

BEYOND BORDERS

Exploring cultures, countries and comfort zones



Sink or Swim in Southeast Asia

With a city population nearing 5 million on a landmass one fifth the size San Francisco, Singapore's export trade rivals the

Russian Federation and shines as the innovation hub of Southeast Asia.

Rebuilt from the devastation of World War II, Singapore became an independent country in 1965. It has attained world-class status by attracting professionals to growth industries like tourism, logistics, academia, medicine, telecommunications and life sciences.

Before you board the plane, here are a few things you should know to help improve your business success in Singapore and across Southeast Asia.

Know before you go. Research Southeast Asian culture by surfing Google, reading travel books, and watching DVDs from your local library. Explore your travel options. While direct flights to Singapore from Sydney

are only eight hours, it takes 13 hours from London, 16 hours from Los Angeles and 19 hours from New York City. Tack on at least three more hours for non-direct flights.

Get advice. Talk to CSPs and CPAEs who attended the 2005 inaugural Global Speakers Summit in Singapore, the 2007 Summit in Dubai or the 2009 Summit in Cape Town. Those with global experience, including accredited IFFPS members and veterans, can fool-proof your plan by sharing mistakes and helping you prepare for unforeseen expenses.

Talk of the town.

English, Chinese,

Malay and Tamil are the four languages of Singapore. Other vibrant nationalities/languages hail from the Philippines, India and Japan. Many residents are fluent in a combination of grafted phrases and words known as "Singlish."

Connect with APSA. The Asia Professional Speakers Association's (APSA) Web site is a valuable online tool. Founding members are business

Speakers who have "gone global" can share mistakes and help you prepare.

The harbor reflects the Singapore skyline at twilight.

savvy and skilled in audience etiquette from working in China, Hong Kong, Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and India.

Schedule playtime. Singapore is 120 miles north of the equator, so plan a half day to adjust to the tropics. Ride the Singapore Flyer (30 meters higher than the London Eye), visit Sentosa, jump on a Duck Boat Tour, or see rare animals at the award-winning night zoo.

Mind your Ps and Qs. Never throw goodies at Asian audiences to enforce participation. Singaporeans are respectful and curious, but unforgiving if provoked or challenged. Leave slang and profanity at home. An Australian author was recently sentenced to a three-year Thailand prison term for self-publishing a book with remarks considered offensive to the Thai Royal family.

Increase your book-ability: Be courteous, arrive early for meetings and avoid grandstanding conversations as a visitor. Avoid presenting rehearsed or borrowed materials, as you may lose face. Locals have seen topic experts and authors in Singapore for years. Slow your speech by 20 percent, communicate clearly and provide real value to your audience.

By following this advice, your speaking engagements in Singapore and Southeast Asia are sure to be a success!



Rob Salisbury, BS, CSP, is a native northern Californian, whose career has taken him to Seattle, Scottsdale, Ariz., Sydney and Singapore. He served as a NSAA Sydney Chapter President from 2001 to 2003, and has been a senior adviser to the APSA Board of Directors since 2004. For more information, visit www.strategicresources.com.au.