

Q&A – VF Webinar: Covid-19 - impacts of the outbreak on the Chinese travel industry

1. Corona outbreak has cost a great impact to Chinese economy and people has lost some part of their money, so is Finland still competitive compared to those more economical destinations in Chinese market?

We all know that Nordic is not cheap destination including Finland. In China, there is different kind of segments for the tourist and such a big population and structure. Certain rich people are able to travel no matter where, but for the average people they will consider more. In the beginning, it will be price-sensitive and people will value more the quality of the product, when they use their money. This will be a trend and consumer behavior will change in that point of view in the beginning, but that isn't a necessarily a bad thing, but a natural development. We are still confident that Chinese tourist will come to Finland.

2. In China has been a few new incidents after opening the borders, and there has been estimations that if borders are opened too quickly, the outbreak may can back and it may prolong the opening of the borders. What do you think of this scenario?

Chinese borders have not been closed at any point. The borders were open all the time for travelling. Yes, there have been confirmed cases but many of them are kids or students that have been studying abroad and now they are travelling back because schools are closing and they return to their home country. Amount has been huge and that is why we have many confirmed cases. Border and airport customs are working hard and trying to follow any potentials threats and we have confident for them now.

China has had the first wave and no one knows if there are going to be a second, but we hope for the best that that will not happen.

3. Teemu said at the beginning that marketing and PR actions to China have been interrupted now. From a marketing point of view, how, when and what kind of operations will you do after April/May?

We do keep some PR presence, but it's more informative. When it comes to campaigns or promotional work or PR that is all cancelled for now until of end of May. In one-month time, we will have next checkpoint to see how the situation develops and when we can initiative our operations. Of course, it has lot to do on Finnair operations, when they restart operating. Lot of elements that affects our decisions when to continue. For now, we work more behind the scenes we work with our key partners, we educate and by that, we do promotional work, but consumer promotions and promotional PR are all halted until further notice.

4. Could you think of some incentives to unite our destinations and resources to stimulate travelers from China after the COVID-19 outbreak?

We will have a discussion if we can think about other ways to do marketing during this special period. Digital channels is something we are considering in our social media that if we can do thing with partners in our some to directly show the destination and do more together. Also, for all of the future online training and online platforms, when we will be building that, we will try to involve partners and try to help them and be ready for the rebound later this year.

5. Could you share some details on e-learning platform? Is it already available or on the planning stage?

We are at the moment on planning stage on the e-learning platform. The concept is there, but it hasn't been published yet. We will have one platform that we will utilize in the future. It has functionalities where we can involve our partners. We have some benchmark cases and our team has been closely involved developing the system and database.

It has more like two functions the online training and the platform for travel trade partners who can get a look on finish products. It is under development and more information to be published later.