



Perfect (China) Co. Ltd

Market Insights

China MICE market study

A report on the characteristics and preferences of the Chinese incentives and meetings market.

In partnership with



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Fast facts

+25%

The UK welcomed over 150,000 business visits from China in 2017 (up 25% on 2016), spending a record £294 million.

91%

Of Chinese corporate incentive buyers indicated a rise in Chinese incentive travel in the next 1-2 years.



Chinese incentive planners are looking for:

- Themed gala dinner / awards night
- Team building
- Meetings and training
- Sightseeing of local icons and scenery
- Mix of both Chinese and British cuisine
- Cultural events / local immersion
- Shopping
- Corporate social responsibility (CSR) Activities
- Reflect corporate culture / objectives
- An iconic group photo location



In 2017 VisitBritain commissioned the international meeting and incentives consultants GainingEdge to provide market intelligence on the characteristics of the Chinese outbound incentives and meetings market. Using a number of local Chinese market experts, GainingEdge provided these insights based on: surveys and interviews with 41 leading Chinese MICE buyers (16 corporate travel / MICE agencies, in-14 house planners and 11 event management companies); interviews of 9 UK DMCs that regularly handle Chinese MICE business; and secondary data.

Introduction

China's outbound business and leisure travel markets have seen significant growth over the last few decades, making it the world's most valuable outbound travel market. This growth is extending beyond the first tier cities of Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Shenzhen. There are now 14 cities with Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the trillions of Yuan with more to follow.

Small to medium enterprises (SMEs) and Chinese trade associations are being encouraged to expand their overseas operations and commercial activities whilst multi-national companies continue to invest in the Chinese domestic market.

The immediate opportunity for MICE business out of China is the corporate incentive business whilst medium to longer term opportunities lie with the association meetings market. The key industry sectors for incentive groups are direct sell, pharmaceutical, banking and insurance, automotive and IT.

The Chinese outbound corporate and incentive market is starting to show signs of maturity and planners are becoming more adventurous with their choice of destinations, with demand for more customised incentive programmes that cater to the needs of the market.

Britain has many of the attributes required for the Chinese market including a strong international brand, rich cultural heritage, direct air access, a good variety of MICE facilities and shopping.

This report is for UK business events and incentives destinations and suppliers, detailing the opportunity and characteristics of the Chinese incentives, association and clan markets.

Market growth

The growth of the Chinese market presents a significant opportunity to the UK business events sector.

The Chinese outbound travel market

China is the world's second largest economy. Whilst China's economic growth has begun to slow, GDP growth remains above 6%. (2017 at 6.9%; 2018 forecast at 6.5%; and 2019 at 6.1%).

There are now 14 cities with GDP in the trillions (RMB): **Shanghai, Beijing, Shenzhen, Guangzhou, Chongqing, Chengdu, Tianjin, Wuhan, Suzhou, Hangzhou, Nanjing, Qingdao, Wuxi and Changsha**. SMEs are playing an important role in economic development and building corporate brand, culture and incentivising employees.

China's outbound tourism has seen very strong growth since the late 1990s. From 2010 to 2015, it maintained annual growth of 15 to 26%, and showed year-on-year growth of 8% in 2016 and 4% in 2017, with 8% growth in outbound overnight visits for 2018 (95.5 million) compared to 2017 (88.9 million)¹.

2017 was another strong year for outbound tourism from China, the world's leading outbound market in value. Estimates show that international tourism expenditure grew by 4.7% on 2016, to US\$258 billion².

Oxford Economics forecasts that business outbound travel from China would reach US\$100 billion in 2018, up 26% on 2017 (estimated at US\$79 billion). In 2025, it is forecast to reach US\$212 billion, about 2.7 times its 2017 value³.

Chinese outbound business travel spend represented just over a third of all Chinese outbound travel expenditure in 2017, according to Oxford Economics.

Chinese Outbound Business Travel Spending 2017-2020:

2017 (estimated)	US\$79 billion
2018 (forecast)	US\$100 billion
2019 (forecast)	US\$113 billion
2020 (forecast)	US\$128 billion

¹ Oxford Economics' Global Travel Service databank, based on UNWTO data, last updated 22/06/2018.

² UNWTO's World Tourism Barometer, Issue 3 - June 2018.

³ Oxford Economics

Chinese travel to the UK

There were 819,000 visits to the UK from China in 2017 (up 27% on 2016). Those visitors spent a record £1.7 billion in the UK in 2017, up 28% on 2016 spend figure.

2017 was a record year for business visits, reaching a new record of 152,000 business visits from China to the UK and a record £294 million spent by those visitors in the UK. The number of business visits from China to the UK has grown 14% on average per year between 2012 and 2017, whilst spending has grown 23% on average in each year.

Roughly 1-in-5 business visits from China to the UK in 2016 were MICE related (group meetings of 21+, conference/convention/congress, and exhibition/event/trade show).

Flight access is also growing. Seat capacity on direct, non-stopping flights from China to the UK is estimated at 968,500 seats in 2018, up 16% on 2017. New routes are launching in 2018 to deliver more direct flight options: Chinese travellers can now fly direct to the UK from 11 airports, with new options from Changsha, Sanya, Shenzhen, Wuhan, and Xi'an. The new route from Beijing to Edinburgh with Hainan Airlines brings to three the number of UK cities served by direct routes from China (with London and Manchester).

A record

819,000

leisure and business visits from China to the UK last year, up 27% on 2016.



Seat capacity on direct, non-stop routes to the UK up

16%



on 2017



Chinese Corporate Incentive Market



Market trends

There is a steady demand for outbound incentive travel from China, and the market is starting to mature.

The vast majority of Chinese corporate and incentive decision makers are forecasting continued growth in the market despite a recent slowdown in the economy. Although incentive travel is still a relatively new tool, more Chinese corporations are realising the benefits associated with incentive travel to drive sales, motivate employees and increase staff loyalty. SMEs are also playing an important role in economic development and are investing more in employee incentive programmes as part of building their corporate brand and staff culture.

Travel is becoming more convenient and accessible for Chinese citizens, with significant expansion of air routes and visa restrictions easing. At the same time, Chinese domestic brands are moving into overseas markets, and Chinese companies are eager to engage with and learn about global markets.

Fast-growing industry sectors such as IT, direct sell, automotive, insurance and finance are favouring incentive programmes, contributing to the growth of the incentive travel sector.

The key reasons Chinese corporates will hold an incentive travel programme are to:

- Reward high performance
- Motivate sales and improve performance
- Team building and relationship building
- Broaden staff horizons and increase their engagement with global market
- Expand their organisation into new markets

The emergence of second tier cities, the growing sophistication of Chinese travellers and the demand in more personalised travel itineraries is also impacting on the MICE market where corporates have a greater selection of destinations for employees and are demanding more customised and unique cultural experiences.

Chinese companies are increasingly looking for:

- Meaningful CSR activities
- Unique accommodation and venue options
- Revenue generating opportunities through trade
- Meeting components to be incorporated into programme
- Safe and secure destinations that are China friendly

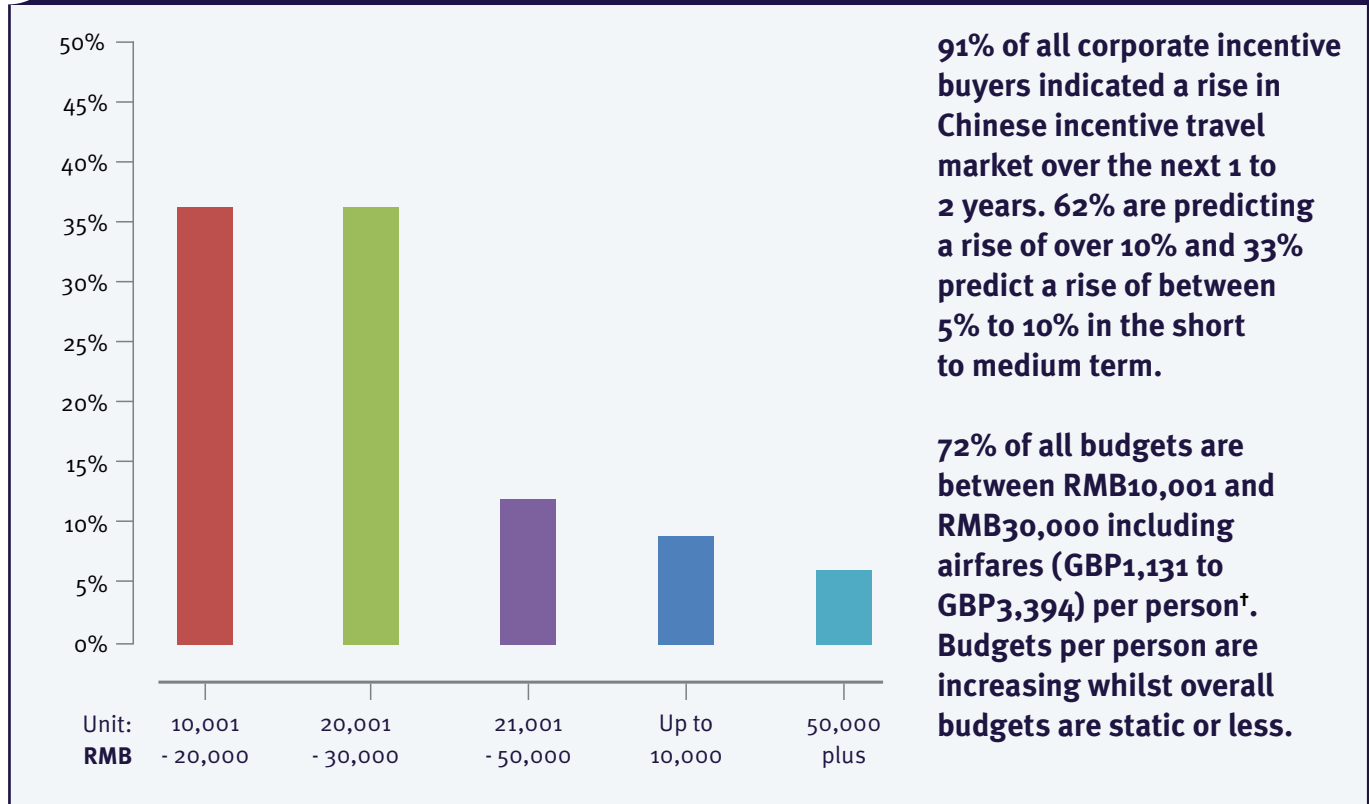
Furthermore, with air pollution being a serious problem in China, air quality and the natural environment have become important factors for selecting destinations.

40%

of corporate buyers handle between 10 to 50 incentive groups per annum, 28% over 50 groups per annum and 25% handle 5 or less groups per annum.



Average budget per person (including airfares)



Average budget per person (including airfares)	%
Up to RMB10,000	6
RMB10,001 - RMB20,000	36
RMB20,001 - RMB30,000	36
RMB30,001 - RMB50,000	12
RMB50,000 plus	9

† Bank of England, July 2018 average UNWTO's World Tourism Barometer, Issue 3 - June 2018.

* Based on GainingEdge survey for VisitBritain of 41 Chinese MICE buyers – agencies, in-house planners and event management companies

The average duration of medium to long haul Chinese incentive group is

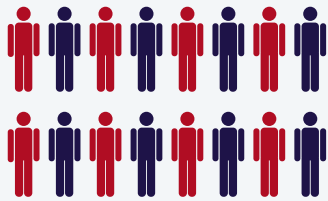
7.6 days

including air travel, the shortest duration being 4 days and the longest 12 days



Group Sizes

51% 50-199 pax
25% 200-299 pax
6% 1,000+ pax



Group sizes vary dramatically from 10 to 16,000 with an average size of 383 people

Large groups often have staggered arrival and departure dates due to capacity restraints



Distribution networks

In China, business event planners are known as MICE agencies. Most agencies are divisions of large travel management companies. Large online travel agencies such as Ctrip, Tuniu and JD have invested in business events divisions and have successfully targeted smaller, premium incentive groups of 100 to 300 people. The Chinese travel distribution system is highly regulated by the Chinese government.

Requests for quotes for an incentive program may originate from the corporation directly, from an incentive agent in China or a UK destination management company (DMC).

Key conference, incentive and MICE agencies:

- China CYTS MICE Service Company
- CITS International MICE Company
- CTS MICE Service Company
- Grand China MICE Service
- UMICE International Travel

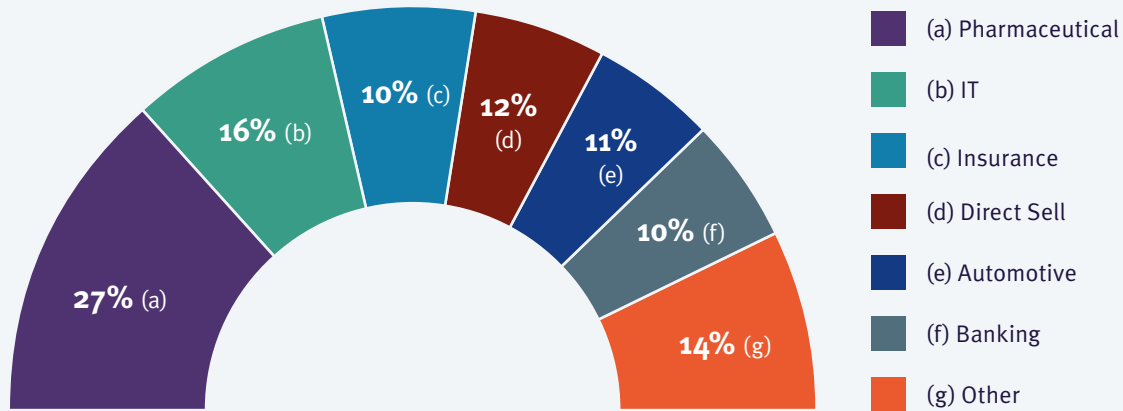
Key travel agencies:

- Ctrip
- New View
- Swallow Travel
- Tuniu
- JD





Key industry sectors



The pharmaceutical industry (27%) is the largest source of Chinese incentive groups following by the IT sector (16%). Direct sell, automotive, banking and insurance are also important sectors.

* Based on GainingEdge survey for VisitBritain of 41 Chinese MICE buyers – agencies, in-house planners and event management companies

Key industry sectors	%
Pharmaceutical	27
IT	16
Direct sell	12
Automotive	11
Banking	10
Insurance	10
Other	14

Direct Sell - Direct selling in China has been growing at a steady rate with a large number of recent new entrants in this sector including some of the leading players in medicine such as Shandong Dong-E-E-Jiao Co.

China now has 71 direct selling companies employing over 2.8 million people with products ranging from cosmetics to health care equipment, according to the Chinese Ministry of Commerce. Over a third of direct selling companies in China are based in Shanghai, Beijing and Guangzhou.

One of these is Amway China which has become the largest affiliate within its worldwide business. Headquartered in Guangzhou with two regional offices in Beijing and Shanghai, Amway China has 7,000 employees and offers a flexible business opportunities to more than 190,000 people. The company has grown and built up an extensive network of agents.

Infinitus China is a well-known Chinese herbal medicine health product company and selected Australia for its overseas training activities in 2018.

Jeunesse, a US-based multilevel marketing form of lifestyle products and dietary supplements brought 2,700 top producers from Greater China and Taiwan to Frankfurt, Stuttgart and Metzingen for five days in May 2017.

Other direct-sell companies are NuSkin, Pro-Health (China), and Tiens Group.

Insurance - Global insurance premiums went up by 4.4 percent in 2016 to over 3,600 billion Euros. Almost half of this growth can be traced back to the rapid development in China. Examples: Taikang Insurance and Ping An Insurance.

Pharmaceutical - China is the world's largest producer of pharma ingredients and the world's second largest pharma market. China's population growth and increasing medical needs make it the world's biggest producers and exporters of pharmaceutical ingredients. The Chinese pharma market has huge opportunities for growth with the government's increasing investment in healthcare and R&D. Examples: Novartis China and China National Pharmaceutical Group Corporation.

Information Technology - China's IT industry benefits from government support and booming foreign investment. In addition, China is the global centre for original equipment manufacturers due to the low cost of manufacturing, and enjoys a huge domestic market that is expanding as the country develops. Examples: Digital China and Microsoft.

Automotive - Among a tepid macroeconomic environment, the Chinese automotive industry has demonstrated robust double-digit sales growth as it continues to receive strong government support with ad-hoc tax incentives. Examples: Shanghai Volkswagen and Volvo (China) Investment Co. Ltd.

Banking - Most of China's banks are underpinned by the expectation of government support, as the sector plays a strategic role in supporting economic stability and avoiding widespread defaults. This state backing, is expected to remain especially strong for the country's major banks to maintain public confidence and systemic stability. Examples: UBS China Ltd and China Merchants Bank.



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International examples of Chinese incentive groups

Perfect China, one of China's leading direct-sales organisations with 7,000 chain outlets nationwide, took 4,500 delegates to Toronto in May 2016 – the largest incentive travel group to ever visit Canada.

Malaysia hosted 3,500 delegates for Perfect China's 5th 'Achievement Seminar' in June 2017.

Perfect China brought a 3,200 group to the UK in May 2018, visiting destinations including London, the Cotswolds, Manchester and Liverpool. It celebrated with a flagship gala dinner at Alexandra Palace, which was also the location for the company group photo.

Amway China sent 10,000 of its elite sales people to Queenstown, New Zealand for five days in 2018. The group visited in multiple waves of 500. Amway China has become the largest affiliate within Amway's worldwide business. Headquartered in Guangzhou with

two regional offices in Beijing and Shanghai, Amway China has 7,000 employees and offers a flexible business opportunities to more than 190,000 people.

Seoul hosted its largest single incentive group as part of a week-long incentive trip in 2016 with 8,000 participants from **Joy Main Science & Technology**, the healthcare unit of the China-based Zhongmai Group. The 9,000 pax Joy Main Annual Conference took place in Macao in 2015.



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Unique experiences that 'wowed' Chinese incentive participants

- Exclusive dinner hosted on Liberty Island in New York City
- Recreation of a local festival just for the incentive group even though the delegates were in that destination during a different time of the year.

Nu Skin

(personal care products and dietary supplements)

The biannual **Nu Skin Greater China Regional Convention** returned to Hong Kong in June 2017, with a record attendance of 30,000 delegates, breaking its previous record of 20,000 attendees in 2014.

The **Nu Skin Greater China 2016 Success Trip** rewarded 4,000 of its business partners from China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau to Sydney in 2016. [Other big incentive Chinese groups to Sydney include the **Roche Diagnostics Greater China Annual Meeting** in 2015 with 1,700 delegates and the 2014 **Pro-Health China Annual Conference** with 4,000 delegates.

Dubai 2014 - 10 day trip

14,500

Participants



\$80 million

Economic impact



Largest single
incentive group ever
hosted in Dubai

200



Flights booked,
including two chartered
Emirates planes

Visitors arrived in seven
overlapping groups of
around 2,000 people
at a time

409



Buses were required

39,000

Beds in 40 hotels



Gala dinners in
groups of



7,500

Tiens Group

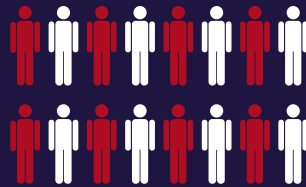
(Healthcare products)

In May 2015, the **Tiens Group**, which offers healthcare products, booked more than 4,700 rooms in 79 hotels in France to take 6,000 consultants on a four-day excursion to celebrate the company's 20th anniversary.

France 2015 - four day trip

6,000

Consultants



\$20 million

Economic impact

4,700

Rooms in 79 hotels



Infinitus

(Chinese herbal products)

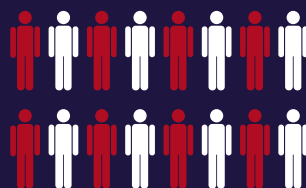
Infinitus China, a well-known Chinese herbal medicine health product company, selected Thailand for their 2015 incentive programme.

Groups of 2,000 to 3,000 visited Bangkok and the beach town of Pattaya.

Thailand 2015 - six day trip

12,700

Consultants



\$18 million

Economic impact

Destination selection criteria

There is a steady demand for outbound incentive travel from China, and the market is starting to mature with clear trends in what they are looking for.

Destination selection criteria

- A destination's tourism appeal is very important. They are looking for unique attractions with a strong interest in **culture, scenery, shopping, food experience and entertainment**.
- Destinations that are **culturally rich, new and unique**. Planners are seeking new hotspot destinations beyond the traditional picks (e.g. Scandinavia) with strong interest in cultural and lifestyle experiences.
- Planners are looking for a destination's ability to understand and facilitate Chinese groups – with **programmes tailored for the market, with Chinese-speaking personnel**.
- **Safety and stability** have become a high-priority criteria in recent years, with greater concern over safety in many regions including Europe, Middle East. There is also preference towards places that are considered 'China-friendly' and
- have a **positive political relationship with China**.
- Destinations with **'fresh air'** are also considered favourably, amid public concerns of air quality in China.

Programme design

- Planners are placing stronger focus on innovative programme content and design. **The meetings component within an incentive programme is growing**.
- Group sizes have shrunk with a greater emphasis on **high achievers and more high-end incentive product**.
- There are preferences towards **exclusive experiences, team building and training activities**.
- Innovative programme design and content. Most programmes incorporate **meeting component** and a **themed dinner / awards ceremony**.
- Clients are looking for places that match their corporate image and corporate culture. Chinese companies are increasingly looking to incorporate meaningful corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities.
- Chinese firms are also adding **trade and investment objectives** to their incentive travel programmes, seeking trade opportunities in the destination. For example, a Chinese healthcare firm that went to South Africa also took the chance to explore opportunities to supply their products to local hospitals.



Programme design for Chinese incentive groups

- Themed dinner / gala dinner / awards night
- Team building
- Sightseeing of local icons and scenery
- Mix of both Chinese and local cuisines
- Cultural event / performance / local immersion
- Shopping
- Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Activities
- Meetings and training are important
- Relate to corporate culture / objectives
- Iconic location for a group photo

Venues, hotels, dining

- **Venue and hotel capacity and facilities** are very important to Chinese incentive groups
- Accommodation **evenly split between 4 and 5 star hotels** with some use of 3 star. There is a preference of opulent 5 star accommodation but when choosing Europe they often choose 4 star due to cost (competitively priced 5 star properties are more readily available in Asia). They are often disappointed with room size and variable configurations of European hotels.
- Unique accommodation is very important, but so is **capacity for larger groups**, as there is preference for larger-scale properties that can take large room blocks.
- Groups look for hotels with meeting space. The most common room type is twin but this may vary.
- Chinese groups have an interest in **both Chinese and British cuisines**. There is often a request for **high-end, private dining** experiences.
- Location and price were key priorities for organisers when choosing a venue. Unique venues are important.

Convention bureau

- Planners seek some government / CVB support and in some cases, incentives. Planners are looking for support for **welcome gifts, official welcomes, cultural performances and hosted dinners**. Competitive destinations within Asia often provide airport/hotel welcome signage, meet and greets and destination welcome kits. Some destinations also offer per person subsidies to make destinations more financially appealing.
- Direct-sell companies are starting to go direct to airlines and hotel groups, but will liaise **with convention bureau (CVBs) for ideas**.
- The market strongly favours high service levels and responsiveness.

Cost, visas, access

- The market has a stronger emphasis on cost control and ROI, **requiring more innovative and cost-effective proposals.**
- The Pharma code is also starting to regulate the market with limitations put on expenditure and programming.
- There is also **cost competitiveness in the market**, especially when two or more agents are vying for the same business.
- Visa costs and requirements including **convenient visa process for groups** and attendees from first and second tier Chinese cities.
- Accessibility in terms of **direct flight access, frequency and proximity, with competitive pricing** for ground and air costs.

*Based on GainingEdge survey for VisitBritain of 41 Chinese MICE buyers – agencies, in-house planners and event management companies

Incentive groups in the UK

Average group size **73**

Ranging from 16 to 200



Average budget per person

£2,022

Ranging from £600 to £4000

6 Average number of days

Ranging from 3 to 10 days



Key source markets:

- Shanghai
- Beijing
- Guangzhou

Secondary source markets:

- Chengdu
- Chongqing

Distribution networks:

- 78% through agencies 21% direct from corporates

*Based on GainingEdge survey for VisitBritain of 9 UK DMCs that handle Chinese MICE business



Perception of the UK

The UK has strong potential to attract more Chinese corporate incentive groups.

Britain's positive selling points

- Strong international brand and profile
- Strong culture with historic locations, iconic landmarks, and picturesque countryside (Chinese travellers have 'must-do' checklists to see iconic destinations and landmarks)
- The UK is seen to have a good variety and choice of attractions as well as suitable MICE facilities.
- Good direct air access / accessibility, especially to Chinese Tier 1 cities
- Unique culture and traditions
- Safe and 'China-friendly' with positive cultural and political relationships
- Favourable exchange rate
- Shopping
- Sport
- English speaking

Areas for improvement

- Cost and distance - air and ground costs considered expensive. [It is a price sensitive market]
- Availability of Chinese speaking staff and guides
- Tailored programmes to suit Chinese market / lack of market understanding
- Visa application process
- Hotel suitability, especially few large scale properties, meaning for larger groups agents must use multiple hotels of variable standards
- Europe has the advantage of offering multiple country itineraries
- Chinese market is attracted to prestigious designer brands i.e. fashion in Paris and Italy, watches in Switzerland. British brands are lesser known

*Based on GainingEdge survey for VisitBritain of 9 UK DMCs that handle Chinese MICE business



Growing the Chinese incentive market

- **Be more accommodating and flexible for the Chinese market**
- **Timely responses to RFPs and queries**
- **Develop products and services suitable for the Chinese market**
- **Collaborate to package and promote destination, products and services.**
- **Engage Chinese speaking personnel**
- **Chinese operators have also requested greater transparency when it comes to pricing**
- **Learn and understand Chinese culture, business practices and programme requirements**
- **Increase in-market presence and activities**
- **Create long-lasting relationships**

Association Market



Chinese trade associations

The Chinese association market presents a medium to long term growth opportunity for the UK business events sector.

The association sector is changing in China, with the Chinese government announcing an initiative to decouple industrial associations from business councils and administrative institutions. Chinese associations are being encouraged to run commercial operations, which will include hosting association events overseas.

Traditionally the majority of meetings from China have been incentive meetings, however this 'sea change' may see significant growth in China's association meetings and generating evolutionary change in the global meetings industry.

Chinese trade associations are expected to generate more events in the future as a result of greater autonomy granted to them by the government. In 2015, a trial programme was announced granting autonomy to 148 select associations covering a wide range of industries, from publishing and mining to automobile and animal protection. The China Tourism Association was the first.

Chinese industry observers believe that the conditions are in place to encourage Chinese associations to meet outside the country in search of new investment opportunities, such as The World Federation of Chinese Catering Industry, which organised a forum and cooking competition in Barcelona.



Chinese Association Case Study

In November 2016, the World Federation of Chinese Medicine Societies hosted its annual meeting of 800 people in Auckland, New Zealand. The 2015 meeting was held in Barcelona, Spain. The development of Chinese medicine is advanced in southern European countries such as Spain, Portugal and Italy where there are many practitioners of traditional Chinese medicine, clinics, education and training institutions and research institutions. It is reported by the Federation that there are more than 120,000 traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) practitioners and acupuncturists, and that European patients with TCM treatment have exceeded five million per year.

Association market – delegate recruitment

There is an increase in Chinese delegations attending international conferences and events as the country's economy expands, diversifies and opens up to global markets. Destinations, particularly within Asia Pacific, are developing strategies to attract Chinese delegations to international events. This includes the provision of simultaneous translation, Chinese speaking streams, sponsoring Chinese speakers and delegations, working with agents to develop and promote conference packages as well as conducting delegate promotions within China.



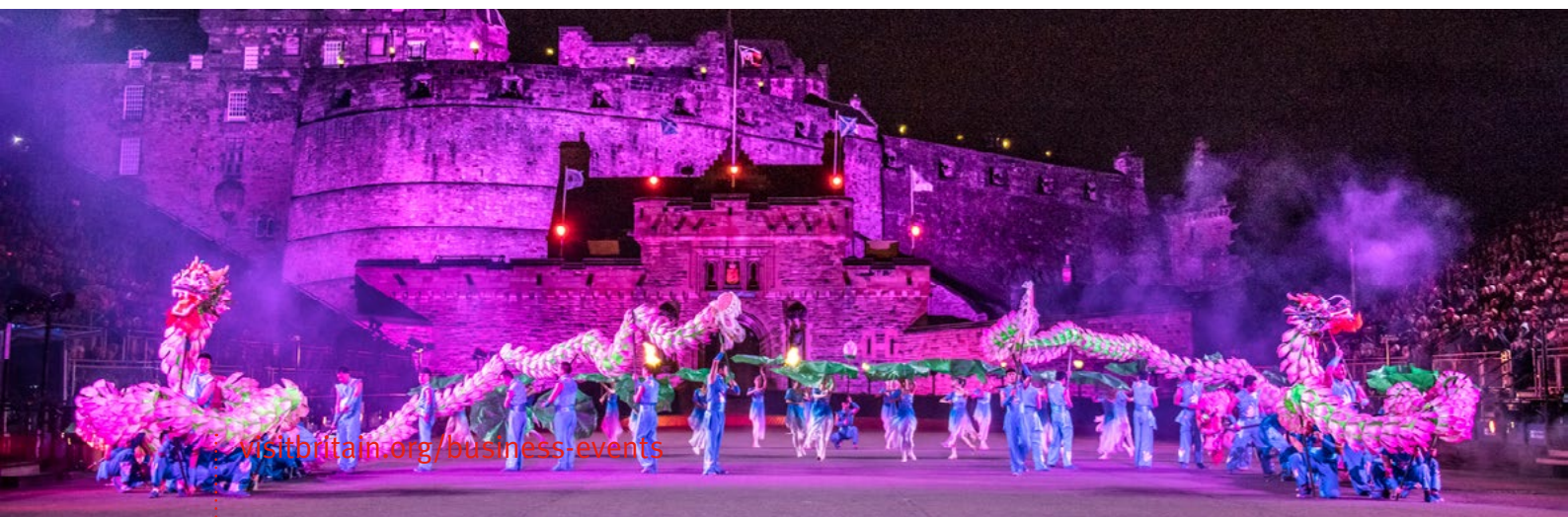
Chinese delegate recruitment case study

The American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) is a leading global tumor professional academic organisation. The group has nearly 40,000 members in more than 100 countries. The annual ASCO annual meeting is the one of the world's premier meetings for clinical oncology. Many of the important findings and clinical test results are released at the ASCO annual meeting. There were some 1,000 Chinese doctors who attended the 2016 ASCO Annual Meeting in Chicago.

International association decision makers

Many international associations are increasingly focused on growing their Chinese membership. This is because their association community is becoming more active at an international level.

Bidding for international conferences may now require lobbying and promotion to decision makers located in China.



Chinese Clan Market

Chinese clan associations or societies usually start when some enterprising members of the international Chinese community have sought to forge unity and work together for the benefit of clan members, to share dialect and origin. Many have migrated overseas in search of a new life, but are still maintaining links with their ancestral home.

To illustrate such a community gathering, one such clan is the “Huang” clan. The Huangs from all over the world not only have contributed to local social and economic progress but also returned to their ancestral country to invest, donate, educate, facilitate bilateral trade and cultural exchanges between China and their new homes.

In 2012, Huang Association in Cambodia hosted more than 1,600 global members from various Huang Clan Associations. Chinese clan associations are essentially community associations. Globally, China has by far the greatest number of Huangs, and there are also many clan members in Philippines, Republic of Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, Brunei, United States and Canada.

Since the early 1980’s, starting from Taiwan, Huang Clan gatherings occur once each year, rotating from country to country. The Huang clan members attend such gatherings to find their roots, connect with other members, develop business connections as well as for leisure purposes. In 2016, China hosted the World Huang Clan Convention.

To attract this market segment you must identify and work with active clans in your destination.



Chinese clan case study

The third annual meeting of the European Federation of Taiwanese Hakka Associations and the World Hakka Reunion was held by the Austrian Hakka Association and welcomed attendees from 11 countries including Taiwan, United States, Brazil, Germany, Japan, Spain, France, Canada, South Africa and England. Earlier editions of the meetings took place in Madrid and Frankfurt.

