

Rise of the Asian Phoenix

For Phoenix Tours International, staying ahead of the game means diversifying its business, innovating and focusing on products and services to meet travellers' changing demands, says chairman William Chang. BY **PRUDENCE LUI**

How does Phoenix Tours remain competitive?

To stay ahead of the game, we focus on four key areas, namely products, services, innovation and consolidation of resources. Apart from catering to customers' needs with quality, we offer a one-stop shop for domestic and international travel products while refining travel services with diverse service channels.

Innovation is also key. We pioneered ideas such as all-inclusive packages and app development to facilitate paperless operations in line with our commitment to ESG. For instance, we upgraded our app during the pandemic so that customers could have all group tour information such as itineraries, hotels and even guided tour services at their fingertips. In the future, we will beef up online guiding tour functions and systems to promote consistent tour guide service standards.

Moreover, we diversified our business by going into the food court business in shopping malls. We are also building a hotel on Xiaoliuqi Island (opening in 2Q2025) and will open the Kaohsiung Container Style Hotel this year.

What new markets or demographics are you targeting as growth drivers?

We are active in chartered flight and chartered cruise markets. Thanks to the surging demand for high-end travel in the post-pandemic era, we are launching more top-tier products such as European river cruises, tours to Antarctica, and Northern Lights trips to meet the desire for rare travel experiences.

In the past, we only sent one to two groups per year on Antarctica cruises; this year, we have an unprecedented demand for a 200 pax chartered sailing.



There is surging demand for high-end travel in the post-pandemic era

WILLIAM CHANG

Chairman,
Phoenix Tours International



How do you drive sustainable business?

In compliance with regulatory authorities, we have initiated the preparation of a sustainability report to implement various ESG requirements. We have applied for certification as an environmentally-friendly travel agency from Taiwan's Environmental Protection Department, promoting green tourism.

We continue to integrate energy-saving and carbon reduction initiatives into our travel products, such as offering more hiking itineraries, incorporating public transportation, and reducing the use of disposable bathroom amenities or bottled water.

We are also one of the first agents to collaborate with Lufthansa Group to promote sustainable aviation fuel.

What are the key strengths that distinguish the Asian traveller market from the global market? How does Phoenix Tours utilise this advantage?

As Asian countries experience economic development, demographic dividends, and rich travel resources, many have transitioned from developing to developed destination status or have emerged as notable new markets.

Phoenix Tours has a strong foothold in the mature outbound travel market of Taiwan, in which we continually launch new itineraries and optimise existing ones based on consumer demands.

We also package Taiwan's travel resources to promote inbound tourism. Japan has been a vital leisure destination for Taiwanese and if opportunity knocks, we hope to shift to other Asian destinations. In fact, outbound traffic to Vietnam has increased quite a lot, whereas traditional spots such as Singapore, Hong Kong, and Thailand have not yet rebounded to pre-pandemic levels due to insufficient flight frequency.

What notable travel trends are you keeping an eye on?

There is an increasing demand for high-end travel and growing interest in unique travel experiences. The pent-up demand for both individuals and groups is high, and so are their budgets. Many travellers request for business class seats, while incentive groups raise their budgets or shift from short trips to longhaul travel. The post-pandemic travel boom is

still evolving. As airlines resume flights and countries rebuild their fleet/team, supply is stabilising, and therefore, the cost of travel becomes reasonable and favours more travel demands.

TRAVEL HALL OF FAME

Hertz Asia Pacific



Brian Yeap
General manager sales, Southeast Asia
Hertz Asia Pacific

What is the most impressive achievement for your company this year?

This year, in collaboration with our travel partners, Hertz made significant strides in growing our international footprint and driving innovation. Expanding our presence in India through a partnership with MLL Mobility marked a major milestone for our business and demonstrates our dedication to meeting diverse market needs. We've also continued to set new standards in sustainable travel by offering one of the largest selections of electric and hybrid vehicles – providing greener mobility options for customers. As we prepare for the coming year, we remain committed to delivering exceptional value and support to our partners and customers.

What can your trade partners and customers look forward to in doing business with you in 2025?

Innovation is at the heart of everything we do. In 2025, Hertz will continue challenging the norm by introducing new and improved initiatives designed to enhance the rental experience for both customers and partners alike. We'll keep optimising our fleet of electric and hybrid vehicles, giving customers greater choice while helping our partners meet their own sustainability goals. Additionally, by fostering stronger relationships with our travel partners and leveraging our multi brand offering, we aim to exceed expectations and drive mutual success.

Sabre Asia Pacific



Weerapon Thoopsaneh
Regional director airline distribution – South East Asia
Sabre Asia Pacific

What is the most impressive achievement for your company this year?

Our technology transformation. In the 60s, Sabre created the world's first Global Distribution System. So, it's only fitting we are leading the way for future industry transformation. In 2024, we completed our multi-year project to migrate Sabre's technology stack to the Google Cloud. What this means for Sabre, and our travel partners, is greater security and reliability, easier integration, faster innovation, and faster time to market with more advanced technology.

What can your trade partners and customers look forward to in doing business with you in 2025?

More innovation, more partnership, and more content. We're committed to leading the way in New Distribution Capability (NDC). We have significant numbers of global online booking tools supporting Sabre NDC, and expect 36 airlines to be active on Sabre NDC by the end of 2024.

In 2025, we'll launch even more NDC content on our global marketplace, and NDC offers will be accessible through our advanced AI-powered multi-source content platform. Our priority is on NDC scalability, enabling travel agencies to easily search, book, and manage all content types for personalised offers.

Now, we're focused on scalability, making NDC offers widely accessible, and providing personalised experiences for as many travellers as possible. The availability of NDC content in Zeno is an important step in that journey.

– **Brett Thorstad, vice president, agency sales & airline distribution, APAC, Sabre Asia Pacific**

Phoenix Tours International



William Chang
Chairman
Phoenix Tours International

What is the most impressive achievement for your company this year?

We just announced our financial report for the first half of the year this month, where we achieved consolidated revenue of approximately US\$45 million, marking a year-on-year growth of 68 per cent. The operating gross profit reached around US\$6 million with a year-on-year increase of 33 per cent, resulting in a gross profit margin of 14.22 per cent, a net profit of about US\$4.3 million. After recovering from the impacts of Covid-19, the company is focussed on returning to pre-pandemic levels.

What can your trade partners and customers look forward to in doing business with you in 2025?

This year we will introduce an AI service platform to optimise our services and improve customer satisfaction. We are also supporting the Lufthansa airline SAF eco-friendly fuel programme. We have been certified as a Taiwan environmental label travel agency to promote green tourism, and we hope to contribute to sustainable tourism together with our partners and customers. – **Benjamin Pien, general manager, Phoenix Tours International**

Hall of Fame 2024



Phoenix Tours

The first listed travel agency on Stock Market of Taiwan.

The perfect combination of

- Corporate Governance
- Company Commitment
- Social Responsibility

— Head office —