

Insight



Priorities of Female Travelers - Less Automation and Sharing, More Details

Databank



Eight Vital Distribution Solutions Every Hotel Needs to Stay Competitive

Leaders in Trade



Ctrip's Partial Customer Service Has Been Taken Over by Artificial Intelligence
—— Interview with Ctrip's CTO Mr. Gan Quan

City



Kathmandu's Alleys and Temples



In- depth Analysis: 2017 Tourism Industry Threats and Opportunities

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In the blink of an eye, 2017 will be the end. The whole travel industry has experienced the turnover of spring and autumn, the opportunity and hope being intertwined, together with creativity and challenge. We begin by sorting out the big events in the industry, and deeply dissect the gain and losses of travel agencies, airlines, cruise lines, capital and hotels, and show potential threats and opportunities.

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The outbound tourism is gradually becoming standard and the consumption is rising to the highest level

China will continue to be the world champion of outbound tourism in 2017. According to tourism statistics released by the National

Tourism Administration, the number of Chinese citizens travelling abroad reached 62.03 million in the first half year, up 5% from 593,000 in the same period last year. Pointed out by the China Tourism Academy's "China's outbound tourism development of the annual report 2017", the

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combination of outbound tourism makes it not only became the soft power of the nation's image building, but also become the foundation of the "Belt and Road" initiatives strategy.

In total, China's outbound tourism market and consumption growth have slowed down, and the proportion of outbound tourism in the structure has increased significantly, and the number of tourists traveling to "Belt and Road" countries has grown significantly. Customers on the output growth is the main driving factor, and tourism in the western region with new market to rise further, also destination consumer behavior shows the changes from "buy buy" to "swim swim". The satisfaction of Chinese tourists on the overall and tourism service quality of various destinations is high.

Today, China's outbound tourism has entered the phase of "consumption upgrade", and the purposes of the travel abroad also more diversified, shifting from sightseeing to enjoy high quality life and spiritual pursuit, such as education, health care, shopping, food, and even the air and water can be the reason tourists traveled. Outbound tourism has become the new standard for the middle class in China. Jiang yiyi, director of the international institute of China tourism research institute, said that since 2013, China has been the world's largest source of outbound tourists, and its per capita consumption is high.

The improvement of the exchange rate has provided strong support for the development of outbound tourism, but the fundamental factor is the improvement of the consumption capacity of residents.

With the increase of international airline capacity in the central and western regions, there is a tendency to sink into the second, third, fourth tier cities. In the future, China's consumer market will have a surprising amount of growth. In the next five years, 81 per cent of China's total consumption growth will come from the upper middle class and the wealthy.

Mr. Chen Xiaobing (Founder of Caesar China, Caesar Tourism President)

In 2017, the tourism market is robust; series of favorable tourism policies are introduced, and the tourism market and consumers are becoming more mature and rational. The tourism industry sees opportunities and challenges. We are in a big upgrade of tourist consumption era, while the diversity of travel demand and consumption upgrade quality to promote tourism industry.

The supply and consumption upgrade is reversed transmission side reform, products and services provided by the tourism enterprises, more and more emphasis on quality.

In the context of consumption upgrade, every tourism practitioners need to return to nature, to explore the essence of tourism products and services, to really think about how to provide valuable experience. Based on this, Caesar comprehensively promote tourism consumption upgrade, increased the new high tourism products and private group series product research and development. Private products are gradually popular, "delicate small group", "high density" private "personalization" and "deep experience" are gradually popular with guests.

In 2017, with the in-depth development of the "Belt and Road" initiative, silk road tourism has come a long way. From the sales of Caesars, Kazakhstan, Russia, Poland, central Asia, have seen a big increase. Caesar tourism complies with "Belt and Road" initiative, in-depth excavation along the silk road tourism resources. The introduction of each product line, integration of land and maritime silk road, will make all-round development of the silk road tourism products system. At the same time, we also see the Chinese people have become more and more popular with the theme of "sports tourism""outdoor hiking" and "education tourism". In the Spanish super bowl, more than 200 fans from more than 20 provinces and cities gathered at the Bernabeu field.

Mr. Zhang Lei (Senior Vice President of Uzai Tourism Group)

In 2017, the concentration of tourism industry is increasing and the industry is further gathered. As the consumption upgrade trend becomes more and more obvious, the tourism industry keeps pushing new products, creating new products, developing new destinations, and opening a wider door to our visitors.

The outbound tourism market continues to develop. As a company, we are excited to be able to catch up with such a good time. We also expand our business in rapid development, and strengthen our services and products. In 2017, Uzai Tourism will build a comprehensive service platform for outbound tourism with the development of collectivization and an integrated service platform for outbound tourism.

It will expand the outbound tourism service to "tourism +" outbound services and build a large ecosystem of outbound services. In the context of rapid development, the segmentation market is more obvious, and the study tour, parent-child, self-drive and customization are the fastest growing segments in the industry.

The travel agencies are looking for a more focused and in-depth business model, looking for the subdivision direction, grasping the market segment and becoming the key to this year. Uzai tourism in 2017 to develop theme products, precisely is to grasp the market segment, to promote the new performance.

2017: New Consumption to Promote New Civil Aviation Reform

Delta President Mr. Huang Kang, Greater China and Singapore

The key word that impressed me most in 2017 is the "new consumption", because it is having a profound impact on the civil aviation industry. Many industrial events and





changes that have occurred in the civil aviation sector in the past year are largely due to the rapid development of new consumption. In recent years, China's middle class is on the rise, their spending power has given rise to a powerful new consumption concept, tourism, vacation, entertainment, health, culture, education, information services become the new consumption hot spots. As one of the carriers of these new consumption, airlines are keeping up with the times.

Enhance the Capacity

A notable trend for the sino-american civil aviation market is that the number of Chinese travelers to the United States is growing rapidly in the face of a growing number of travelers. In 2010, Chinese travelers to the United States accounted for about 30 percent of the total number of travelers between the two countries. In 2016, the number of travelers between the two countries was basically flat, and this year we have seen Chinese travelers start to outnumber American travelers. We expect that by 2020, the number of Chinese travelers to the United States will be more than double that of the United States, and the total number of passengers between the two countries is expected to reach 70 percent.

To this end, the United States and China's major airlines are increasing their capacity. In recent years, Delta air lines have nearly tripled the number of direct flights between China and the United States. Currently, there are five daily

direct flights, and 2017 is about 3.5 times the capacity of 2009. In July 2018, delta will also open a daily direct flight between Shanghai and Atlanta.

Improve Service

There is a growing demand for service quality between China and the United States. For example, China's millennials are increasingly turning to the United States as a destination for studying abroad and traveling. The young people who grew up in the open culture of the education and the open culture are more willing to invest time and money in experiential tourism than their grandparents. They no longer see airlines as mere vehicles, but as part of the travel experience. Therefore, in the service, delta and other airlines are also the director of each exhibition, to meet the needs of these new generation of travel.

From January 17, 2018, Delta's new A350 passenger jet will be used for the first time on the Beijing-Detroit route, and delta will become the world's first airline to launch the A350 on the Sino-US route.

The A350 will bring a qualitative leap for passenger air experience: the newly designed to reaches business class suites with sliding door, can build a good air illicit close space for passengers, and still is delta new super economy class cabin, more spacious and comfortable seats.

The development of information and the popularization of the Internet have made it

important for many people to connect to the Internet at any time. The WiFi on board is also becoming more and more important. Delta all long-haul international flights, including routes of China and the United States, all equipped with WiFi on. Delta also has the world's largest fleet equipped with WiFi, the A350 is equipped with 2ku a new generation of in-flight WiFi, surf the Internet faster and more stable.

Take the Alliance Road

This year, industry competition is becoming more and more intense, as many airlines adopt the way of alliance, with the advantage of the two sides or various parties, the resources join together in order to enhance the competitiveness.

If there is a big event in the global aviation industry in 2017, that would be one of the 10 per cent strategic stakes for Air France-KLM. The investment will lead to further in-depth cooperation between Asia, the United States and Europe, and integrate the global network resources.

As early as 2015, Delta's \$450 million deal to buy a 3.55% stake in China Eastern, through close cooperation, the number of cities linked between China and the United States turned over several times as before, offering more and more convenience for passengers of flight and destination choice.

2017 is a year of change and a year of reaping. The airline industry has been changing steadily. The improvement of people's

consumption level, the great progress of science and technology, and the deepening of the cooperation of aviation enterprises have laid a good foundation for the development of the whole industry. The next year, let's wait and see.

Cruise to the Next Decade

Royal Caribbean Global Senior

Vice President Mr. Liu Zinan,

China and North Asia President

2017 is the year when China's cruise market took a turn. In the past ten years, the Chinese cruise market has experienced a rapid development from the start to the global cruise industry strategic market.

During this process, the brand awareness and reputation of cruise brands have become increasingly prominent to consumers, and has gradually become the core standard of their choice of cruise ship. The international cruise lines, represented by Royal Caribbean, has been introducing world-leading cruise products into the Chinese market, in terms of product development and market development

A large amount of investment has greatly enhanced the recognition and popularity of cruise ships in Chinese consumers.

As the Chinese cruise market continues to heat up, more and more Chinese consumers are starting to try cruises, take cruises again, or take family and friends to experience cruises. At the same time, under the government's strong promotion and the guidance of the "Belt & Road" initiatives, the Chinese cruise industry has been continuously upgraded, and the construction of the Chinese cruise port has been improved, and the cruise economy has boomed. Cruise lines can be more comprehensive and flexible in their marketing.

For example, in 2017, Royal Caribbean Sea Voyage for the first time from Shenzhen home port to operate multiple routes, north China, east China, south China, make each region more convenient for consumers to experience the high quality product.

The sustainable development of China's cruise industry is the most important issue for the cruise industry in the next decade. There are five levels of demand for China's cruise industry, and the most basic is consumer satisfaction.

Having the satisfaction of consumers, it will have more cruises to enter the market, and then will be the demand for shipbuilding, port construction and development of supply chain and the economic effects to the culture.

At the same time, we see in the consumption level to upgrade under the background of Chinese consumers for a better life, and quality requirement of the resort is increasing day by day, tend to be

more diversified and personalized consumer demand, however, the present China's cruise market is facing challenges, such as serious product similarity and the shore experience is lack of interests, etc.

To solve these problems, the localization of cruise products should not be simple, but to optimize the experiences. It has been committed to creating consumers in mind, to their surprise and fresh experience. Royal Caribbean, for example, our innovation is divided into four aspects: 1. for the future to build a new ship: Royal Caribbean has recently started to build Quantum series tailor-made for Chinese market only super cruise ship "ocean spectrum", will deploy 2019 home port in China. 2, continuously optimize existing cruise products: such as quantum series and voyager series, launch cruise on the royal suite exclusive courtesy, from the arrival of the dock, ship, hotel suites, dining, entertainment, shopping, aspects and so on to shore upstream for suite guests provide fast track and a full set of private VIP services; In the "Quantum of the Seas" and "Ocean Praise", the Chinese restaurant of Chinese artistic conception is introduced to enhance the dining experience of the sea. 3, improving the pre-market experience: optimize the boarding process of the dock and launch the exclusive website and service of the royal bank. 4, optimizing destination and tourist experience: in 2018, we will add 14 to the nation from the port selection of 6 nights and above the long route, 11 new dock port, and will launch 135 boutique shore sightseeing trips.

At the same time, the promotion of overseas routes will be one of the future priorities of Royal Caribbean. In the future, Royal Caribbean will continue to practice in the Chinese market, with innovative products and services for customers to create high-quality cruise holidays, consolidate the foundation of Chinese cruise industry development; With unrelenting quality improvement and market operation, we provide win-win business conditions for our hotel partners.

I believe in government, industry innovation, the cooperation environment, Chinese cruise industry will usher in a new turning point, the formation of ecological economic circle, the booming cruise in the coming out of a sustainable development of their own health.

When the Hotel Industry is Overhauled

Mr. Li Yusheng, Chief Operating Officer

and Managing Director of Marriott

International Group Greater China

China's economy has steadily increased year by year, and the disposable income of its residents has been rising.

By 2022, the proportion of middle class

in China's cities will reach to more than 76 percent, and the consumption mindset will be more enjoyable to experience lifestyle.

As Chinese travelers are getting younger and travel experiences are becoming more and more diverse, we can learn from consumers' changes in travel products and related experiences.

Luxury travelers are increasingly interested in personalized travel services, and more than 50 percent of luxury travelers have experienced high-end customization.

As the demand for luxury travelers changes, the tourism industry will cater to the trend, offering more unique and impressive experiences of travel and parking. Affluent luxury travelers pay great attention to their choice of destination, while the demand for leisure vacation is higher than shopping.

The average annual tourism consumption of China's "Y generation" luxury tourists is 420,000 yuan. The average budget for their stay at the hotel is 3,100 yuan per night, compared with an average of 3.3 trips abroad in the past year, with an average of 25 days, 69 percent of which are recreational vacations.

With the increase of female social responsibility, aesthetic demand and household responsibilities, the era of "her economy" is driving new impetus with these demands.

China has become the world's largest tourist destination, regardless of outbound travel or inbound tourism, which is one of the most important markets for global hotel operators. Marriott international has also made a lot of progress this year.

We already have three new brands in China, including the proud Autograph Collection, Bulgari Hotel and Resort, and Fairfield by Marriott.

Marriott's partnership with Alibaba in August was more of an industry blockbuster. The establishment of the joint venture will be Marriott international global brand layout and professional experience in hospitality industry, with Alibaba in the lead in the field of digital retail and 500 million monthly active users in combination with each other, the move will undoubtedly redefining the travel experience.

The joint venture between Marriott and Alibaba will provide a superior online and offline travel experience for Chinese consumers. By matching the Alibaba's advanced digital platform, Marriott international's global hotel resources will dock to Chinese consumers, combining with the Marriott international understanding of Chinese consumers, we can look forward to Marriott international being China's outbound travel choice of users. ➤

(Source: travelweekly magazine)

WTCF Widely Complimented for Hosting the China Tourism Development Forum at the WTM 2017"



The World Travel Market (WTM 2017) is currently being held at ExCeL London from November 6-8, 2017. World Tourism Cities Federation (WTCF) was invited to attend the event and hosted the "China Tourism Development Forum". Representing WTCF, Mr. Li Baochun, Executive Deputy Secretary-General of WTCF; Mrs. Nancy Cockerell, Expert of WTCF Expert Committee; and Mr. Roger Carter, Deputy Director of WTCF Expert Committee, were present at the forum held that day. They discussed the characteristics of China's tourism market under the world tourism development trend in front of 50 visitors and media representatives at the site.

Li Baochun, Executive Deputy Secretary-General of WTCF, delivered the keynote speech "Chinese Outbound Tourist Consumption Behaviour Analysis and Introduction to the Market Research Report on Chinese Outbound Tourist (City) Consumption" during the forum. Outlining the detailed data, investigation and analysis methods, he systematically analyzed the status quo and characteristics of today's Chinese outbound tourism market. Other issues covered in his analysis also included the Chinese outbound tourism data, the changes and development of Chinese outbound tourist models, the characteristics, habits, hobbies of Chinese outbound tourists, and so on.

Representing WTCF, Mrs. Nancy Cockerell, Expert of WTCF Expert Committee, released the UNWTO-WTCF City Tourism Performance Research, which was jointly developed by WTCF and the UNWTO. This research analyzes the destination management, economics, society and culture, environment

and technology of the 12 tourism cities of the world, and the research result provides scientific basis for the world tourism cities to achieve sustainable development.

Next, Mr. Roger Carter, Deputy Director of WTCF Expert Committee, released The Report on World Tourism Economy Trends 2018, which predicts the 2018 world tourism economy development's 8 major trends by analyzing the core data of the general scale of the global tourism economy, namely: comprehensive and fast growth of the global tourism economy; the global tourism tripod pattern becomes more obvious and the Asian-Pacific part is expanding in the global tourism pattern; tourism grows faster in emerging economies; the tourism development of BRICS stands out; tourism has become the largest component of the international trade in services; global tourism investment grows quickly, and cities play important roles in the global tourism economy. According to the report, 2/3 of the WTCF member cities have received nearly 1/3 of all global tourists.



During the Expo, Li Baochun, Executive Deputy Secretary-General of WTCF, met with the Mayor and Executive Deputy Mayor of Seville. They discussed several issues including how to provide better service for WTCF members and how to promote development of world tourism cities.

While accepting interviews by BBC and other media, Executive Deputy Secretary-General Li Baochun introduced the five years of development of WTCF as well as the current membership, services provided for member cities such as exhibition, investment, academic and training during the interview. He also welcomed more European and the world's tourism cities and tourism companies to join WTCF.

In 2015, WTCF was invited to participate WTM and won the WTM's annual World Travel Leaders Award. The award is aimed at rewarding organizations and individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the development of world travel industry during the year. At the 2016 WTM, WTCF hosted the Chinese Tourism Market Development Forum and WTCF Members Europe Meeting. During the forum, WTCF released the Market Research Report on Chinese Outbound Tourist (City) Consumption (2015-2016) and the Annual Report on Development of World Tourist Cities (2016).

Around 50,000 senior travel industry professionals, government ministers and international media visit WTM London every November generating more than £2 billion worth of travel industry contracts. This year's newcomers include those that represent every continent and every sector of the travel trade, such as destinations, technology, hospitality, cruising, insurance, car hire and so on. More than 130 new exhibitors from across the globe have signed up for WTM London. The fast-growing Asian markets are particularly well represented, with 33 of the new exhibitors coming from Asia.



"UNWTO-WTCF City Tourism Performance Research" Was Released at the 6th Global Summit on Urban Tourism



The 6th Global Summit on Urban Tourism, co-organized by MOTAC, and UNWTO, is being held in Kuala Lumpur from December 4-6. During the summit, Ms. Esencan Terzibasoglu, Director of the Destination Management and Quality Programme at the UNWTO, released the UNWTO-WTCF City Tourism Performance Research. Representatives of 5 cities including WTCF city members Buenos Aires, Hangzhou, Cape Town and Turin interpreted the report during the summit.

With the tourism industry transforming to a major driving force for the social and economic development of locals, the UNWTO and World Tourism Cities Federation (WTCF) established the cooperative partnership in 2015 to jointly conduct regional and performance research on cities. This project was named "UNWTO-WTCF City Tourism Performance Research." The research is an instrument with a set of criteria and a platform for exchange of information that can be used globally to benchmark tourism performance in urban destinations.

The research focuses on 15 cities such as Beijing, Berlin, Bogota, Buenos Aires, Cape Town, Copenhagen, Hangzhou, Marrakesh, Sapporo, Seoul, Tianjin and Turin, etc. Several participants were included in the UNWTO-WTCF City Tourism Performance Research. Data of the research is collected at the city level by the tourism experts identified by UNWTO and WTCF. Establishing these performance

criteria in cities and collecting data from the best-case cities will enable other cities to learn and to help them to improve and evaluate the performance of city tourism in general.

The UNWTO-WTCF City Tourism Performance Research focuses on 5 key performance areas: Destination Management, Economic Perspective, Social and Cultural, Environment Perspective and, Technology & New Business Models. WTCF and UNWTO held phased City Tourism Performance Seminars in Tianjin, China, and Buenos Aires, Argentina. Experts in the tourism industry were invited to the seminar to discuss and provide more comprehensive data for the research result.

Take Berlin as an example, visitors in licensed lodging operations alone have more than quadrupled since the early 1990s to a record breaking 12.73 million annual visitors and more than 31.06 million overnight stays in 2016, making Berlin Europe's third most popular urban tourism destination after Paris and London. There is no single one reason that explains the success of Berlin as a destination, but it appears reasonable to suggest that the effective and professional marketing and representation services provided by the city's DMO, visitBerlin, have played a major role in making the destination Berlin the success that it is today. Meanwhile Berlin also finds itself confronted with several challenges. Many of them relate to or are linked to the heightened need for tourism management and planning that result from the increases of tourism activity the city has experienced. It requires the government to launch new regulation to face these challenges. Take Hangzhou as another example, this city has always paid attention to the tourism and leisure industry. In 2016, it has been calculated that the added value of the city's tourism and leisure industry experienced a 13.3% increase to 80.889 billion Yuan. The city's unique quality is centered with, not like Beijing, Xi'an or other ancient Chinese cities with heavy historical cultural DNA, "relaxing life" atmosphere, such as "poetic leisureliness", "slow life", "peacefulness" and "southern femi-beauty". Following this line, with years of research and studies, in 2014 "the culture of living" was identified as the city's cultural DNA, the Hangzhou IP. "Hangzhou, Living Poetry" was created as the English promotional slogan of Hangzhou tourism accordingly.

Taking into account the fact that by 2050, 70% of the world's population is estimated to be living in cities and only by 2025, cities will contribute over 30 trillion US dollars to the world economy annually. Nowadays, tourism has become to a core for developing

in economy, social and geography sectors for the cities, it is essential to monitor the tourism performance in urban destinations and clearly address the areas for improvement. Just as Taleb Rifai, Secretary-General of UNWTO, says that city tourism is on a par with sustainable development, it is important to develop local tourism resources, but what is also important is to protect environmental resources, and tangible and non-tangible heritages.

The UNWTO is an international organization between the governments of the United Nations, and an international organization serving as a leader of the tourism industry. It was developed from the IUOTPO. In November 2003, it officially became a department of the United Nations, which has 156 formal member countries and 6 contact members. The objectives of the UNWTO are to promote and develop sustainable tourism so as to contribute to economic development, international understanding, peace, prosperity, and universal respect.

World Tourism Cities Federation (WTCF) is the world's first international tourism organization focusing on cities. Guided by the core vision of Better City Life through Tourism, WTCF facilitates exchanges and cooperation among members, and contributes to the sustainable development of the tourism industry. WTCF continuously promotes the attraction of tourism cities as international destinations, enhances the service quality and efficiency of different cities, and raises the brand image of tourism cities.



Bo'ao International Tourism Communication Forum Held, WTCF Deputy Secretary-General Yan Han Was Invited to Attend the Forum and Delivered a Speech



WTCF Deputy Secretary-General Yan Han was invited to attend the forum and delivered a speech. Through the successful tourism communication cases of London, Singapore, New York, and other cities, he systematically analyzed the international marketing cases of city brands with simple but effective methods.

Zhou Ping, Vice Director of the Hainan Tourism Development Commission; Hong Feng, Deputy Mayor of Qionghai Municipal Government; Professor Larry Dwyer, President of the International Association for Tourism Economics; and Randy Balemor, Chief Operating Officer at Hawaii Tourism Authority, attend the forum. They delivered speeches from the perspective of building the destination brand, research results of global tourism transmission, etc.

This forum invited nearly 100 media outlets, including dozens of mainstream media such

as, Xinhua News Agency, CCTV news, Ifeng and Tencent.

ITCF has addressed that all future forums will be held in Bo'ao Town. Hainan, as the host, will take the forum as an opportunity to listen to the views of professionals from China and abroad. Share the experience of world island tourism transmission while contributing to the development of international island tourism.

On November 19th, the 2nd Bo'ao International Tourism Communication Forum (ITCF) kicked off in Bo'ao Town, Qionghai City, Hainan Province. This forum's theme was "Global Wisdom in Tourism Communication and China's Path II", and those who came to the forum include tourism expert representatives from more than 20 countries, dozens of related leaders of Chinese cities' and provincial tourism bureaus, and more than 800 individuals from the tourism industry.



The China International Travel Mart 2017 Held in Kunming, WTCF Joins to Exhibit and Communicate with Its Members



The 2017 International Travel Mart 2017, jointly hosted by the China National Tourism Administration, Civil Aviation Administration of China, and People's Government of Yunnan Province, kicked off in Yunnan on November

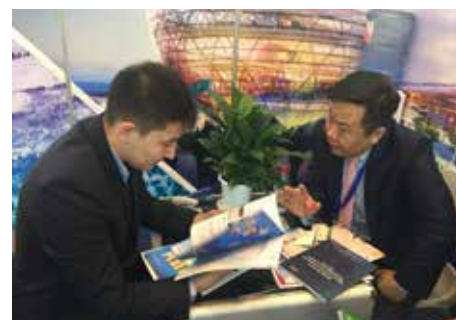
17. WTCF set up a booth to promote WTCF and its members, and also communicated and negotiated with its members who joined the travel mart.

The China International Travel Mart is

the largest professional travel fair in Asia, and has been held alternately in Shanghai and Kunming annually since 2001.

About 10,000 global representatives including travel wholesalers, travel agents, retailers, and travel industry professionals participated in the 2017 Mart to exhibit, negotiate, communicate, and so on. It is estimated that over 50,000 visitors came to the travel mart.

On the first day of the China International Travel Mart, WTCF communicated with the tourism bureaus of Seoul, Colombo, Qingdao, as well as, Kazakhstan, and Zimbabwe. International exhibitors are optimistic about China's outbound



tourism market. Since July, 2016, China and Kazakhstan officially started group tours to Kazakhstan.

The number of Chinese tourists traveling to Kazakhstan sharply increased in less than a year, and reached about 5000 in 2016. Almaty, one of the member cities of WTCF, is becoming more and more familiar to Chinese people. Colombo, the capital of Sri Lanka, is also a member of WTCF to which China has become the second largest tourist source after India. The number of Chinese tourists continues to grow. Therefore, how to attract more Chinese tourists and improve the

service quality, as well as the report, Market Research Report on Chinese Outbound Tourist (City) Consumption, and other researches results



bring a new surge of interest to member cities, which they then consulted with WTCF for relevant issues.



WTCF Supports the Hosting of the "2017 China Leisure Conference"



Recently, the first "2017 China Leisure Conference (2017 CLC)" was held in "China's first Eco-city" Lishui, Zhejiang province. The conference was hosted by China Tourism Association, the Tourism Bureau of Zhejiang Province, People's Government of Lishui Municipality, Zhejiang Province, and supported by the World Tourism Cities Federation and other organizations. Over one thousand guests, including tourism industry experts, leaders of Chinese tourism enterprises as well as media reporters, attended the event.

The topic of the 2017 CLC is "New Era, New Thinking New Lifestyle". As the first

leisure tourism themed conference in China, the organizer hopes to promote the new concept of leisure tourism to the society, therefore leading new trends in Chinese leisure industry.

At the conference, Wei Xiao'an, Chief Expert of WTCF Expert Committee, delivered a leisure tourism topic presentation. The well-prepared speech attracted media and tourism expert's attention and was well received.

At the conference, 34 leaders of the tourism industry in China were selected to deliver keynote speeches. This shows how the tourism industry takes the path of business-starting innovation by making great plans, taking action to innovate, pursuing the best, and achieving demonstration results, under the current challenging but hopeful condition.

The Lishui Declaration and the China Leisure Resort Industry Development Report were released at the conference. The National Leisure Standardization Technical Committee was founded after being approved was announced, and related authorized documents

such as the Standardization of Service Quality of Main Function Area of Leisure Tourism were also released.



The First China Tourism Public Opinion (Fragrant Hills) Summit Kicks off in Beijing: Develop Professional Public Opinion Management Strategies, and Boost Tourism Industry Innovation

On November 16th, with the theme of "Vision Expansion • Pattern Breaking • Future Anticipation", the First China Tourism Public Opinion (Fragrant Hills) Summit was jointly held by the Culture and Tourism Professional Committee of China Culture Administration Association and Public Opinion Monitoring Office of People.com.cn. Those who attended the summit include Li Xiaolei, Vice Chairman of

the China Culture Administration Association; Shang Shenglong, Deputy Director of the Comprehensive Coordination Division of China National Tourism Administration; Zhu Shouchen, former Secretary of All-China Journalists Association's Secretariat; Yan Han, Deputy Secretary-General of WTCF, tourism professionals, renowned scholar think-tanks, tourism companies, and media

representatives. They shared research results of the new opportunities of the tourism industrial development, the integrity and innovative development, and the public opinion of tourism.

The Improvement of Public Opinion Quality Is Impending, Consolidate the Development Result of "Comprehensive Tourism"

At the summit, Shang Shenglong, Deputy Director of the Comprehensive Coordination Division of the China National Tourism Administration, delivered a speech and highly appreciated the significance of the summit. He said that under the guidance of the "Comprehensive Tourism" concept, the tourism industry has become a strategic industry for the people's economic development upgrading and structure transformation. At the same time, negative public opinions also keep coming up. According to the current conditions, travel destinations are also troubled by a series of problems such as public opinion management, publicity strategies lacking the macro view of dealing with problems, weak public opinions in leading brand building, and so on. The supervision departments of tourist destinations should specially realize that public opinion of tourism management not only measures crisis and problems, but it also has a positive influence on comprehensive tourism planning and development and it works to adjust the shaping of city images.

Make Full Use of the Combination of "Tourism + Culture", Release Positive Energy

Li Xiaolei, Vice Chairman of China Culture Administration Association, said that the public opinion has generated positive effects and become more valuable in the combined development between culture and tourism. He said that the crisis management and publicity-oriented roles of tourism public opinion management and the export and spreading of culture, plays an irreplaceable role in boosting the upgrading and transformation of the tourism industry and shaping the city brand and image.

Zhu Shouchen, former Secretary of All-China Journalists Association's Secretariat, said that the function of public opinion management in social governance becomes more and more obvious, and effectively dealing with public opinions is important for the healthy development of the tourism industry. Currently, managers working in tourist destinations, companies and related institutions do not have much experience in the current requirements of development. It is impending to entirely improve the quality of public opinion management.

To fully utilize interpersonal transmission, tourist destinations need to establish favorable interactive relations

As Chinese outbound tourists' and consumption ability dramatically grow, the public opinion requirements for tourists and

tourist destinations increase day by day. The tourism industry not only needs to satisfy the public's wish of living a happy life, but it also needs to strengthen the soft power of China. Therefore, WTCF Secretary-General Yan Han said, "Tourism has further spread and promoted Chinese culture." Tourism itself functions to transmit information. When facing a new environment and new information, tourists will think and become information producers and communicators, and will further enter the process of shaping tourism brands.

At present, tourist destinations need to establish favorable interactive relations with the outside world, namely "Gather public opinions in daily life, research and judge public opinions during emergent conditions, guide public opinions in critical conditions, and cope with and influence public opinions after each event". Meanwhile, tourist destinations also hope to further collaborate with the media on brand promotion and during the process of marketing, for they hope to generate favorable public opinion, reports on active popular events, public opinion collection, work performance profits, and other profound and comprehensive brand management effects. He thinks, "Tourist destinations need to design channels to market themselves in their destinations and also market themselves outside of their destinations."

Strengthen the Combined Power of Convergence Media, Shape Upgraded Tourism Brands

At the summit, Sun Yu, former Deputy Chief of the Public Opinion Bureau of the Publicity Department of the Communist Party of China, delivered a keynote speech with the theme of "Build the Combined Power of the Convergence Media of China Tourism Public Opinion". He thinks that public opinion of tourism can be understood as the "public opinion of society" of the tourism industry; properly dealing with public opinion of tourism will become a backbone power in shaping and sustaining tourism brands, and improperly dealing with it can also cause the tourism economic development of tourist destinations lag behind.

Sun Yu said that today's information and technology sector keeps upgrading increasingly and media convergence is strengthening, and the "Comprehensive Tourism" development strategy enhances the added value of the tourism industrial integrity day by day. If we want to actively cater for and implement the "Comprehensive Tourism" and "Tourism+" development strategies, improve the brand images of tourist destinations, expand the space of tourism development,



push forward the upgrading and structure transformation of tourism development, we must build the combined power of convergence media of China's tourism public opinion. When analyzing the "An Oriental Journey" project as a typical case, he proposed two specific suggestions for practice: collect media resources and further enhance the positive value of tourism public opinions; and embark on setting up a gathering and analysis mechanism for tourism public opinions, and improve our understanding of the public's opinion on tourism status and our abilities to deal with it.

Lately, as the tourism industry is booming, the developmental strategies of tourist destinations cannot ignore the influence of public opinion. According to the tourism industrial status with the "Comprehensive Tourism" theory as its background, public opinion of tourism covers many different fields such as tourism resources, policy and law, ecological condition, public service, civilized manners, related industries and so on. It is also more related to tourist destinations' management elements including dining, accommodation, transportation, toilet qualities, travel, shopping, entertainment, popular travel events, topics, etc. Therefore, in the process of the tourism industrial transformation, we not only need to pay much attention to the further exploration and consolidation of the tourism market, but we also need to comprehensively build systematic and professional public opinion management strategies, so that we can improve our guiding power of the public's opinion and brand reputation levels, and strengthen brand competitiveness. The successful holding of this summit provides new management ideas for tourist destinations and companies, and refreshes our understanding of the power of public opinion on tourism, and it is also significant to boost the development of China's tourism industry. It also provides a macro view of comprehensive development for the tourism industry, and a brand new realization that tourism companies can surpass time and space.

WTCF Launches "World Travelling" Program at 46 Chinese Five-star Hotels -- The first of 36 City Members' Tourism Promotional Program were Played



Recently, World Tourism Cities Federation and Beijing Sparkle Roll Interactive Technology cooperated together to launch the new promotional program series "World Travelling" at 46 five-star Hotels in China. Guests can watch the program on the room's television sets.

The program was first broadcasted at the following hotels: Kempinski Hotel Shanghai, Le Royal Meridien Shanghai, Hilton Chengdu, Crowne Plaza Beijing Lido, and Shangri-La Hotel Shenzhen.

The hotels are located in first- and second-tier cities or famous tourist destinations of China and covers a total of 15 regions including Beijing,

Shanghai, Tianjin, Shandong, Jiangsu and Hainan Province. During the one-month trial, a total of 36 city member's tourism promotional programs were played in 19,556 hotel rooms, and it was the second most-frequently played program after the movie column.

The "Interactive TV" can provide multi-media services such as multilingual services, guestroom services, unified hotel marketing, information release, video browsing, video/audio on demand, and so on.

These services can guarantee perfect interactions such as self-service, entertainment and information demand between the guest and the hotel through the guestroom television set. And so, the hotel guestroom amenities can be improved, service content can be enriched, service quality can be enhanced, and guestroom business functions can be perfected.

Beijing Sparkle Roll Interactive Technology is a high-tech company invested and established by Sparkle Roll Group, which is a leading enterprise in China luxury goods industry.

Through the intensive combination of "Interactive TV" technology, which is the essential part, and the hotel industry, Sparkle Roll delivers a series of digital products, services, and solutions for hotel information delivery and marketing.

The company plans to create 20,000 more screens in a year, and the total screen number of screens amount to 40,000 in the next year. Projects which are already in operation will achieve a 22,500 daily viewership numbers and in an expectation, as well as 5.5 million annually viewership numbers. The program's audiences are China's high net worth individuals.



Invited by Moscow, WTCF Gathers Institutional Members and Tourism Businesses to Visit



Recently, WTCF was invited by the Department of National Policy, Inter-Regional Relations and Tourism of the city of Moscow (hereinafter referred to as Moscow Tourism Department) to gather its institutional members and tourism businesses to visit Moscow for tourism resource surveying.

Those that participated in this survey expedition are institutional members of WTCF and tourism businesses, including CITS, CTS, Beijing China Travel Service, CEITS, Yangguan Tourism International Travel Agency, Caissa Touristic, Ctrip, Tuniu.com., China Comfort Travel etc.

On December 8th, members of the survey group and representatives of Moscow Tourism

Department and Moscow local travel agencies held profound face-to-face communication, during which problems that the both parties are concerned were discussed. Moscow Tourism Department introduced Moscow's tourism resources and status of development, especially the featured tourist routes customized according to Chinese tourists' characteristics and interests. The investigation group suggested that Moscow further specify their featured tourism products according to the spotlights of travel such as "Chinese Red Tourism", "Belt and Road Initiative", and so on. They also suggested that Moscow provide Chinese tourists with more specific services by taking their consumption habits into consideration, and hang up Chinese or English signs on the street or inside scenic areas.

The survey group visited many hotels in Moscow including Marriott, and surveyed the guestroom numbers, dining facilities, conference and conference venue facilities etc. Members of the survey group think that these Moscow hotels are suitable for accommodating Chinese tourists and business guests.

The survey group also visited Moscow Red Square, Stalin Bunker, the Kremlin, Lenin's Mausoleum, Tomb of the Unknown Soldier,

Saint Basil's Cathedral (listed among the UNESCO World Heritage Sites), other Moscow landmarks, and Moscow Royal Cruise, etc. This survey was organized by WTCF and its Committee of Tourism-Related Businesses and is a member service activity to facilitate communication. Some travel agencies have joined WTCF's surveys many times before. Each time, they show great interest in the activities organized by WTCF, and are positive toward the communication and collaboration between WTCF's member cities. This survey will be helpful for travel agencies and OTA enterprises to produce more welcoming Moscow and Russian tourism products for tourists, and it also creates an opportunity for this WTCF member city to gather the most direct cooperation advice from Chinese tourism enterprises.





Priorities of Female Travelers - Less Automation and Sharing, More Details

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Research shows that the majority (57.84%) of visitors to travel accommodation sites are women and that female comprises nearly two-thirds of all travelers.

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IATA's latest Global Passenger Survey was once again dominated by responses from men (65%).

As IATA explained to tnooz, the reason for this is not that women were largely excluded from the participant pool, but that more men felt inclined to participate when invited.

The study, published during this year's IATA World Passenger Symposium in Barcelona, makes you ponder whether women have significantly different needs and expectations of air travel.

Tnooz asked IATA for a break-down by gender of the top travel priorities revealed in this year's GPS report, and the organisation kindly processed that data exclusively for us. The results reveal that women are somewhat more protective of their identity information,

something which may be related to a heightened sensitivity to personal security while traveling.

Women also play a critical role in decisions for accommodation, and are setting trends in alternative accommodations.

Research by Hitwise shows that the majority (57.84%) of visitors to travel accommodation sites, including hotel aggregators, hotels, and vacation rentals are women; 60% of visitors to vacation rental sites are women and 31% of visitors to rental sites are women between the ages of 18-44.

Women appear to have stronger emotional connections to their travel booking decisions, and form strong opinions about their travel experience.

Women are more likely than men to link

travel to identity, seeing it as a way to differentiate themselves from friends. They are also more likely to want to visit new destinations.

But women do like to shop around. They are more willing to consider making travel arrangements with new travel services providers, even those with which they have no previous familiarity.

Margaret Ady, head of marketing at hotel data analytics company SnapShot, shares additional insights on women's travel planning priorities.

“Women are most likely to do the travel research, booking, and follow up. They also travel more than men, with women comprising nearly two-thirds of all travelers, according to a 2016 study by George Washington University School of Business.

“Moreover, they comprise 54 percent of coveted affluent travelers, according to MMGY Global. Many of these women travel alone or with other women on ‘girl trips,’ bachelorette parties, or mother-daughter vacations, with nearly 40% of women planning one of these trips, according to a report by AAA.

“If we start by looking at the initial research and planning phase, women, across all travel segments (family, business, solo) do a lion's share of the planning.

“During the booking phase, women tend to book earlier than men, which saves a significant amount of money, according to research by Carlson Wagonlit.

“During and post-stay, women do tend to write reviews. While review scores across genders are not significantly different (i.e., women are not more critical than men, or vice versa), there are differences in the way that each demographic evaluates their travel experience. Women tend to rely more on emotional factors like feeling comfortable and pampered compared to male travelers, who opt for professionalism and facilities. Women are also far more likely to mention food and beverage as well as spa and wellness in their hotel reviews.

“There is a major opportunity for travel and hospitality companies to reach this market segment by creating tailored campaigns, communication, and services specifically for women. Companies that are particularly strong in segmenting their marketing can create hyper-targeted campaigns by further breaking down the female travel segment (by family travel, business, mother-daughter vacations, single affluent, and so on). These findings should also be taken into account when creating special offers or perks: a complimentary drink or spa treatment may be of more interest to female travelers, whereas free parking or WiFi vouchers may appeal more to male travelers.”

(Source: Tnooz)

Eight Vital Distribution Solutions Every Hotel Needs to Stay Competitive

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This article explores eight key distribution solutions every hotel needs in order to stay competitive and properly market its products.

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This article explores ten key distribution solutions every hotel needs in order to stay competitive and properly market its products.

1. Official website

Getting a proper hotel website is, still, the best thing you can do to improve your marketing strategy. When we use the adjective “proper” we refer to websites that are designed to primarily to convert. It is a widely accepted myth that hotel websites should be as informative as possible and show every minute aspect of the property, but the truth is that the main objective of a hotel website is simply to transform visitors into guests. That’s why choosing the right agency is crucial: a fully customized website is likely the best choice for big properties, while small budget hotels can opt for pre-designed inexpensive themes. Whatever the choice, it’s important to look for some key factors: ease of use of CMS, emotional impact of the design, source code optimized for SEO and frictionless mobile design user experience.

2. Booking engine

When choosing a booking engine, keep in mind that it is where the real action (read: transaction) is, so UX is the most important factor. The booking path should be as frictionless as possible and that the “Look and Feel” of the booking engine has to be consistent with the website design. Page load time is another key factor as, according to several studies, hotels lose up to 20% of potential conversion for any second the booking engine takes to load.

3. Channel manager

Channel Managers have no impact on final conversion, as the users never actually interact with them, but they’re indispensable to distribute room inventory and rates amongst OTAs and direct channels. Hotels should make sure that all the OTAs they work with have a certified connection with the channel manager chosen. Often other systems need

to be connected as well (PMS, CRS, etc.), so it’s important not to overlook this aspect. Low latency in inventory and rates update is crucial to avoid rate disparity between channels, that’s why this should be checked before getting any engagement with a provider.

4. Revenue management software

Revenue management software came a long way: even small properties who cannot afford to hire a revenue manager can now get automatic rate suggestions with a simple click. Bigger properties with proper revenue management departments, on the other hand, can get the best out of the software in terms of granular data analysis and forecasting. As per booking engines, PMSs and channel managers, revenue management software should have high connectivity with all hotel software, in order to correctly aggregate fragmented data into easily interpretable information.

5. Reputation

A lot has been said and written about the importance of a good reputation and its direct correlation to revenue increase, so a proper reputation management tool comes in handy to easily manage all the hotel mentions around the web and run sentiment analysis with just a few clicks. It’s critical to make sure that the software chosen aggregates all the review sites and social media on which the hotel has the highest volume of comments, in order to have properly aggregated data from multiple sources.

6. CRM and email marketing

Customer Relationship Managers are usually used only by medium/big size hotels and chains, as small independent hotels rarely will be able to use them to their full potential. Again, connectivity is the key element to look for when choosing a CRS in order to automatize as many triggers as possible. Email Marketing is an easy and inexpensive way to get more brand visibility. MailChimp is usually sufficient for most small properties,

while bigger hotels may want a proper CRM integration and be guided by a specialized agency.

7. Social media

It goes without saying that all hotels should be active on social media. Smaller ones can stick to basic strategies (posting a couple of times a week, replying to users messages and reviews, post boosting), but larger properties need to have a proper professional figure dealing with social media. As social media provide very granular tools in order to advertise to highly targeted audiences too, the help of a specialized agency is highly recommended.

8. Marketing widgets

Over the years hotel websites evolved from static pages to real “hubs” where hotels can connect price checkers, chats and chatbots to guide the potential guests through the whole booking journey and increase conversion. These tools are relatively easy to implement and not very expensive, so virtually any hotel can benefit from them. Flexibility in development and design customization are key elements when choosing a partner, in order to make the whole booking experience as smooth as possible. ➤

(Source: Tnooz)





Ctrip's Partial Customer Service Has Been Taken Over by Artificial Intelligence

Interview with Ctrip's CTO: Mr. Gan Quan

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At present, in the after-sales environment of Ctrip's hotel sector, intelligent customer service has been able to solve 70% of the problems, which will gradually expand to the after-sales service of airline ticket, tourism and car rental, etc.

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Recently, Ctrip celebrated its 18th birthday at its headquarter in Shanghai. Founded in 1999, it is now the largest online travel company in China.

Whether it is the mouse + cement or thumb + cement, Ctrip both showed its ability to serve and arrange supply chain control while shaping the basic playground of the online travel industry.

If you use a few key words to sum up Ctrip's competitive advantage, those will be services, call centers, supply chains, and business travel customers etc. Under these terms, Ctrip is rarely associated with technology. But technology's importance to Ctrip may be beyond the imagination, and Ctrip's emphasis on technology is growing.

Most complex e-commerce form

One year ago, the co-founder James Liang announced to step down from the chief executive position, after which, Ctrip execute a large adjustment. After the adjustment, Ctrip welcomed the new CTO Mr. Gan Quan - previous Qunar platform CEO.

Gan joined Qunar in 2010. He has more than 10 years of relevant working experience. During the six years in Qunar, he served as director of wireless technology, senior technical director, wireless business group vice President, and is responsible for organizing and managing wireless R&D team, big data team, wireless technology system team, wireless engineer management system, wireless security and operation support system team , which

given him rich experience in the online travel technology area.

In Ctrip's Shanghai headquarter volley SOHO office, after a full year as CTO, Gan says he understands outside's fuzzy viewpoint on Ctrip's technology ability , but also he is more willing to take time to explain the technical status and what role the technology plays in such a big giant corporation like Ctrip .

"In fact, when we were recruiting in the schools, many students were asking us questions like this: Ctrip is doing travel business, but I didn't think of working in travel business, I wanted to go for technology. But when you talk to him about what problem Ctrip is trying to solve, he will suddenly realize that the technical obstacles that Ctrip has to deal with are also very complicated."

In the case of airline ticket business, the combination of different elements means a huge amount of data, with the number of routes added, the different policies of each airline, and the price strategy of the agents. Meanwhile, the inventory and price of tickets are changing in real time. Changes in the face of such a big and frequent data, technical system has to think how to enable users to experience a few seconds in front the ticket booking, calculate the price what you see is what you get, this is the main focus or problem for the technical team to solve.

The same is true to hotel business: the combination of various details such as room inventory, room price, room type, etc., which also means huge amount of data. To this end, Ctrip needs to build a very large distribution system to solve the problems of data storage, search and price consistency.

"The physical commerce is different because it is a stock system, the inventory price may not change, it may be a long time before it will be adjusted, so there will be fewer dimensions and the changes in the data will be small." Therefore, in the view of Gan, Ctrip is facing fundamental problems in the business of travel e-commerce, and even the most complicated



Ctrip's CTO: Mr. Gan Quan

of all e-commerce forms. Technology has more meaning with Ctrip.

Aerial refueling

After being promoted to CTO, Gan became busier. In addition to facilitating the integration of Ctrip and Qunar's technical system, he also needs to address the issues of efficiency, resource allocation and the capacity to output the technology system. Switching from Qunar to Ctrip, Gan reacquainted with the strategy of "Leader" Ctrip and the need to consider and balance.

As an established company created the online travel industry in China, the development of Ctrip has witnessed the development of China's Internet, mobile Internet from scratch, and the accumulation of the entire system. There are a lot of the old system needs to be updated, and need to upgrade technology system. At the same time, the functions of some teams are very important at the time, but with the development of business and technology and the changing times, skills need to be transferred to new areas and need time to adapt.

Historical burden exists objectively, but the development of the company puts forward new requirements to technology. Gan described this update iterative process as change a tire when the car is running, or refueling aircraft during a flight. Upgrading and improving the technical system without affecting the normal operation of the business requires a longer transformation cycle, which is expected to take two years.

It is significant to improve Ctrip through technology.

Experienced the bloody war of online travel industry, Gan knows very well the newcomers' way to challenge industry giants: growing up during the period of the mobile Internet, and there is no historical burden, and the efficiency is very high. At this time, if simply compete efficiency, it must be wrong, so Ctrip must use its advantages.

"Ctrip, has the advantages on supply chain, price, and the customer base, if technology can solve the problem of efficiency, it will be very severe. If Ctrip use the same efficiency strategy to compete with other companies, its own advantage is not so strong, because Ctrip also constantly needs to solve such problems. If the opponent's weak points cannot be improved, then the competitive advantage will be reversed, and in a nutshell, the competition between the two companies must be comprehensive."

In order to achieve the goal of continuous

improvement of efficiency, Gan took office in addition to transforming Ctrip technology system and solving the problems of Ctrip and Qunar technology integration.

In the future, Ctrip will set up a research and development center in Beijing to make full use of the advantages of Qunar's technology system, and implement some technical projects in which Ctrip is going to cooperate with each other, Gan said.

Another important task of Gan is the continuous construction of Ctrip's engineer culture.

Since last year, Ctrip fully implemented committee system, made a line of research and development manager, and the engineers have the opportunity to speak out, and let the team in the field have their own professional organization. Currently, Ctrip's internal vertical fields are big data, wireless, the server architecture, quality, safety, and other fields, all of which has its own professional committee to make technical decisions.

Now, in the process of using technology to improve its competitiveness, Ctrip is experimenting with the latest tool: artificial intelligence.

New weapon: AI

It may be hard for ordinary users to sense that some of the features on Ctrip have been taken over by artificial intelligence, and that the source of change began in 2015.

Dividends in 2015, as the mobile Internet traffic peak, widely spread in the smartphone, and people travel demand presents under the background of explosive growth, Ctrip accumulated data volume increase sharply. The rapid expansion of data provides the basic conditions for Ctrip to develop machine learning.

In 2016, Ctrip set up a smart customer service team, which then launched a personalized purchasing program. Intelligent customer service is not hard to understand, the personalized guide is based on the historical data of users, tailored to push for its content or products - before the artificial intelligence, most of these content output depends on the experienced editors for manual operation.

At present, in the after-sales environment of hotel sector, intelligent customer service has been able to solve 70% problems, and will gradually expand to the after-sales service of airline ticket, tourism and car.

The most difficult challenge lies in the more complex and varied problems facing pre-sale scenarios compared to the after-sales scene, which raises technical requirements for intelligent customer service.

For the development of artificial intelligence technology, Ctrip's overall goal is to raise revenue, improve efficiency and reduce costs. Specifically, Ctrip divides the scenes into pre-sales and after-sales. Before selling, the AI technology helps users to better understand their needs, meet their needs and help them make decisions; after sale, it will answer and solve problems quickly and accurately. On the vertical dimension, according to different problems of different businesses before and after sales, more scenarios are broken down and more targeted solutions will be offered based on big data development.

In the process of using AI technology to enhance the product experience, Ctrip has a very open mind.

At present, the intelligence of Ctrip project take the development pattern of PK service: the target scene platform for the data import, data to a third party company (such as Zhuiyi Tech, and Laiye etc.) algorithm and the developed algorithm is equally open. In the end, who do the best, and who can keep as the solution of the scene, who will stay. If everyone couldn't reach the requirement, Ctrip will continue to training, respectively.

Gan believes, through this way of learning and competition, it can develop technology which may touch the ceiling in the scene, "every problem, finally to solve the scene under a fixed scene may be about the same, but since every company can become a company independently, who can get investment, and help other enterprises solve the problem. If they can also help Ctrip, we will be more open to look at this situation. At the same time, we also adhere to the path of self-development, and the ultimate goal is to solve the problems encountered by the business."

Whether it is a huge amount of data and complex technical system, and to promote the efficiency of the existing customer experience, all of which makes Gan have the confidence to face comments from outside: I don't think the technical problems we need to solve is simple, and it won't need too good technology, on the contrary, I think it may be the bias and misunderstanding the outsiders has for Ctrip technology in a long time.

And for the future, the meaning of technology to Ctrip is huge, expected by Gan. Built upon Ctrip's advantages of services and business, as the amount of data is more and more big, with the new technology development, the future of the entire tourism industry can present technical drivers changing the trend of the travel experience totally. "Personally, I would be more willing to define Ctrip as a technology-driven company." 🍀

(Source: Tencent technology)



Kathmandu's Alleys and Temples

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Kathmandu is enchanting. It's medieval and spiritual and alive. And the only way to really see this chaotic cobbled maze is by foot.

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Start your exploring in Thamel – a traveller enclave with some great hotels and hostels. Thamel is loads of fun and crammed with touts and colourful stalls. Looking up, the vibrancy continues in a mash of wires, shop signs and overhanging balconies. And if you need them, you can get home comforts such as a good-quality wine or chocolate.

Head south of Thamel's main market (Thamel Chowk) towards Kathmandu's beating heart, Durbar Square. Winding your way through markets, alleys and bahals (monastery courtyards), keep your eyes open for the architectural wonders that seem to appear on every corner. From Thamel Chowk you'll reach Tahiti Tole, a square with a central stupa and, along its northern edge, the Nateshwar Temple, with doors showing creatures playing musical instruments. South of here is Kathesimbhu

Stupa, which radiates colourful prayer flags, and further along you'll find the triple-roofed Ugratara Temple.

Turn east and immerse yourself in the frantic vegetable and spice markets of Asan Tole, one of the busiest intersections in old Kathmandu, before wandering past the octagonal Krishna Temple. Then it's on through Indra Chowk, another of Kathmandu's markets and the traditional centre for blanket and cloth merchants (look around and you'll also find bangle and bead sellers). Head west and enter Yatkha Bahal, a huge open courtyard with a white-washed central stupa.

As you wind your way through these crowded alleyways, you'll pass many wonderful things - stalls alive with Buddhist prayer flags, rows of dental surgeries, gleaming brass and glittering glass bead shops...not to mention the odd wandering cow!

South of Yatkha Bahal, you'll reach your goal: Durbar Square. This UNESCO World Heritage-listed area is really a series of three squares and the finest remaining example of Kathmandu's traditional architecture. It's easy to spend hours wandering around and watching the world go by from the terraced platforms of the towering Maju Deval. When the shadows begin to lengthen, head back to Thamel, find a rooftop garden, and relax with a beer or pot of tea.

Like many cities on the Indian Subcontinent, Kathmandu can be an assault on the senses. It has constant traffic, complete with beeping horns and diesel fumes, and streets filled with bicycles, taxis, rickshaws, and more. Blackouts occur regularly. It can be a bit much at first. But once you discover the colors and otherworldly architecture of the magnificent Durbar Square it will all be worthwhile. There are modern concrete

blocks and Western cafés selling bagels and cappuccinos, but duck into the side alleys check out the tiny shops filled with spices and fabrics; things look as if they haven't changed since the Middle Ages and you could well have stepped back in time. It's this fascinating melting pot of ancient and modern that makes Kathmandu so unique.

Eat the world in Kathmandu

Daal bhaat isn't just a meal in Nepal. This hearty combination of rice, lentil soup and vegetables is the fuel of the Himalaya.

Trekkers can walk for weeks across the highest mountain range on earth, powered almost solely by this carb-packed treat. However, what you don't get while trekking is a huge amount of variety...

Sure, there are moments where the menu varies, such as when leaving vegetarian Sherpa lands for the meat-eating hills of the Limbu and Rai tribes, but for the most part, meals are prepared from a limited palette of rice, lentils and greens.

By the time they return to Kathmandu, many trekkers are openly salivating at the very thought of such delicacies as burgers, chips and pizza.

For some, the repetitive diet of rice and lentils can inspire extreme measures. An on-the-spot examination of trekking packs will uncover hidden bottles of ketchup and Tabasco, zip-lock plastic bags of seasonings and secreted salamis, saucisson and beef jerky. On the other hand, anticipating the culinary delights that await on your return to Kathmandu can be an almost transcendental pleasure.

Nepal has been calling out to the world's adventurers for decades and restaurants have sprung up in the backstreets of Kathmandu catering to every imaginable palate. You want pizzas? You got 'em. You want Thai curries? The lemongrass is already being pounded. You want Korean barbecues? The grill is already sizzling. Despite its rugged location and patchy transport links, Kathmandu serves up the world in a menu, and we guarantee your first meal back in the city after trekking will be a feast. Here is our pick of Kathmandu's culinary highlights.

Wood-fired fabulousness

After weeks of lentils in the hills, the flavour sensation of tomatoes, pepperoni and mozzarella can be an almost religious experience. Nobody in Kathmandu does it better than Fire & Ice, an upscale favourite in a smart setting in an arcade on Tridevi Marg.

For one thing, the ingredients are authentic, which means anchovies, salami and olives flown in fresh from Italy, hand-made mozzarella and

hard-to-find options such as pizzas made with wholewheat dough.

Himalayan jambalaya?

New Orleans Cafe isn't just a restaurant, it's a Thamel institution. This courtyard café has been serving up globe-trotting cuisine to generations of travellers, with everything from Creole jambalaya to barbecued beef and jacket potatoes on the menu. There's live music twice weekly and travellers have been known to join the on-stage musicians for impromptu jams – not a bad way to shake off the trail dust after a knee-knocking circuit around the Annapurnas.

A monument to momos

Delicious parcels of meat, cheese or vegetables wrapped in wheat-flour shells, the momo is the dish that binds Tibet, Nepal and India together – transported across the mountains by the wandering monks who introduced Tibetan Buddhism to the Himalaya. These magnificent morsels come steamed or fried, with a side dollop of spicy chilli sauce; both locals and tourists agree that the tastiest in town are served at the low-key Yangling Tibetan Restaurant, prepared by hand to a family recipe passed down through the generations.

Sky-high sushi

With the Japanese embassy just down the road, Lazimpat's Kotetsu has the market cornered for Japanese food in Kathmandu. Despite being 650km from the nearest ocean, the seafood here is so fresh you can almost hear the breaking waves (in the absence of direct Nepal-Japan flights, it comes in daily by jet from Thailand). As you'd expect, the house sashimi is expertly sliced, the Kobe steaks are delicately marbled and the teppanyaki fillets are deliciously moist and tender.

Terrific tandoori

Rather surprisingly, Indian food is somewhat under-represented in Kathmandu. Many dishes that claim to be Indian are actually Nepali interpretations – tasty enough, but rarely packed with the authentic flavours of the Indian plains.

For the real deal, head to the elegant surroundings of Third Eye, where higher prices secure you rich, spicy masalas and succulent skewers from the tandoori oven. One caveat though – chilli levels can be toned down, so ask your waiter to add a little garam (heat) to your plate.

Beef up your life

A post-trek steak is a traveller tradition, and K-Too – partner restaurant of the long-established Kilroy's – serves them fat as

doorstops and as rare as you care to ask for. The dining room is packed out nightly with trekkers toasting the end of another expedition, and with chunky chips and fried apple momos for afters, it pays to bring an appetite. Plan a lazy itinerary for the next day while you digest!

A teensy taste of Vienna

The Austrian government provided the funding for the glorious restoration of the Kaiser Mahal gardens – now known as the Garden of Dreams – and in the process, they created a tiny Austrian culinary enclave in the form of the Kaiser Cafe. Here, amidst statuary, pergolas and fountains, you can dine in peace on sachertorte and schnitzel, while the cacophony of Kathmandu is kept at bay behind the garden walls. Come at sunset and the atmosphere is genuinely romantic – not something easy to find in frenetic Kathmandu.

Thamel's top Thai

As well as being loved by round-the-world backpackers, Thai Airways' daily flights from Bangkok to Nepal carry a precious cargo of lime leaves, lemongrass and Thai basil, ensuring that Kathmandu's curry pastes are every bit as blistering as those served in Bangkok, Ko Pha-Ngan and Chiang Mai. Several restaurants compete for the title of top Thamel Thai but for our money Yin Yang has the most authentic flavours, plus a terrace dotted with cast-iron chairs that offers a classy retreat from the chaos at street level.

Hummus in the hills

If you're feeling revived by the veg diet in the hills, you could always continue the habit with a wholesome meal of hummus, falafel and labane (Levantine sour cheese). Or2khas been tempting vegetarians and meat-avoiders for years with a true-to-the-book menu of Israeli and middle-eastern dishes. It's down-to-earth and informal, with a no-shoes policy and seating on soft cushions on the floor. ➤

(Source: Lonely Planet)



Kew Gardens in London Nears Completion on Restoration of World's Largest Victorian Glasshouse



London's Kew Gardens has announced an opening date for its historic Temperate House, which has been closed while undergoing a five-year renovation. The southwest London attraction said the Victorian glasshouse – the largest in the world – will reopen to the public on 5 May 2018, complete with 10,000 rare and exotic plants. The long and painstaking restoration, designed by Donald Insall Associates and costing £41m (£46m, US\$54m), is the biggest such project in Kew Gardens' history, with the framework of the building, its intricate ironwork and ground paving carefully repaired and thousands of panes of glass replaced.

The Temperate House, which was designed by architect Decimus Burton and built in 1863, will be used for horticultural education and to showcase rare and sometimes near-extinct plant specimens.

About 500 plants were housed in the glasshouse, which were removed and propagated by Kew's gardeners throughout the restoration period.

There are now 10,000 plants from all over the world being rehoused in the newly upgraded building, including *Dombeya mauritiana*, which was considered practically extinct until Kew horticulturalist Carlos Magdalena found one growing wild in Mauritius.

Walsh Water to Turn Ailing Reservoir into Vibrant Leisure Destination



A proposal to transform a Walsh reservoir into a landscaped leisure and activity destination have been approved by Pembrokeshire County

Council. The £4m plans from Walsh Water will improve facilities at Llys Fran Country Park, with permission granted to renovate the existing visitor centre, build an outdoor activity centre and create new waterside facilities and a play area.

It also means the park will be able to cater better to mountain bikers, provide camping and caravan pitches, expand parking and improve the site entrance and general landscaping. The reservoir's walking trail will be improved and new activities will be introduced such as ropes courses, zip lines and mini golf. The site hopes to attract 120,000 visitors after the work is finished. "Although presently a visitor attraction, the site is, and has been for a number of years, significantly underused," said the application.

Berlin Wants to Attract Tourists to Its Outskirts



Berlin authorities announced a new tourism concept for the German capital. Their plan is to attract tourists more to the outskirts of the city which also have a lot to offer. Another part of the project is to focus on quality tourism and to change the image of a cheap destination.

One of the reasons for the new concept to attract tourists is also the need to regulate relations between the locals and the visitors. Mass tourism and crowded city center has been problematic for many years.

The new concept should help manage the tourist numbers in a more acceptable manner and counteract the developments that restrict the quality of life. "We want to find balance, together with the residents, politicians, and the tourism businesses," said Christian Tänzler, spokesman of Visit Berlin, the official marketing partner in the tourism sector.

At the moment, the Brandenburg Gate in the golden evening sun is still emblazoned on its website. Just a long way down there is the colorful map with twelve Berlin districts.

"Most tourists still visit Berlin because of the sights," says Burkhard Kieker, managing director of Visit Berlin. For 65% this is the main reason for their visit, followed by art and culture, as well as cityscape and architecture.

Easyjet and Ryanair transports the so called "party clientele". However, this is only 17% of the visitors. About half of the tourists, on the other hand, are "cultured explorers" between the ages of 30 and 60 years. Especially this target group often does not visit Berlin just once. "Especially for repeated travelers it is becoming increasingly important to get in touch with the locals," Kieker added.

They live above all in the outskirts. To ensure that tourists do not get lost outside of the S-train ring, Visit Berlin has developed the smartphone app "Going Local". It has more than 700 tips in all districts of Berlin and has been downloaded more than 50,000 times.

"The app is a good start, but we have to work on our reputation even more," says Patrick Celery, head of Economic Development of Spandau.

About two out of three people are still "real" Berlin citizens, Celery says. For tourists to come, they first need to know what Spandau has to offer. Therefore, in June this year, a tourism concept for the district was started together with an agency.

"There will be an umbrella brand for Spandau. A recognizable design and an Internet portal for bookings," says Celery. For the concept, the district has 300 thousand euros available from the subsidy coffers to improve regional economic structure. In addition, Spandau recently became the first district to appoint a tourism representative.

At the other end of the city, the potential of holidaymakers has long been recognized.

For the past 26 years, the Tourism Association of Treptow-Köpenick has been taking care of visitors finding their way into Berlin's southeast. "We have to strengthen the outskirts, give them an identity," says CEO Mathis Richter.

This is going pretty well at the moment. In 2014, the association entered into a strategic partnership with Visit Berlin, switched to advertising in the city center, launched a campaign on Facebook and Instagram.

Since then, 1.5 million people visit the website annually. This is eight times more than before.

But they do not only click, they also come to the district as well. Last year, 18% more tourists traveled to Treptow-Köpenick than in 2015.

In three years, the district also wants to be the most popular cycling region of Berlin. "The new tourism concept is water on our mills," says Mathis Richter.

However, even if other districts show as much initiative as these two, it will still take some time for the situation to stabilize and for the tourism flow to distribute itself in a more acceptable and convenient manner.

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