



到中国，游苏州
Suzhou, China with Style

Industry

Travel & Tourism

Services

Trade Representation

Website

Digital Marketing

Public Relations

Date of Service

September 2014 – December 2020

Case Study

Maintaining Growth and Increasing Awareness for Suzhou in North America

Situation

The 2,500 year-old city of Suzhou is known for UNESCO World Heritage gardens, picturesque canals, and traditional Chinese architecture. Despite its location close to Shanghai, it is often overlooked by many North American travelers as a must-experience destination on their China travel itineraries, a situation created in part due to the North American market's limited knowledge of Suzhou and its tourism offerings. Suzhou Tourism sought a partner to develop a long-term strategic plan that builds awareness of the destination among North American travel trade influencers and media and sets it apart from competitor destinations that are higher in the booking consideration set.

Solution

PTG Consulting implemented a multi-pronged approach that included travel trade outreach in both the North American and domestic markets to grow tourism product offerings and bolster collaboration, along with media relations to elevate the destination's position in North America while keeping domestic media informed of marketing efforts abroad. Through an integrated approach, PTG Consulting executed large scale events to educate travel advisors, tour operators, media, and consumers on Suzhou, while aligning the destination with well-known venues and cultural institutions to further elevate its profile.



Results

- Organized and hosted 115 North American and Chinese travel trade attendees on individual and group FAM trips
- Attended more than 30 North American tradeshows promoting Suzhou product
- Confirmed partnerships for Suzhou with prestigious U.S. organizations including the Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art in New York City, the De Young Museum in San Francisco, and the Academy Awards in Los Angeles, and hosted events to promote the destination among media, travel trade professionals, industry influencers, and celebrities
- Held annual press conferences in Suzhou to keep domestic media updated on international promotional efforts and engage them in Suzhou culture
- Launched and maintained the destination’s English-language website
- Held in-country educational sessions with tour operators and stakeholders, educating them on how to work with PTG Consulting to maximize sales and media opportunities in North America
- Engaged in ongoing proactive and reactive travel trade and media outreach in both North America and China

13,000+

Articles secured

471 Billion

Earned Media Impressions

90

Tour operators began selling Suzhou

130%

Increase in North American itineraries that include Suzhou

“PTG Consulting has helped put Suzhou on the map through engaging events and impactful travel trade programs. The amount of exposure they have achieved for the destination throughout our longstanding relationship is truly outstanding.”

— Rudong Wang | *Suzhou Municipal Bureau of Culture, Radio, Television and Tourism*



Suzhou's breathtaking canals have been a part of the city's appeal for hundreds of years.

What makes Suzhou special among China's cities?
Suzhou is special because it offers a glimpse back in time to the classic images of China that many travelers envision. The well-preserved Old City within the City Wall is home to peaceful canals, cobblestone streets, classic gardens, and more, in an easily walkable area. Modern China is accessible in a 20-minute drive to the SIP District, where luxury hotels and upscale shopping and dining await visitors on the shores of Jinji Lake.

Of the Classical Gardens of Suzhou, which two should not be missed and why?
The Humble Administrator's Garden, Suzhou's largest garden, which offers evening performances in various areas throughout the garden. It's a great way to become immersed in various traditional Chinese art forms. Lion Grove Garden was once owned by the grandfather of famous architect I.M. Pei. Visitors can stop by before visiting the I.M. Pei-designed Suzhou Museum.

What role do Suzhou's canals play in the city?
An astounding 42% of Suzhou is covered in water, so the canals are an integral part of the city. Suzhou's Grand Canal is in fact the longest in the world. Flowing 1,200 miles from tip to tip, it connects Beijing to Hangzhou to Suzhou's south, linking various river systems along the way into a crucial and widespread trade network. A labyrinth of canals spread out through Suzhou today, and are open to users both on foot and via gondola.

What's one uniquely-Suzhou experience?
Visit the Kun Opera Museum to learn about this history of this Suzhou-born art form. You will learn about the gestures frequently used in performances, how the performers train for the opera, and background on the vibrant role. Kun Opera is listed by UNESCO as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Is there a favourite off-beat, 'unseen Suzhou' experience that tourists don't usually find?
Tough Water Town is approximately 45

What's the easiest way for a visitor to reach Suzhou?
Travel to Suzhou is easily accessible via three convenient area airports serving flights from North America. Shanghai Hongqiao International Airport (SHA) offers bullet train service to Suzhou, which is approximately an 80-min, 30-minute trip. Pudong International Airport (PVG) is approximately 65 miles from Suzhou, or a 90-minute drive, while Huzhou Shuangfeng International Airport (WUXI) is approximately 22km from Suzhou, or a 30-minute drive. Many travelers begin their trip in Shanghai and reach Suzhou from Shanghai Railway Station.

Is there a signature Suzhou dish foodies should try while they're in town?
Mandarin Fish is Suzhou's signature dish. The squirrel-shaped fish is served crisp and coated in a bright orange sweet and sour sauce. Try it at Songhuo Restaurant, where it has been served for more than 200 years.

Head to Tough Water Town for delectable meals minutes from central Suzhou by car. One of the area's most famous water towns, it can only be explored by foot or traditional boat. Explore its gardens, meander over its stone bridges, and be sure to plan lunch at Xuan-tang, an exquisite restaurant serving freshly sourced vegetarian cuisine.

Visit TravelToSuzhou.com to learn more about Suzhou.

TRAVEL + LEISURE 50 Best Places to Travel in 2017

Suzhou, China

A half-hour from Shanghai by bullet train, 2,500-year-old Suzhou has two faces. Most know of its classical gardens (nine UNESCO-designated), celebrated in Chinese art and poetry for centuries, and its canal-filled Old Town with traditional white-washed buildings. But there's also the high-rise-filled Suzhou Industrial Park (built in partnership with the Singaporean government), which has lured many Fortune 500 companies and is a recreational spot for locals and expats. It has a shopping and entertainment district named Times Square, a London Eye-like Ferris wheel, multiple Western and Asian restaurants, bars, theaters, and a concert hall, plus colorful musical fountains on Jinji Lake at night—and it's all just a 20-minute subway ride from the heart of Old Town. Over the next two years, W Hotels, Sheraton, and the Luxury Collection join a stampede of Western hotel brands that include the stylish Tonino Lamborghini, a Hilton, and a Hyatt Regency. —Sharon McDonnell



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VERANDA These Are the 30 Most Beautiful Gardens in the World

Humble Administrator's Garden in Suzhou, China
Originally built in 1509 during the Ming Dynasty, the Humble Administrator's Garden started as a private garden for the Imperial Envoy and poet Wang Xianchen. The legend goes that Wang longed to retire from the stresses of official life, and the garden served as the perfect place for him to create a new quiet life.

