

Title:

China Business Travel 101

Word Count:

624

Summary:

Ever wondered if you could deal directly with manufacturers... in China?! It's easier than you think. This article tells the story of someone's first experiences doing business in China.

Keywords:

china travel, china business, china business travel, business trip china, chinese travel

Article Body:

Ever wondered if you could deal directly with manufacturers... in China?! It's easier than you think.

First Impressions

I visited China in Autumn 2005 with a group of business associates and must admit that I was amazed, both by the warm reception we received wherever we went, and at the factories we toured. Having never been there before, and having only news accounts of "difficulties" between China and the U.S. to fuel my imagination, I assumed things would be overly formal and official at best... at worst, cold... and we would be "watched" constantly. I was so wrong on both counts. We were treated as welcome visitors and had only to ask the hotel staff for something to have it almost magically produced.

Lost in Translation

Outside of the hotels and manufacturing facilities, doing business in the streets and in small shops was, at most times, terribly difficult. We had arranged our factory visits and business meetings with our contacts in China, and there were no problems on that side when it came to language. But once we stepped out on our own, we rarely found anyone - even in tourist gift shops - who could communicate in English at all. Next time I visit China, I'll hopefully be armed with a few more basic Mandarin phrases, but for everyone visiting, even just for leisure, I'd recommend hiring translators to assist you.

Cash in China

Another word of warning: business owners back home in the States may be suitably

impressed by your Gold Card, but to the Chinese shopkeeper it's just a pretty piece of plastic that won't buy a cup of Chinese tea. Even in the large cities, you're going to have to carry around Chinese Yuan (aka Renminbi) in cash if you want to be able to go shopping or eat at a restaurant. I have to say, the upside of this is that you won't find yourself going over budget. But with the incredibly low Chinese retail prices, that probably wouldn't happen anyway.

Low Retail Prices

Once you've overcome the communication difficulties you'll be amazed to find the bargains you'll find in the small shops. For a start, it's an electronics paradise. Just make sure you do your homework on what will and won't work back in the States. For example, you'll find that some Chinese DVD players, though remarkably low-cost, are manufactured to a Chinese standard that is not compatible with DVD discs sold in other parts of the world.

Factories in China

Our visit to a manufacturing plant in Huizhou left us all . . . well, 'impressed' hardly seems like a strong enough word. The building, on the outside was sort of drab looking with banners hanging here and there but inside was quite a different story. First of all we were treated as if we were VIPs instead of mid-level managers from Kenosha. Most importantly, however, the level of automation in this factory was remarkable, even by American standards and, when you look at the numbers, you see that the productivity is really impressive. It's no longer a mystery to this American why China is finding such a willing market in America.

Back Again

I wish I had more than the seven days we were able to stay in China, but it won't be long before I'm back, this time with a group of my friends who have been listening to me talking about the business opportunities since I got back... and who now want to go out there to get a piece of the action for themselves.

