## Ni Hao and how to communicate

## How to make the most of the opportunities which the Olympics offer to businesses across the Thames Valley this summer? Lily Yuan Li sets out the essentials

HE LONDON 2012
Olympic and Paralympic
Games will be a great
opportunity for Berkshire
businesses to connect with
other countries this year and
showcase the best Thames
Valley and the South has to
offer.

A study by Deloitte, the professional service firm, shows that due to the publicity surrounding the London 2012 Olympics in China more than 60% surveyed say they would like to buy more British products. Chinese visitors spend an average \$1,058 on shopping per person on each trip. Chinese visitors to the UK are set to increase by 64% over 2012 (according to Blue Global), and the Chinese market is one which is increasingly being relied on to turn around the fortunes of some UK businesses.

Lilv Yuan Li. director of Prospect Chinese Services, a company which specializes in advising companies and training staff how to attract and communicate with Chinese customers, said: "A common mistake companies make in trying to attract Chinese custom is not really understanding the Chinese frame of mind. Retailers, or any other business wanting to net tourist spending, need to create a welcoming atmosphere - plain and simple. This means staff training, the application of selling techniques and explaining cultural habits to maximise sales. Our clients now

recognise the importance of a positive shopping or guest experience and our courses provide an appreciation of Chinese culture and a better understanding of which selling techniques work."

A number of large London stores, including Selfridges and Harrods, have Mandarinspeaking personnel and instore signage in Chinese. Staff also wear badges depicting the Chinese flag indicating their ability to speak Mandarin.

Lily continued: "Retailers who understand Chinese demographics, and have adapted accordingly, are reaping the rewards and will continue to do so beyond the London 2012 Olympics." Many Chinese visitors are expected to extend their stay in the UK after the Olympics and many may well retun in October when Chinese Golden Week is celebrated.

Some retailers accept UnionPay, China's most popular bank card, aware that most Chinese visitors do not have international credit cards and usually pay in cash. This allows their customers to keep on spending after their cash runs out.

According to Prime Minister David Cameron, it is not only tourists who will be coming to the UK this summer, but also 'major business players'. He said: "This once-in-a-lifetime occasion will provide UK companies with more than a billion pounds business opportunity."

Lily explained: "When the Chinese delegations are here in the UK there will be significant competition for their attention. The business owners who take the time to understand their culture, who greet and negotiate with them in the most agreeable manner

> will win as they will have demonstrated the willingness to establish a lasting business relationship."

During the Beijing
Olympics in 2008,
Chinese taxi drivers
learned how to say
"hello" in English to
welcome foreigners.
Perhaps learning to
welcome Chinese
guests by saying
"Ni Hao" is not only
good for business,
but also good
manners.
www.



**Knowledge reaps rewards:** Lily Yuan Li, UK-China business specialist has the right advice for companies which could benefit from the influx of visitors from China.



prospectchinese.com