



Are Chinese travellers open to experiencing extreme voyages?

Selling adventure travel should be based on what drives the thrill behind it. Such travellers look for experiences that are enthralling and inimitable. So sellers need to play their part in igniting a true spirit of adventure among travellers that belong to this category.

Customized travel specialist Diadema International Travel Agency takes a lot of pride in serving travellers who pursue extraordinary experiences.

Explaining whether Chinese adventure travellers fit into the category of extreme voyages or not, *Forrest Lynn, a polar traveller and Founder of Diadema International Travel Agency*, shared that the "7+2" expedition is the highest level of adventure. It refers to extreme expeditions undertaken to climb the highest peaks of all the seven continents and hike to the north and south poles (2 refers to hiking to the North and South Poles). The concept of the explorer is that these nine locations represent all the extremes on the earth and the highest level of extreme adventure.

Till the end of 2017, Diadema had successfully sent 2,100 travellers to the Antarctic and 900 to the Arctic. Lynn highlighted that in June 2018, Zhang Liang, a Chinese mountaineer, completed the "14+7+2" expedition (i.e., all 14 peaks over 8,000 metres, the highest peaks of the seven continents and hiking to the North and South Poles), the only amateur in the world to achieve this feat. He spent 18 years on this expedition. In 2013, Liang served as Diadema's Antarctic Ambassador.

"However, an adventure trip for Chinese travellers is neither limited to "7+2" nor polar expedition and mountain climbing. It can be said that an adventure can be mountaineering, diving, boating or skydiving...perhaps for some people, "going abroad" is an "adventure". Everyone has their own definition of adventure," Lynn said.

The South and North Poles are always the preferred destinations of adventure tourism. In addition to mountaineering, Kilimanjaro in Africa, part of the "7+2" expedition, is also a pilgrimage for climbers from all over the world. There are other well-known destinations, for example South America, with attractions of the Mirror of the Sky and the Amazon Jungle Adventures. Depending on personal interests, such as diving and sailing, there are specific destination, including Kamchatka, Africa and Papua New Guinea, shared Lynn.

The company's adventure travel products are mainly affordable luxury products instead of extreme adventures. In addition to adventures, Diadema also provides comfortable and extravagant experiences. "At present, this kind of affordable luxury adventures are highly recognized in our customer base," said Lynn.

The "within" factor

"Regardless of the way of travel, the biggest driver is always from the inside. No matter in which era, those who become and are known as "explorers" are always few. No one is a natural explorer. If a person likes to explore and act upon this passion, and when more and more people go exploration, it will naturally become a trend," said Lynn.

"Expedition is driven by self-awareness and self-demand of Chinese travellers. The key is the internal driver. As Manori, a mountaineer, stated, "Why mountaineering? - Because the mountain is there." Only a climber will understand the true meaning of this statement," explained Lynn. "As the world is enormous, there are always some paths that can't be travelled in high-heels and there are always some people you won't meet in office buildings. Travellers' awareness of the world and the way they get along with the world also determine whether they will participate in outdoor adventure trips."

At the same time, he acknowledged that as the market evolves, the destination resources are improved and there are more like-minded travellers. "The external factors also have certain driving effects," he said.

Profile of Chinese adventure travellers

Referring to the profile of Chinese adventure travellers, Lynn said many may think that "exploration" is limited to relatively young people.

"But in fact, it can be seen that most of the adventure travellers are middle-aged people - they are "young" middle-aged people. On the other hand, many entrepreneurs and executives love adventure, and most mountaineers are entrepreneurs and senior executives. To a certain extent, expedition and entrepreneurship have similarities, such as extraordinary courage and dedication, not being afraid of difficulties, challenging yourself and constantly surpassing yourself," said Lynn.

He said different types of adventure travellers pursue different types of adventure travel products.

"Mountaineers will naturally segment mountaineering products. The levels of climbers are different and there are different levels of products. Extreme sports fans will also break down many different extreme sports products. For example, if you like diving, you will check different diving sites according to your capability," he said. "The biggest difference between budget and premium adventure travel is your personal situation. For example, at the entry level of "7+2" expedition, Kilimanjaro represents no particularly high threshold for physical and financial conditions."

Making it personalized

"From the perspective of products, "adventure travel" obviously reflects the individualized needs, so the products are more customized. The so-called standardized adventure tours are actually personalized and targeted integration of various products," said Lynn.

Diadema ensures routes and itineraries are continuously optimized on various aspects, including the accommodation, meals, comfort and other elements that are carefully communicated before the trip. "If a traveller prefers a customized adventure tour, he/she can make requests and requirements based on his/her preference. We will provide the plan proposal to meet such needs as much as possible according to the actual situation and relevant experience and coordinate the destination resources accordingly," said Lynn.

As for what adventure trips itinerary needs to feature, Lynn said it depends on expedition categories and activities. He pointed out that there are still special outdoor/ exploration activities at the focus, which are highly attractive for travellers. "Because you haven't tried it, you want to experience it and get in touch with the local community," he said.

"If the North and South Poles are classified as outdoor adventure products, we have been in operation for 10 years. Chartering to the South Pole is what we have been doing. Every year, more than 100 like-minded people visit Antarctica. In 2018, it is the 10th charter. Our signature is light and luxury adventures, which are both adventure and luxury travel experience by glamorous cruises," mentioned Lynn. "We also provide Arctic and Antarctic tours every year. Instead of hiking, we offer mature travel products with strict organization and maximum security."

As for Diadema's branded products related to the Arctic and Arctic tours, the volume is stable (more than 200 travellers per year). Each product has its specific characteristics. Take the Antarctic tours for an example. There are the Antarctic Three-Island Line and the Antarctic Peninsula Line, by charters or in small groups. For the Arctic, there are Aurora Chaser Tours in Iceland and Greenland, Self-driving tours in Iceland and the trips to the North Pole. "Our Antarctic and Arctic products have been optimized and innovated over the years. Adhering to the idea of "not only traveling", we provide customers with more value-added services to realize their dreams of travel. For example, every year, we invite experts and masters from all walks of life to share and exchange their insights on the road, so that everyone can have more spiritual and intellectual gains and become more mindful," he said.

In the "7+2" expedition, Kilimanjaro, the highest peak in Africa, is an "entry-level" adventure. Lynn said that it is not very difficult, so it's quite popular. "In the Spring Festival of 2019, we have plans to climb to Kilimanjaro," concluded Lynn.

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