

Chinese Travelers Seek “Instagrammable” Memories

Outbound trips planned digitally, shared on social media – Oliver Wyman report

SHANGHAI, January 24, 2019 — Chinese tourists are increasingly looking for social experiences when they travel overseas, and the desire for “shareable” memories plays a central role in all aspects of their trips, according to a report released by global consulting firm Oliver Wyman.

The report, Oliver Wyman’s second on Chinese travel, shows that choices of where to go, what to buy, and what and where to eat are all heavily influenced by social and digital platforms.

“Chinese consumers have leapfrogged shopping formats that are mainstream elsewhere and taken up mobile ecommerce, mobile payments, and social shopping,” said Hunter Williams, Oliver Wyman partner and author of the report commented. “So it should come as no surprise that Chinese travelers are also highly social and digital.”

Destinations are also changing. Nearby places such as Hong Kong remain the most common, but the Chinese are increasingly comfortable traveling further afield, with “Instagrammable” locations such as **Iceland** gaining popularity.

Even with the long distance and less classic itinerary, the clear trend has been away from professional planning, towards self-planning. More than one-third of respondents reported jointly planning a trip with their companions. The growing social aspect of Chinese travel begins during the planning stages, even before departure.

When the Chinese travel with friends and family, they seek memories: Sightseeing and recreation-and-entertainment were the most frequently cited reasons for a trip. Chinese travelers tend to remember a destination for its great natural scenery, good value, cleanliness, cityscapes, or authentic feeling – and they share their experience instantly on social networks. More than 80 percent of respondents share on WeChat.

Shopping decisions – what to buy and where – are also heavily influenced by social contacts. However, unlike in the previous survey, fewer than half the respondents cited shopping in their top-three reasons for traveling overseas, and only 7 percent cited it as number one. For the second year running, Chinese travelers in the survey reported spending less on shopping year-on-year.

“We have observed a decline in both shopping for oneself and for resale – *dai gou* – so China’s first e-commerce law may have already had an effect before its official implementation,” said James Yang, Principal of Oliver Wyman. “In the meantime, what’s more important is that they are seeking authentic experiences. They are open to trying authentic local cuisine, and the preferred type of accommodation is boutique hotels and homestays.”

Consistent with the trend toward digitally-enabled “social” travel, online restaurant reviews were a key source of information for choosing where to eat, cited by 57 percent of travelers in 2018, up from 46 percent in 2017. About 70 percent of our sample agreed that “dining out and drinking form an important part of my travels.” What has changed, however, is

the level of openness to local food: In 2018, 83 percent reported being willing to try new types of food, including non-Chinese.

“Given the digitally-savvy characteristics of today’s Chinese traveler, marketing to them requires a specific, localized approach,” concluded Williams. “As Chinese travelers rely heavily on word of mouth and online reviews, it’s important for businesses to be present on the right platforms, to monitor and manage their profiles, to head off early issues that could generate negative word of mouth, and to create ample opportunities to generate positive word of mouth.”

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About the survey

This is the second year Oliver Wyman has published a report on Chinese travelers. The report is based on a recent survey by of 2,000 travelers, demonstrating the changes in how they make trips and the implications for business.

Link to download the full report:

<https://www.oliverwyman.com/our-expertise/insights/2019/jan/digital-media-plays-increasing-role-for-chinese-travelers.html>

About Oliver Wyman

Oliver Wyman is a global leader in management consulting. With offices in 50+ cities across nearly 30 countries, Oliver Wyman combines deep industry knowledge with specialized expertise in strategy, operations, risk management, and organization transformation. The firm has more than 5,000 professionals around the world who help clients optimize their business, improve their operations and risk profile, and accelerate their organizational performance to seize the most attractive opportunities. Oliver Wyman is a wholly owned subsidiary of Marsh & McLennan Companies [NYSE: MMC]. For more information, visit www.oliverwyman.com. Follow Oliver Wyman on Twitter @OliverWyman.