for evaluating the event's result and planner's performance. Therefore, event software has consolidated analyzing functions of ROI and other KPIs into integrated system and is able to effectively measure financial performance of event project on event planners demand. Additionally, the system also can automatically import the results of email surveys into internal data center and create customized reports with specific details. (Oxton, 2009)

Currently, event software is one of the fastest growing areas in the event management sector. Taking advantage of the benefits of automation and online software tools is helping event managers save management costs and increasing efficiency, and therefore increase the return on investment provided to both delegates and event hosts. Pursuing high ROI for clients obviously is very important factor to ensure event industry afloat in this recession age.

THE GAP OF EVENT MARKETS BETWEEN THE US AND CHINA

Overview of the Industry in China

IBISWorld's research report published in September of 2009 about convention and exhibition service in China stated that China's convention and exhibition industry is a government-oriented, low management effectiveness, labor intensity and rapid growing market. In 2009, the combined market share of the top four players in the industry is estimated at about 24.9%, representing a low level of industry concentration. According to IBISWorld' 2009 data, there are about 7,000 establishments (around 4,000 enterprises) and over 210,000 employees in the business, and contributed around \$2.5 billion revenue each year.

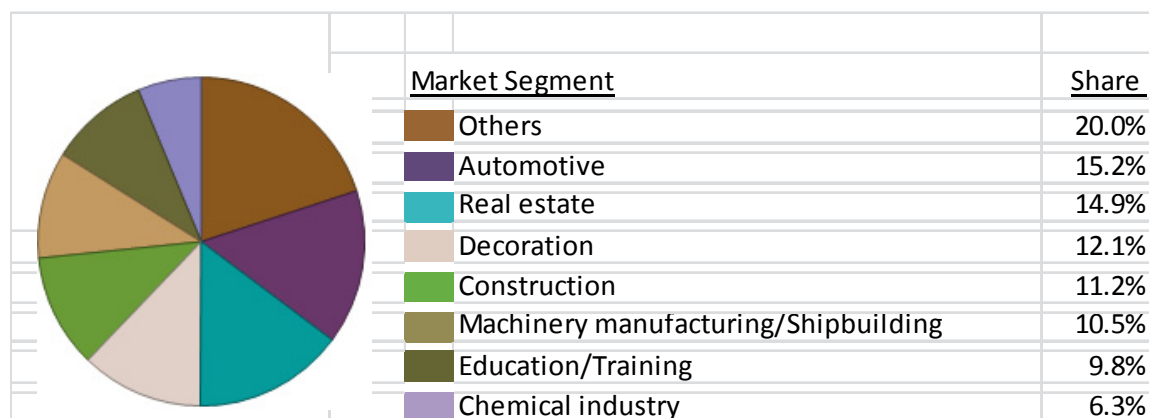
Table6. Inflation Adjusted (Constant) Price in China

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	
Industry Revenue	1,434.10	1,642.30	1,969.10	2,301.20	2,553.10	\$US Mil
Industry Gross Product	544.2	620.3	714.7	816.8	895.7	\$US Mil
Number of Establishments	5,647	6,109	6,532	6,892	7,172	Units
Number of Enterprises	3,372	3,521	3,746	4,012	4,289	Units
Employment	151,067	164,996	179,647	195,097	209,573	Units
Total Wages	210.7	234.5	276.9	326.5	363.7	\$US Mil
Total Assets	5,517.90	6,340.00	7,310.00	8,384.60	9,360.20	\$US Mil

Revenue generated from four major sectors, real estate, construction, home-furnishings and automotive manufacturing accounts for a large share of total industry revenue. In recent years, these industries have experienced rapid development due to China's strong economic growth. Demand for convention and exhibition services from companies in these industries therefore increased significantly. (IBISWorld.cn, 2009)

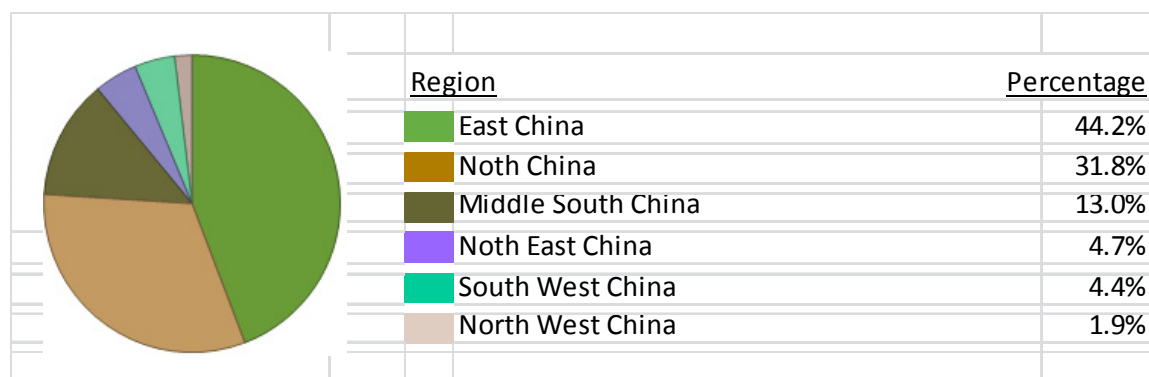
THE GAP OF EVENT MARKETS BETWEEN THE US AND CHINA

Table7. Major Market Segments



The industry's concentration levels vary across different regions in China. Developed cities such as Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou contributed larger shares to industry revenue when compared with other cities. East China and North China jointly contributed about 76.0% to total industry revenue in 2008. The main reason for this high share was the well-developed economic level in these regions, where demand for convention and exhibition services was highest. (IBISWorld.cn, 2009)

Table8. Geographic Spread Based on Establishment Numbers



THE GAP OF EVENT MARKETS BETWEEN THE US AND CHINA

Of the companies in this industry located in East China and North China, about 97% employed less than 50 workers, and about 0.5% employed over 100 staff members. Over 94% of companies in these regions had annual sales revenue of less than \$60 million. Although fragmented market increases competition, the industry is in the growth phase of its lifecycle because industry value added increased at a faster rate than China's GDP during the current five-year period with an annualized rate of 13.3%. (IBISWorl.cn, 2009)

The main factors that affect demand for convention and exhibition services include China's economic growth levels, downstream manufacturing and service industries demand for the industry's services and technological developments. With the exception of some large-scale convention and exhibition companies, the majority of enterprises in this industry do not own convention & Exhibition centers. Therefore, these companies' cost structure typically includes inputs for space leasing, materials purchasing, labors and other rentals etc.

Table9. Industry Cost Structure in China (Year:2009)

Item	Cost %
Purchases	39.2%
Wages	14.1%
Rent	5.6%
Depreciation	4.7%
Utilities	3.2%
Other	16.9%
Profit	16.3%

In the market, five major players accounted for 26.4% entire market share while other smaller companies covered 73.6% of the rest.

THE GAP OF EVENT MARKETS BETWEEN THE US AND CHINA

Table10. Major Player and Market Share (Year:2009)

Major Player	Market Share
China Foreign Trade Center	10.5%
China International Exhibition Center Group Corporation	6.0%
China New International Expo Center	4.6%
Shanghai International Convention and Exhibition Co. Ltd.	3.8%
China Kunming International Convention and Exhibition Center	1.5%
Other	73.6%

Problems Facing China's Convention and Exhibition Industry

Due to distinctive industry definitions from the US and China, besides providing services related to event planning and organizing, the Convention and Exhibition industry in China also includes management of convention & exhibition centers (fixed assets). That is particularly true for some state-owned operators who are event hosts and also the suppliers of venues and other related services in local market. However the trade show and event planning industry in the US emphasizes more on provision of soft skills and services from corporate players.

Although convention industry in China develops quickly this decade, and the practitioners accumulate valuable experiences from some grand events hosted in the country like APEC meetings, 2008 Beijing Olympic Games as well as coming 2010 Shanghai World Exposition etc., the industry in China still lags behind its US counterpart in several aspects such as specialization, management skills, technology applications and internationalization, etc.

1) Ineffective management of convention industry

Unlike the US, associations play main roles to initiate conventions and trade shows in belonging industries; the majority of conventions and exhibitions in China was sponsored and

THE GAP OF EVENT MARKETS BETWEEN THE US AND CHINA

organized by local governments, enterprises or institutions. Since administration instruction is the main factor influencing the market but not the power under the principle of free market, the management of most events in the market is ineffective and has poor efficiency. Repeated sponsoring of similar exhibitions, low attendance and poor market effects as well as the lack of systematic guide and service standard are prevalent situations happened in some undeveloped second-level cities in China.

2) **Lack of laws and regulations stipulating convention industry**

Besides the lack of service standard and systematic operation guide, the China's convention and event industry also lacks specific laws and regulations to stipulate the industry. Legislation usually is a key factor to ensure an industry developing rightly and orderly. In China, all of the necessary regulations and laws pushing healthy development of event market are not completed. These laws and regulations involve the examination and approval of convention & exhibition, the integrated promotion of international convention & exhibition, as well as the pricing system of the industry, etc. Although new regulations will be issued early or late, it still needs quite long time for the market to adapt to the new game rules.

3) **Lacking professional education and proper event technology**

The competition of the convention industry lies in the competition of the talents. The convention industry in China develops less mature than in America because China lacks systematic knowledge model like event management body of knowledge (EMBOK) as well as professional education program under the subject. As a result, high quality professional staffs are insufficient, especially meeting planners, exhibition project managers, and event marketing managers, etc., and the service quality and efficiency is low in the market.

PART THREE

Introduction

From the literature review part, we got known about the scenarios of event market in the US and China. Great gap of knowledge and technology exists between the two markets. On the side of the US, systematic event management knowledge such as EMBOK and SMMP as well as improved technology application has brought the practitioners in the market higher efficiency and superior service performance. The super competitive advantages are winning the US players an opportunity to export their know-hows and expand their business territory into broader regions. On the side of China, the China's convention industry still have great gap need to learn from its super counterparts in the US at many aspects including establishing scientific knowledge system of event management, developing completed legislation concerned with event market as well as introducing advance event technology from the outside of the country.

Discussion of Results

Through researching the situations of event market in the US and China, exploring the technology trend of event management in the US, as well as identifying the problems facing China's convention industry, we can find the following main differences between the two markets:

Different industry scenarios between the US and China

THE GAP OF EVENT MARKETS BETWEEN THE US AND CHINA

The convention and exhibition industry in China is not a mature and completely free market when compared with the US. The administration instructions from provincial level and regional governments play key roles on pushing the growth of the industry. However, only separate commanding without coordination and comprehensive regulation could not bring out an efficient and effective convention industry rather than more repeated sponsoring and disorder competition in the market. Despite of the boosting construction of convention and exhibition centers as well as quick development of tourism infrastructure in many second-level cities in China, the “software” aspects concerned with management levels, professional skills, service qualities and technology progress in these regions have not experienced significant improvement. The extensive problems existing in event market caused by government, legislation and education have hindered the healthy development of convention industry in China.

In the US, regional CVBs play active role to promote and advertise their destination brand to attract visitors for tourism and conventions in their cities. Meanwhile, industry associations take more responsibilities on organizing conventions and trade shows for business communication and networking in respective industry. In addition, the establishment of systematic knowledge framework and extensive education programs in event management field also help the event practitioners in the country improve professional skills and management levels.

Extensively employing event technology creates super competitive advantage.

Web-based event management software is technology tools that have been extensively employed among industrial practitioners in the US. The technology can realize multiple functions including online attendee registration, one-stop sourcing and procurement, e-Marketing,

THE GAP OF EVENT MARKETS BETWEEN THE US AND CHINA

customer relationship management and financial & reporting, etc. Currently, most popular functions used by event planners are marketing, online registrations, online surveys and event reporting & analysis. According to their response, the most significant benefit for using event technology is the improvement of ROI and service standardization.

Lacking systematic knowledge and improved technology is the main reason that China's convention industry lags behind the US counterpart.

Except for government-oriented developing model, China's convention industry lacks scientific knowledge system of event management. Due to regional governments dominate the development of convention industry, nonprofit industry associations do not play active roles in organizing business communication and networking rather employing affiliated third-party service to fulfilling tasks from regional administration instructions. The professional organization like the America's PCMA (Professional Convention Management Association) didn't exist in China, and thus event practitioners in China didn't have opportunities to receive professional education programs under the subject. Since the knowledge system has been absent in China, the technology application based on it also has not be introduced in the industry. Therefore, "immature" will be best word to describe the situation of China's convention and exhibition industry currently.

THE GAP OF EVENT MARKETS BETWEEN THE US AND CHINA

Conclusion

As one of the most rapid growing economic entities with huge population base in the world, China's convention and exhibition industry is experiencing great growth along with booming construction of convention and exhibition facilities in various areas within the country, particularly in more developed metropolitan cities such as Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou. Although quick development in hardware aspect pushes up the quantity of events hosted in the country, the quality of majority conventions and exhibitions are not significantly improved with increased venue space. Except for the factor of government issues, main problems facing China's convention and exhibition industry are lacking systemic knowledge frameworks in the field of event management, professional education programs and advanced technology applications.

From establishing systematic event management body of knowledge (EMBOK) to initiating the concept of strategic meeting management, the US obviously is the leader of event management profession in the world. Advanced event management technology like web-based event software extensively applied in the market also endows the country super competitive advantages in the convention industry worldwide. The leading position not only encourages industry professionals in the US to expend their business into foreign markets, but also stimulate technology demand from lag players in China's event market to introduce the advanced management model and improved event technology. The identified difference of event markets between the two countries will effectively push cooperation between these two countries in the area of event management in the future.

THE GAP OF EVENT MARKETS BETWEEN THE US AND CHINA

Recommendation

Given current situation and problems facing China's convention industry, the central and regional governments of China need establish completed regulations to rule disorder competition in the market, adopt the principle of free market to manage the even market, and encourage establishment of industrial associations and organization to promoting industry performance. Introducing advanced management experiences and professional talents from outside also are necessary steps for China's event players to make up the blank of knowledge system in the field as well as expedite the training of local professionals.

For the US, professional skills and advanced event technology are earning great opportunities for the players in the convention industry to export their sophisticated skills and improved technology to various markets in other lag regions like China. Such exchanges of knowledge and technology among different markets will finally push the progress of convention industry worldwide. And the convention industry will thus develop towards a true "global" industry.

THE GAP OF EVENT MARKETS BETWEEN THE US AND CHINA

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THE GAP OF EVENT MARKETS BETWEEN THE US AND CHINA

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