

Findings of Public Opinion Survey on Victoria Harbour (20 Feb 2006)

Executive Summary

Introduction

AC Nielsen was commissioned by the Harbour Business Forum to undertake a public opinion survey on their perception of, and aspiration for the Victoria Harbour. The survey was conducted in two segments including qualitative findings (through a literature review and focus group discussions) and quantitative findings (through a telephone survey).

Qualitative Segment:

The qualitative survey was conducted in November and December 2005, in the form of a literature review of media articles related to the Harbour and a focus group discussion for understanding how the public feel about the Harbour on a deeper emotional level.

The results show that the Harbour plays a significant role in the eyes of the public, as congruent to the quantitative findings, vast majority of them agree that the Harbour is shared by all Hong Kong people, is valuable to them and symbolizes the prosperity and success of Hong Kong. The Harbour reflects the identity and physical well-being of Hong Kong, as well as the sense of belonging and emotional welfare of the public.

The public holds strong sentiments about the Harbour. The Harbour is viewed as a victim of excessive reclamation and pollution and over-development. However, the beautiful and distinctive scenery is still strongly associated with the Harbour; the public sees a great opportunity for green and open space and leisure activities along the harbour.

Quantitative Segment:

The quantitative part of the public opinion survey was conducted during mid December 2005 till January 2006, and included 1,039 telephone interviews of Hong Kong residents aged 15 and above. A 60% response rate was achieved.

The majority of interviewees (80%+ "totally agree / agree" rating) agreed that the Harbour is shared by all Hong Kong people, is valuable to them and symbolizes the success and prosperity of Hong Kong.

Less than half (46%) of the interviewees rate the Harbour as “very good / good”. The public’s negative association of the Harbour is due to reclamation – the diminishing width of the Harbour (48%), the frequency and scale of reclamation, and the detrimental effect it has on the overall appearance of the Harbour. In addition, the air and water quality (38% and 57%), and the level of greening (31%) also receive unsatisfactory ratings.

Among all age groups, those aged 55 and above are more nostalgic about the Harbour and hence, more disappointed with the consequences of reclamation. Younger adults are more critical of pollution levels.

The majority (97%) is aware of at least one of the harbour-related development project. Three in ten indicate they are very likely to become involved in harbour-related projects in the future and those aged 25-34 indicates their likeliness in voicing out their opinions.

The respondents show a unified vision of what the future Harbour should be: more greening areas (88%), more promenades (77%) and more ground level pedestrian access to the harbour-front (73%). Among all age groups, those aged 55 and above express stronger urge to enhance the Harbour; while the younger generation simply look for a spacious, quiet and peaceful harbour-front where they can truly relax and enjoy leisure activities.

In addition, as congruent to the qualitative findings, the key areas of improvements of the Harbour are focused on reducing water and air pollution (41% and 15%), the amount of littering in the Harbour (33%) and cutting down the level of reclamation (33%). In conclusion, the majority of Hong Kong people have the impression that the current level of resources devoted to the Harbour is insufficient (58%) and (89%) believe more resources should be dedicated to the development of leisure activities.

Quotes from focus groups on “Perception of the Harbour”:

Hong Kong Identity

“The Harbour reflects the progress and development of Hong Kong. Look at the buildings and skyline around the Harbour. They are here because of the Harbour and the hard work we have all put in.” – Younger Blue Collar

“Hong Kong has come a long way and we have moved on. Our Harbour reflects what we have achieved... and what we believe in... Progress.” -- Retiree

“When I see the busy harbour with ferries and ships, it reminds me of the energy and vitality of Hong Kong... and how much we have achieved.” – Older White Collar

Sanctuary

“It is not just a backdrop... It reminds me of the hard work we have to put in to be successful. It’s like a beacon.” – Older White Collar

“Victoria Harbour is my closest friend, he knows all my deepest secrets and he supports me during hard times... He knows me better than my parents.” – Teen

“You can tell the Harbour anything. It is always there for you, never judging always listening.” – College Student

“You can’t tell your parents everything. Sometimes not even your best friends... The Harbour is old and wise... I like to just sit there and talk to the Harbour.” – Teen

Victim

“It hurts to see these changes. It’s like tearing parts of my memory away.” – Older White Collar

“It’s like there is an invisible wall to hinder me to get close to the Harbour.” – Older White Collar

“Can’t see, can’t touch. So removed from the Harbour.” – Retiree

Quotes from focus groups on “Ideal Future of the Harbour”:

Hopes

“I’m happy to see the Harbour as it is when I get older.” – Younger Blue Collar

“Lock it up in a safe so that it won’t change, so that I will always have this friend.” – College Student

“I want to be proud of being a HongKonger – having a unique Harbour that cannot be found anywhere in the world.” – Older White Collar

Dreams

“Bring out the natural nature of the Harbour. Lying on the grass, picnicking would be such a treat.” – Older White Collar

“A place of applause – not only for the manmade scenes, but also the natural environment.” – Older Blue Collar

“Better quality of the water... One day we can see the white dolphin.” – Teen

For the full survey report, please download from:

http://www.bbluesky.com/download/HBF_survey_press_kit_20_Feb_06.zip