

# REACHING CHINESE MARKET



# Understanding Chinese Luxury Travellers

Chinese Luxury consumers account for 30%-40% of worldwide Luxury consumption, if not 50%, for some product categories. And Chinese customers do not only buy Luxury products but also invest in high-rise properties, luxury experiences, cars, education programs and so on. And they buy worldwide - just walk down New York's Fifth Avenue or Paris's Rue Saint-Honore. If you have a chance to be in Monaco, Nice, or Portofino, today the Chinese own the best properties and luxury cars. Even with a recent slowdown in Chinese Luxury consumption, China remains the second largest world economy and the nation is the number one consumer of Luxury products.

Many of hotel managers -owing to a language barrier or cultural differences - are not comfortable serving Chinese customers. Some are even judgmental, and worse, disapproving. As a hospitality manager, first and foremost, you need to respect Chinese consumers.

## Sentiment and Appreciation



There is quite often resentment toward Chinese tourist consumers. Japanese tourists in Europe, years ago, were perceived as always carrying a camera. Today, Chinese tourists in Europe do not enjoy a good image.

Most of the time, they still travel in a group (though less and less) because it is easier, since a very large majority do not speak English (English language education was not part of their school curriculum).

The younger generation will dare to travel independently; but most Chinese tourists prefer travelling in groups with friends or family. Always being "in a group" makes them more obvious somehow, highly visible. They are in a rush when they visit Western countries as there is so much to see. They dart from Milan to Paris, and London.

For many of them this is their first visit to Europe or to the USA. It is certainly stressful, especially because sometimes no one helps them, and they also have to constantly protect themselves from theft and tourist traps (they have heard many stories of such things before traveling).

Despite the language barrier, and their limited time frame, Chinese tourists have to combine sightseeing and shopping. They have little time to spend and many things to do! Before arriving in Paris, for example, they most likely have already prepared a list of what they do. Many Chinese tourists visiting Europe feel disappointed about the service they receive: slow and unfriendly.

Should we show more appreciation? They are new consumers willing to share our passion for creativity and quality and therefore allow the industry of Luxury and high-end travel experiences to be able to continue to exist.

Chinese consumers are also buying properties and financing expensive education programs for their children. They are creating jobs, financing economies and they do participate in the development of the Luxury industry, allowing the creation of many employment opportunities. With a positive state of mind, and better appreciation, you can learn how to better handle Chinese tourists.



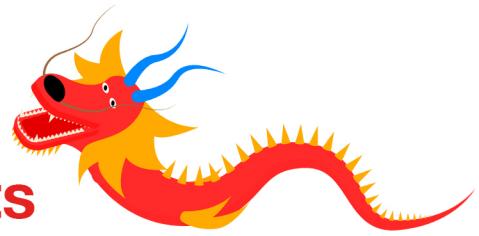
## Recognize Chinese Consumers

The different Chinese tourist customers can be easily identified. First one can separate the Chinese tourist living in China from the Chinese coming mainly from Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore.

Most of the time, Chinese from Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore do not travel in a group and do speak English. Hotel managers do not have too many difficulties with these guests and just have to deal with them as naturally as possible.

We want to focus more on Chinese visitors who deserve your special attention in particular. The first challenge for you is to distinguish a Chinese guest. Of course, it will be easier if you speak Chinese. Instead, why don't you start by watching Chinese movies in the original version so that you can discern the Chinese language?

You can easily distinguish spoken Chinese from Japanese and Korean, for example. The second piece of advice is to obtain clues, for example, from the handbag of Madame or the wrist-watch of Monsieur. Most of the time, you will see a nicely branded handbag for a woman. For a man, there is a good chance that he will be wearing a nice branded bracelet timepiece. We suggest not looking at their dress code in general. Do not be surprised to see men in very casual attire; business owners in China do not wear suits and comfortable attire is always preferred. Do not be surprised to see ladies in high heels, sometimes seemingly over-dressed at all times, to always look good in pictures but also to be able to match the beauty of the cities they visit.



## Dealing With Chinese Tourists

When they travel Chinese tourists are particularly impatient. It is true that they do have to optimize their shopping time. And shopping is definitely part of the program, and for many of them is even the main objective. Buying abroad offers a cost saving for them, and a guarantee that the products are genuine. Besides, they are buying in the country where the product has been made (which is even more meaningful). And for sure, Chinese tourists do come for the quality and service experience of a Luxury boutique.

I still believe that sales advisors do need to take the necessary time. A Chinese tourist will never reproach quality service. They only disguise slow service, a lack of efficiency. Communicate, charm and provide the same service as you would to other clients and you will be surprised by the response.

## Serving To Chinese Travellers



In a normal situation, what advice can be offered for serving to Chinese customers, taking into account the cultural differences? More and more Chinese customers do speak English. The key is your capability to quickly establish confidence in you. And it's not really any more difficult to establish a relationship with a Chinese guest than with any other. It is about showing

empathy, generosity and sincerity. Respect is important and might be one of the key differences.

Converse with and behave naturally is the second piece of advice. More and more Chinese travellers do speak English. But you can learn a few Chinese sentences, to be able to communicate and show respect to your Chinese guests. But never pretend that you can speak a little Chinese, unless you are very proficient. Unfortunately, for most of us, it is easier and better to learn to speak English fluently. Always speak clearly and slowly enough to allow your guests to understand what you are saying.

Accept with intelligence cultural differences and other personal behavior. Your guest may seem rude when they speak, in a rustic way. They may not understand the etiquette in Luxury establishment. You may be surprised that they can behave in a certain way. This is a sentiment of superiority and one to absolutely avoid. Most of these guests are highly educated, with strong leadership positions. They are not impressed by Luxury - for many of these customers, the items are to be used in daily life.

Being extremely courteous is always necessary. You need to be aware of a few important rules. Firstly, never become too familiar. A guest is a guest even when he treats you like a friend. Never make the mistake of taking your guest for a friend. If your guest is a particularly friendly guest, still make sure you avoid getting into conversations of a private nature unless your Chinese guest offers such information. Wait for him to tell you and if he does, be sure to remember what he told you. The second rule is to not be in too much of a hurry. Let things come naturally; time is the best facilitator.

Some hospitality managers have the impression that it is difficult to know what the Chinese customer's decision is. It is pretty simple. Chinese guest never commit unless they are absolutely sure about their decision. If they are sure, they will tell you.

You can also hear that Chinese travellers do not say no. Chinese travellers do say no like everyone else and most managers simply do not know how to detect the no. Some expressions that mean "no" are:

***“It’s okay, thank you.”***

***“No need for the moment, thank you.”***

***“That’s all for the moment, thank you.”***

***“I need to leave now, thank you.”***

Understanding what a Chinese guest is really telling you will come with more experience.

## **Build a Relationship With Your Chinese Guests**

Despite the language barrier, it is always possible to build a long-term relationship with Chinese guests. All you need is a WeChat account, they will easily exchange their contact details with you via your WeChat account. They are generally very happy to have foreign contacts and will even help to introduce your property to friends that may be visiting your city.

You can also go the extra mile for your Chinese guests. In the Chinese culture, there is a great sense of gratitude and they will always reciprocate one way or another to thank you for the additional and personal service you provided.

