



Press release

China moves forward to new Tourism Paradigm

New book of leading China outbound tourism expert puts satisfied guests before marketing euros

International tourism will have to be different after the CoViD-19 pandemic is brought under control, and Chinese travellers as the biggest outbound tourism source market will have to be in the lead for changes in the 2020s.

A new publication shows the way how a return to customer orientation can provide a new paradigm of successful organisation of the – not only – Chinese outbound tourism.

Global tourism reached a turning point already in 2019. More than ten billion domestic trips and more than 1.5 billion international trips resulted in growing dissatisfaction about overtourism, pollution, the destruction of local cultures and ecosystems, the lack of authentic experiences, but also the working conditions in the tourism industry with the dominance of seasonal and badly paid jobs.

In China, the majority of travellers lost interest in travelling in package tours, in hasty visits to many destinations each consisting of a quick stop for shopping, snapshots of the major sights and Chinese food already before 2020. In the new decade the interest for nature, family tours, new experiences and satisfaction of their special interests, will be stronger than before. The risk of dissatisfying them will be bigger than before.

In his new book *Welcoming the New Chinese Outbound Tourists. Guest relationships with Chinese visitors in the 2020s*, Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Georg Arlt, CEO of COTRI China Outbound Tourism Research Institute, describes the development of China's tourism, which since almost a decade is the biggest tourism market in the world. The pandemic, its consequences and the discussions about the "new normal" are presented up to the end of July 2020. The most important part of the publication is the description of a new paradigm for Chinese outbound tourism, which looks beyond the masks and disinfection sprays into the future of tourism in the new decade.

Key arguments are that the needs and expectations of different source market segments have been less and less taken care of during the massive increase of the number of travellers both on a global scale and especially for Chinese visitors. Money was spent on building infrastructure and on marketing instead of adapting and creating customised services and products for the Chinese outbound market and for the many sub-groups of interests within this market.

For example, the new decade sees the first generation of young adults, who grew up in affluent families in China and started international travel already as a child. It will however also welcome the first cohort of 55-65 years old travellers who worked hard for their money in the last 30 years and now have time and the means to travel more leisurely and with more clarity about their own interests and preferences based on experience. Obviously, millennials and "Silver-haired travellers", even though they are all Chinese, will have quite distinct demands and forms of travel.

Data and technology, trainings and know-how are all available to develop such focused offers and as a result turn Chinese customers into satisfied “KOCs” (Key Opinion Customers), who will recommend the company or destination among their peers by WOM<sup>2</sup> (Word of Mouth and Word of Mouse). Instead, the biggest parts of the budget were designated for Social Media marketing with very doubtful results.

China is responsible for about one out of eight international trips. Most Chinese international visitors are not interested in spending time during long-distance trips at beaches or outdoor cafés. After the pandemic, they are looking more than ever for smaller, less crowded destinations and for meaningful experiences. Therefore, they can easier be guided towards other parts of a destination and other times of the year outside the hotspots and the traditional main season, if good reasons to do so are provided. Overcrowding and seasonality can be mitigated, which will provide increased satisfaction also to the staff and the local population.

The book also includes ten interviews with leading experts from politics and industry, adding different points of view, and two invited texts about the pitfalls of marketing and a guide how to find the way out of the box towards innovation.

With this publication, written not as an academic publication but with the aims to be published as close to the events as possible and to provide actionable insights, a CoVID-19 recovery programme can be started using the Chinese outbound market as an avantgarde development, which will create or secure and improve jobs and companies. Such a programme will keep most of the budget inside the destination, spending it on the empowerment of the tourism and hospitality industry concentrating on the key elements TRUST – EMBEDDEDNESS – SATISFACTION, based on product adaptation and digitalisation. The majority of the budget of such a programme will not disappear into the black hole of Chinese social media, being one voice trying to be heard in a cacophony of a million voices, preaching to the converted instead of reaching new visitors.

Prof. Dr. Arlt is the author of “China’s Outbound Tourism” (Routledge 2006), the first-ever monograph about the topic and the founder of COTRI in the year 2004. He has been working in the field since more than 40 years and is a regular speaker and chair at major both academic and industry conferences, in the past months of course in an online format. He is a fellow of the Royal Geographical Society and the Royal Asian Society and member of several international experts’ panels. COTRI is an Affiliated Member of UNWTO, Knowledge Partner of WTTC and member of ETOA, PATA, and WTA.

The book *Welcoming the New Chinese Outbound Tourists. Guest relationships with Chinese visitors in the 2020s* is published as an eBook and provided as ePUB and pdf.

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Contact for interviews, etc.: [pr@china-outbound.com](mailto:pr@china-outbound.com)