

# Compass Edge: Enabling Overseas Hotels to Gain China Visibility

In 2016, Chinese tourists overseas spent \$261.1 Bn, up from \$10 Bn in the year 2000 as reported by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). According to the China Outbound Tourism Research Institute (COTRI), the trips by the Chinese citizens will increase from 145 Mn people in 2017 to more than 400 Mn by 2030. Also, Trip Advisor China Unbounded reports that nearly half of Chinese Free Independent Travelers (FITs) plan to take more trips abroad, and 52 percent will stay for longer periods. However, tapping into this lucrative and rapidly growing Chinese FIT market is easier said than done. The major reason behind this is the exceptional online culture of China. To say that the Chinese online culture is different from the rest of the world is an understatement. Imagine Google, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram all banned in a country? Well, that is China, where even the shared server approach is tricky as the government eliminates the whole server without notice if it finds one bad neighbor. Adding to these challenges is the Great Fire Wall of China which slows down the speed of international websites. A number of overseas hoteliers fail to notice this unique culture. Thereby, no matter what western strategy the overseas hoteliers throw at China, they will remain impervious. So how will financially limited overseas independent hoteliers tap into this attractive Chinese FIT market with the invisible online culture? Addressing this very need is Compass Edge that offers 'Go China' online branding solutions to help overseas hoteliers establish an online presence and enhance their visibility among Chinese travelers.

With Compass Edge's Go China solutions, the company offers a total package—a localized responsive website on a dedicated Alibaba Cloud server, Chinese Google-

'Baidu' Search Engine Optimization (SEO), visibility in Chinese social media (Weibo and WeChat) with their travel platform GoHotelsGO and local hosting for fast loading speed. Additionally, the company's LN Global Alliance empowers independent hoteliers to reach out to a large number of Chinese travelers.

Compass Edge helps hoteliers to set up a localized Chinese website solely based on the interests and needs of the Chinese travelers to suit their taste and culture, making it comfortable for them to navigate and stick around longer. As soon as the website is set up, the company ensures that the website is well positioned on Baidu as an organic listing. "Also, back-ups are done for every 3-4 days; all of our clients will have eight copies of the website in



Anita Chan,  
CEO



Compass Edge  
HOTEL ONLINE SOLUTIONS

our dedicated server each month that protects them from hacking or data corruption. Besides, in case of a disaster, Compass Edge can get the clients' websites up and running in less than 4 hours. This means 8X more hosting space on a dedicated server for each of our hotels," states Anita Chan, CEO, Compass Edge.

When it comes to social media, China has both open platforms (Weibo) and closed platforms (WeChat). Compass Edge assists the hoteliers to create accounts on Weibo, and publishes 12 posts every month, as the company strongly believes that it is the reach and the engagement that matters most. On the other hand, the company's travel alliance platform GoHotelsGo features all the Compass Edge hotels under their WeChat GoHotelsGo official account and soft feature the hotels in weekly 'Always On KOLs' or blogger articles. Besides, the company also has a Facebook group "China Ready Hotels" to get the hoteliers up to speed on everything on Chinese online, marketing, technology and e-commerce. As online is not pure online, and offline presence and marketing are extremely important in China, the company conducts huge travel fairs exhibitions to promote its alliance hotels, offering them the competitive edge over their peers.

In addition, the company's LN Global Hotel Alliance is one-of-a-kind Chinese-centric loyalty program co-founded by Anita & Ling Nan Hospitality alongside with China Southern Airline and GZL Travel Services. "Together, we have 46 million+ ready to travel Chinese loyalty members in our alliance. This offers huge benefits for our hotel clients," extols Anita. As the Chinese government supports the program, the Chinese consumers

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will see this as a sign of trust. "This is something that no individual overseas hotelier can do on their own."

Compass Edge also generates an analytics report on a quarterly basis. The report has a detailed account of its clients' performance across the different stages of traveler acquisition. For instance, take inspiration stage, where the company scales out the influences—what attracts the travelers more, the good impressions the client received, how satisfactory the engagement is, and more. This report keeps track of not only the website statistics but also social media statistics. Compass Edge's report also includes social listening which is based on Chinese travelers' feedback. The clients can leverage these reports to change traveler acquisition tactics that align with the increasing demand in the market.

Citing one of their success stories, Anita mentions The Surin Phuket, a luxury hotel in Phuket, Thailand, with whom Compass Edge has been partnering for almost two years now. Through their effective 'Go China' strategy, the client captured the attention of not only Chinese travelers but also celebrities, establishing a solid branding presence in China.

While most organizations are still trying to figure out the WeChat ecosystem, WeChat Mini Program is taking off in China with 20-30 percent traffic. It is like an application inside WeChat, and it promotes social commerce with 60 entry points. Also, all data sources in WeChat are ICP enabled with no connections to APIs outside of China. "We are now in the beta testing stage and will launch WeChat Mini Program in early 2019, and we are sure it will enhance the experience of the Chinese travelers," concludes Anita. **ACQ**