

Memorable Moments

Our Father-Daughter Business Partner Trip to Tokyo

BY MARK STINSON

In the spring of 2009, I had the opportunity to travel to Tokyo with my daughter and agency partner, Melanie. It was a memorable combination of business and family moments. The trip allowed us to spend nearly two weeks of dedicated time with each other for the first time in many years. What's more, it gave us some great, shared experiences.

Before arriving in Tokyo, we had been facilitating a rigorous Asia-Pacific regional managers' meeting in Cebu, Philippines. The schedule was day-and-night with clients and participants; speaking, videotaping, breakout groups, and team-building exercises. So after the meeting, Melanie and I were ready to relax and enjoy the city.

TOURING TOKYO

Many people say Tokyo is too big, too crowded, too confusing, and too expensive. This was not our experience at all. On our tour of Tokyo, Melanie and I had a wonderful local guide named Junko Matsuda (Jun's Tokyo Discovery Tours, me2@gb3.so-net.ne.jp). She was a fantastic hostess who helped us navigate the streets and subways. Really, Junko Matsuda was more than just a tour guide; with her, our touring felt like spending a day in the city with a friend. She took us "behind the scenes" in a few places and even took us to a great little neighborhood place for sushi.

We had a great time visiting five major areas of Tokyo:

1. Tsukiji Fish Market (One of the world's largest and busiest fish markets, there's an inner market for wholesale and outer market for retail)
2. Ginza (Mitsukoshi 12-story department store and Kyu-kyodo, a specialty store selling handmade Japanese paper, paper products, and materials for calligraphy)
3. Asakusa (Old Tokyo temple town with Nakamise Street pedestrian mall leading to Sensoji Temple and surrounding neighborhood)
4. Imperial Palace (Residence of the Tokyo's now symbolic and ceremonial Imperial Family, surrounded

by moats and massive stone walls; a short walk from Tokyo Station)

5. Akihabara Electrical Town (World-famous for electronics of every description for a discount, also known as a center for Japanese animation, where we also had sushi for lunch)



A memorable moment for Mark Stinson, along with his daughter and business partner Melanie, outside the Imperial Palace in Tokyo.

BRANDING MECCA

While in Tokyo, we were amazed at the variety of advertising. In fact, since I didn't know the language, I found myself considering the visual communication power. (I also pondered how many people, with a population of 30 million within a 30-mile radius of the city center, must see these signs every day.)

Tokyo is a true mecca for branding media. It's utilized

everywhere, for everything—in electronics and games, restaurants, buildings, street banners, and subways.

PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL PARTNERSHIPS

There's something special about my daughter following in my professional footsteps. It makes a father proud! I can see the legacy of our family business evolving. Sometimes Melanie and I are working side-by-side, sometimes across town with different clients and on different assignments. But we are always sharing ideas and energy, which leads to many memorable moments.

When I look back on our trip to Tokyo together, it was a memorable moment that strengthened our relationship and our partnership, both professionally and personally.

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