

Series: MICE will rejuvenate Japan

Part 2

How the “power of MICE” can drive forward the renaissance

MICE Research Institute

We would like to express anew our sincere condolences to the victims, their families and all those who have been forced to evacuate and suffer unnecessarily from the effects of the disaster caused by the earthquake and tsunami of March 11th.

In the previous issue, we introduced a general outline of how, and in what way the MICE Research Institute (hereafter referred to as MICE R.I.), launched in February, plans to pursue its objectives. In brief, the initial main tasks are 1/ intensifying surveys and research that are essential for MICE promotion and 2/ proactively transmitting those findings as well as reflecting the results in practical business.

The first issue in our series went to press just after the 3.11 Great East Japan Earthquake hit our country, and since then, witnessing the unprecedented atrocities - great earthquake, tsunami and nuclear power plants accident - we have reflected more deeply on the disaster and the significance that the disaster and its aftermath have for all of us. MICE R.I. intends to place our number one priority on utilizing the power of MICE to the greatest extent possible, for the recovery of the affected areas and the renaissance of Japan.

The Congress Corporation Group, with the MICE R.I. in the lead, therefore contemplated what we could do, utilizing our forte as the MICE Industry, and started to take action.

■ “Japan After 3.11” website for transmitting accurate information abroad

First private sector initiative of this kind in Japan - toward eradicating inaccurate rumors

The number of visitors to Japan from overseas has plunged dramatically due to uncertainty about the situation after the earthquake & tsunami and the nuclear power plant crisis. According to JNTO research, the number of overseas visitors in March this year was only 50.3% of the result for March, 2010. Numerous international conferences and events were cancelled or postponed, and also future MICE bids for inviting conferences/events to Japan were put into jeopardy as overseas organizers who had been considering Japan as the venue increasingly started to avoid our country. The MICE industry as a whole, including regions planning to invite/host MICE events, convention/event facilities and PCOs, suffered a severe setback.

The Congress Corporation Group considered how to respond, and decided to start implementing the initiatives we knew we could do now.

As one initiative, the MICE R.I. launched the “Japan After 3.11” website, the first private sector initiative to disseminate accurate information about Japan's current situation to people overseas, on May 10th.

◆ <http://www.mice-ri.or.jp/en/index>.

The government and related organizations were naturally involved in various activities to try to turn the tide of decreasing international visitors, caused by inaccurate rumors about Japan's safety. Yet, we wanted to tackle an activity from the private sector perspective that would convey every single piece of information especially for MICE professionals on Japan's current situation, from a standpoint close to the practical side of the MICE business.

This project's aim is to promote the convening of MICE events in Japan, through suppressing inaccurate rumors so that overseas MICE participants will not cancel but go ahead with their trips and stop avoiding Japan. Returning Japan's MICE industry to health will give a big boost to the renaissance of Japan.

“Japan After 3.11” posts the very latest information in English on the safety and security of Japan, so that MICE professionals can plan and implement their events/conventions etc. in Japan with peace of mind.

<<Publicizing “timely” information particularly for MICE>>

On this site, all of the MICE facilities around Japan have provided information on their current situation, which is uploaded continuously, so that people around the world will be reassured about traveling to Japan. (① in the website page image to the right.)

Also, the site releases news every minute about Japan's safety, to aid people abroad in judging the situation, including messages on the theme of “Japan is O.K.” from people who actually came to Japan after 3.11 on business or to participate

in MICE events, as well as notices on the easing of travel restrictions issued by foreign governments, in order for people abroad to feel that Japan is a safe place to visit. (② in the image to the right.)

Furthermore, links to JNTO and other public websites provide information that would be useful when in Japan, such as local events taking place around the country and updates on domestic public transportation network operations, as well as nationwide radiation monitoring results and test data for drinking water, etc. — a wide variety of information that will be useful for people planning to travel to Japan. (③ in the website page image at right.)

<< "Japan After 3.11" —Expand and Evolve >>

This site's objective is to have people abroad, in particular MICE professionals, congress operators/organizers and those planning on participating in conferences/event in Japan, to comprehend the real situation in Japan now.

It is necessary for Japan to welcome many people from overseas, for MICE or other purposes, in order to restore Japan as quickly as possible. This website endeavors to spread the message out all over the world that overseas visitors coming and enjoying travel in Japan will give a huge boost to the true renaissance of Japan.

Here in Japan, this site will be useful for organizers, MICE professionals and those in regions and facilities involved in MICE, who can introduce this site to their partners abroad, such as the international headquarters of associations and meeting participants. Through this, we endeavor to promulgate to the world that Japan is safe and secure, aiming for Japan's full-fledged renaissance.

We are grateful for all of the warm support we have received so far from our colleagues and clients, both in Japan and overseas, and we hope you will continue to grant us your cooperation in the future.

■ Charity Concert to aid the Great East Japan Earthquake recovery efforts

Along with the website, the Congress Corporation Group was also keen to produce a charity event. Together with the MICE R. I. and utilizing the Nagoya Congress Center, which is managed by Congress Corporation, with the great cooperation of many people, the big day arrived, May 6th, in the midst of the "Golden Week" holiday period.

Despite the extremely short lead time of only one month, we were able to put on a fabulous charity concert under the theme of "Friends — Love — Believing" thanks to the exceptional efforts of first of all the orchestrator Katsuhisa Hattori, who graciously agreed to direct and conduct the concert, the full support of the Chubu Philharmonic Orchestra, the sister duo Saori Yuki & Shoko Yasuda and the some 10 other popular entertainers and groups who performed to a packed house of 3,000. It was a successful and truly memorable event. <<Turning compassion for others into something concrete — through MICE>>

The generous donations received from members of the audience were donated to disaster aid, through the City of Nagoya.

The contributions were well received by those in the

affected areas, and what's more, we succeeded in turning compassion for our fellow human beings in the disaster areas into something concrete, through MICE. The MICE R.I. looks forward to taking the initiative in implementing similar activities hereafter.

Clearly, the road to the renaissance will be long and challenging. It will be important to continue to think about what we can do and proactively put that into action. The MICE R. I. is committed to not just performing one-time activities, but to planning and tackling sustained activities, together with our MICE colleagues, clients and friends.

- MICE Research Institute - Major Activities

- ① Planning and consulting services for domestic and international conferences and exhibitions
- ② Promotion of PFI, private finance initiative, and PPP, privatization of government enterprises
- ③ Planning and research for the development of conference and cultural facilities
- ④ Research of MICE projects overseas
- ⑤ Publicity and publishing related to MICE