Suzhou Tourism Celebrates Its Culture With Star-Studded North American Social Media and PR Campaign

High profile celebrity events, wide-reaching social media partnerships, and a robust public relations campaign resulted in more than 2,000 positive articles and more than 25.5 million social media impressions.

New York, New York (May 28, 2019) – Suzhou Tourism is celebrating another monumental year of marketing the destination and its unique cultural attractions to North American travelers through an innovative and integrated social media, public relations, digital marketing, and travel trade program. Through the year-long campaign, Suzhou Tourism had presence at the most prolific celebrity events in North America, hosted some of the travel industry’s top influencers and media on experiential familiarization trips, and partnered with fashionable lifestyle brands to reach new audiences. Results include more than 25.5 million social media impressions, more than 2,000 positive articles, and more than 530 million media impressions achieved from June 2018 to May 2019.

The campaign captured Suzhou’s distinct culture by highlighting one-of-a-kind aspects of the destination including local crafts such as silk making, embroidery, and tea harvesting; performing arts such as the Kunqu opera; and natural wonders like the UNESCO World Heritage designated classical gardens, meandering canals, peaceful water towns, and more. This innovative campaign, designed to shine a spotlight on the destination’s distinctive attributes, was executed by PHG Consulting, Suzhou Tourism’s North American marketing and representation partner since 2014.

One major goal of the campaign was to connect Suzhou Tourism with top tastemakers, encouraging them to spread the word about Suzhou to their influential friends and fervent fanbases. To do so, Suzhou Tourism took center stage at several exclusive celebrity events. During New York Fashion Week in September 2018, actors, influencers, models, and television stars learned about the “Venice of China” at an invitation-only gifting suite produced by Luxury Experience & Co. and a private party hosted by Celebrity Page TV. Boldfaced names from NBC, Miss USA, BRAVO’s The Real Housewives series, and more were personally introduced to the destination and its silk-making heritage, with top talent taking home a goodie bag including a locally produced Xiù Niáng Silk scarf and a gift certificate for a complimentary stay at W Suzhou. The destination was also the subject of a Celebrity Page TV feature that aired in 150 markets across the United States including New York City, Los Angeles, and Dallas. During the 91st annual Academy Awards in Los Angeles in February 2019, more than 60 A-list celebrities, award nominees, influencers, and media networked with Suzhou Tourism representatives and were presented with Sheng Feng Fans made in Suzhou, Suzhou-grown Biluochun Tea, and a three-night gift certificate to the Kempinski Hotel Suzhou during GBK Productions’ Luxury Gifting Lounge.

Through a series of familiarization trips, 48 top media, influencers, tour operators, and travel agents visited Suzhou to experience all the destination has to offer. Groups watched Kunqu opera performers prepare for the stage at a local opera house, tried their hand at bonsai under the watchful eye of a master at Tiger Hill, and took a seat at a loom next to an embroidery expert. Participants reached millions of captive consumers through the content produced on these trips which ranged from viral videos of Suzhou’s most outrageous cuisine published by FOODBEAST to Instagram takeovers of the Travel + Leisure channel and feature stories in luxury lifestyle and trade magazines.
Additionally, Suzhou Tourism launched a robust sweepstakes program that was promoted to consumers via email, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Each sweepstakes was executed in tandem with a curated selection of likeminded lifestyle brands such as SheKnows, Rank and Style, and Serious Eats, which allowed PHG Consulting to expose Suzhou Tourism to thousands of new consumers, including 48,700 people who entered to win trips to Suzhou. The campaign also included educational travel trade events held at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.

Over the course of PHG Consulting’s five-year partnership with Suzhou Tourism, the destination has become one of the most highly visible Chinese destinations in North America. Suzhou Tourism consistently ranks in the top three Chinese destinations in terms of social media audience size, with close to 950,000 collective followers across its Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube channels. Nearly half a million consumers have visited TravelToSuzhou.com, which PHG Consulting built and launched at the onset of its relationship with Suzhou Tourism. In addition, the destination has been featured in more than 12,500 positive articles generating more than 10.2 billion media impressions, and 89 North American tour operators are currently selling 410 travel packages featuring Suzhou.

Those interested in getting an inside glimpse at Suzhou and the immersive cultural experiences that await travelers can follow the destination’s Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube channels, follow #TravelSuzhou on social media and visit TravelToSuzhou.com.

About Suzhou
Suzhou, the "Venice of China," is known for its elegant stone bridges, canals, flowing water, and noteworthy architecture. Located in the center of the Yangtze River Delta, approximately 60 miles west of Shanghai, Suzhou is one of the oldest cities in the Yangtze Basin dating back more than 2,500 years. The city boasts the beautifully manicured Classical Gardens of Suzhou, nine of which have been collectively designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site, as well as 11 destinations along the Grand Canal that have also been designated world cultural heritage sites.

Each year, millions of tourists travel to Suzhou to experience the destination’s more than 400 attractions, ranging from pagodas and temples to historical districts and world-class museums. Suzhou is continually developing in areas like the Suzhou Industrial Park (SIP), which boasts five-star hotels, the iconic Lake Jinji, and China’s largest overwater Ferris Wheel.

Travel to Suzhou is easily accessible via three convenient area airports with non-stop flights from North America: Shanghai Hongqiao International Airport (SHA) offers bullet train service to Suzhou, which is approximately a 50-mile, 30-minute trip; Pudong International Airport (PVG) is approximately 65 miles from Suzhou, an hour and half drive; and Sunan Shuofang International Airport (WUX) is approximately 14 miles from Suzhou, a 30 minute drive.

For more information on Suzhou please visit www.TravelToSuzhou.com, and follow Instagram, Twitter and Facebook.

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