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UK Conference Urges Retailers To Gear Up To Serve Chinese Shoppers

UK retailers need to do more to engage with the vital audience of Chinese tourists claim the organisers behind a new event - the China Edge Symposium: Hospitality and Service for High Net Worth Chinese. The half day event, which is being sponsored by the world's biggest-selling fashion magazine, ELLE, takes place at the May Fair Hotel in London on 3 July 2013.

Some leading retailers and brands provide Chinese cultural training and Chinese-speaking staff, while the China UnionPay sign, which indicates acceptance of Chinese payment cards, is an increasingly common sight at high-end stores. However, serving Chinese shoppers who come into a store is only part of the challenge.

"Few retailers are taking a sufficiently strategic approach to maximise the opportunity by looking at the long-term, understanding key customer groups, leveraging Chinese social



media, or engaging the Chinese travel industry to attract more customers in a structured way” claims Roy Graff, a China tourism specialist and an organiser of the China Edge event.

ELLE is working with ChinaContact to produce a special edition of its award-winning catwalk bible, ELLE Collections, to target the high spending Chinese tourists in the UK. 10,000 copies will have an additional London shopping guide in Mandarin Chinese and will be available via Apple news stand and at key hotels, retailers and tour operators. Elle’s Group Publishing Director, Meribeth Parker, says: “As the world’s biggest fashion magazine, ELLE understands the importance of Chinese tourists to the luxury goods industry in Britain and we are delighted to be working with Roy Graff and his team at ChinaContact on a Special Edition Chinese version of ELLE Collections for this influential market.”

The symposium will provide practical advice and examples of global best practice from speakers including Graff who presented in New York (February 2012) to a group of retailers and brands including Bergdorf Goodman, Bloomingdale’s, Calvin Klein, Ralph Lauren and Tiffany & CO.

The UK government has allocated millions of pounds in marketing spend to attract Chinese, who are amongst the highest spending international shoppers. It is expected that tourism from China to the UK could see a threefold increase by 2015 and visitor numbers are set to increase after the Government recently promised to simplify the visa process.



"Businesses need to gear up in terms of strategic engagement and service skills, and understand and serve the needs of visitors from China in order to maximise the retail reward. If not, they will miss out on the visa dividend that the Government's new China policy should provide" adds Graff. Recent estimates suggest that Chinese visitors spend nearly three times as much in the West End than the average overseas visitor – £1,688 compared with £567*.

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* Source: New West End Company

Notes to editors:

- **Event Details:**

- Hospitality and Service for High Net Worth Chinese
- Date: July 3, 2013 (08:30-12:30);
- Location: The May Fair Hotel, Stratton Street, London;
- Discounted, early-bird registration is £250 + VAT, until June 10;
- Event booking site: <http://chinaedge.eventbrite.co.uk/>



- **About China Edge:**

China Edge is a collaboration of sector experts with a wealth of experience in China including:

- Jeremy Gordon, a strategy consultant from <http://www.chinabusinessservices.com>>China Business Services;
- Roy Graff, a marketing specialist from <http://www.chinacontact.co.uk>>ChinaContact;
- Yu Sun, a cross-cultural trainer from <http://www.yuyumedia.com>>Orient Business Consulting;
- Arnold Ma, a digital media specialist from <http://www.qumin.co.uk>>Qumin.

- **About ELLE**

- Elle UK, published by Hearst Magazines UK, is the world's biggest-selling fashion magazine. It has a circulation of 189,568 and is edited by Editor-in-Chief, Lorraine Candy. Meribeth Parker is Group Publishing Director. ELLE UK is one of the most digitally innovative luxury fashion magazines in the UK market place. It has a unique ability to connect with audiences and deliver enhanced editorial content, including leading daily fashion, shopping and celebrity style news and trends, across multi-platforms. ELLE's magazine and website reaches a combined total of 1,094,000 readers, while its social media reach stands as more than 1m across Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest.