



UKTI support 'very valuable' to WMP in China

Fast facts

Company: WMP

Industry: Creative Industries

Target Market: China

UKTI Services: Trade Mission; Business Opportunities; Events

www.wmpcreative.com



A UK Trade & Investment (UKTI) Trade Mission to China put the wheels in motion for creative agency WMP to learn about the market and win lucrative new business there, worth over £2 million.

Formed in 1980 just outside Oxford, WMP is now one of Europe's longest established creative agencies. The company has worked with big names such as 3M, Vodafone and Jaguar Land Rover and on projects that include video, product design, graphic design, live events, exhibitions, digital media and integrated solutions.

In over 30 years of business, WMP has built up an international network of tried and tested partners in a wide field of creative and technical expertise. The company's key overseas markets are Europe, the Middle East and China and it has teams based in Doha, Hong Kong, Shanghai and Beijing as well as the UK.

"Our cornerstones are a strong personal service, dependability and above all a passion for creative excellence," says William Martin, Chairman of WMP. "Clients call on us to manage both stand-alone projects and larger strategic campaigns and we use a broad range of media to deliver integrated solutions. We are always on the lookout for markets where there is potential for us to grow our business. Qatar, for example, is a hub of activity at the moment as it works towards its 2030 National Vision for modernisation and economic growth. Having an office in Doha means that we are well placed to take advantage of new opportunities there, as they arise."

Mission to China

One of the markets that WMP planned to target was China. In 2011, the International Visual Communications Association (IVCA), a representative body for the industry, suggested that the company join a UKTI Trade Mission

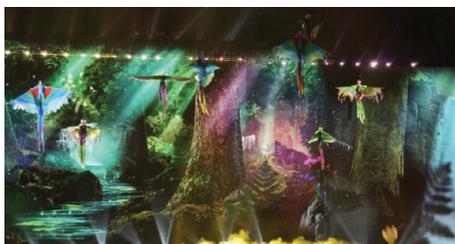
to this market. The visit was subsidised by a grant from UKTI and took William to Nanjing, Beijing and Shanghai. He made several useful new contacts which resulted in WMP employing a representative in Nanjing and one in Beijing. These new recruits have since brought in new business for the company, including a web development project for Haukie and a television commercial for Beijing Design Week.

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William Martin, Chairman of WMP

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A second UKTI Trade Mission in 2013 gave WMP the opportunity to follow up with contacts made on the 2011 visit and identify opportunities to generate new leads. Meanwhile a UKTI Trade Mission to Qatar in 2012 allowed WMP to build a pipeline of opportunities in this market too.

“Without UKTI, we simply would not have gone to China at this stage,” says William. “Until we joined the trade mission, we had no contact base there at all and no understanding of how the market operates, which areas to tackle, how real opportunities were or the challenges of working there. The first visit really kick-started our Chinese business. It was well organised and we gained a lot of local knowledge. Being associated with UKTI gave us the authority and confidence we needed to show local businesses that we are credible. The introductions that UKTI made for us were particularly useful. We saw that it was important to have some local representation and after I got back we hired two people that we had met there through UKTI. We are also following up with several other contacts that we met on the 2012 mission.”

Major new projects

In 2013, William made a further trip to China to recruit new staff, meet with existing clients and explore new opportunities. This resulted in a £2 million project making two 3D films for one of China’s largest commercial property companies. The company is also working on a major project at the Beijing National Stadium, known as the Bird’s Nest, and talks are already underway for a second project with the same client.

Today, WMP has five members of staff in China – two permanent and three employed on a contract basis.

“Exporting’s not for the faint-hearted, but we’re taking the plunge into interesting and potentially fruitful markets,” says William. “Since our first visit to China with the UKTI Trade Mission, our workload there is gathering pace very quickly, on a scale that we haven’t experienced in any other single market. Over the course of four months we have had 50 people working on cutting edge projects there, worth over £2 million. Our clients are buying into a skillset that is really only available in Los Angeles and London and we’re using camera equipment that isn’t readily available to sufficient spec in China. UKTI’s support has been very valuable. The financial support we had from them made our initial investment more appealing and less risky. Their introductions give us added credibility and allow us to leverage the reputation that Britain has overseas.”

The UK and China

The Chinese economy has grown at almost 10 per cent a year for the last 30 years, effectively doubling in size every eight years

In 2013 the UK’s goods exports to China increased by 17.1 per cent to £11.6 billion, making this the UK’s largest goods export market outside the US and EU. Imports from China to the UK also grew by 5.2 per cent to £31.5 billion. Total bilateral trade in goods and services in 2012 was £46.5 billion (US\$73.8 billion), and the two countries have agreed a target to increase this to US\$100 billion by 2015.

The China-Britain Business Council (CBBC), UKTI’s official trade service delivery partner for mainland China, provides advice and UKTI services to UK businesses via its network of offices across the UK and China.

For more information visit www.cbcc.org or www.gov.uk/ukti

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UKTI was delighted to support WMP in its business overseas.



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