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Relating to China: Strategic Trips by Executives

China is a key strategic partner, and a top business consideration for many North American companies today. It is also quite distant as defined both in miles and operating environment. Understanding the environment requires covering the miles and spending time there.

While blocks of executive time are hard to come by, time allocated to regular China trips are a great investment when well-planned. The best use of executive resources—in terms of both time and expense—usually includes some or all of the following activities for US-based execs who travel to China.

- 1. Meeting with Chinese officials:** at the local, provincial, and even national levels depending on the scope of business operations. These should be the people in the same city, region and/or industry as your organization. If in multiple locations, meet with multiple officials.
- 2. Meeting with key business partners:** talking to customers and vendors first-hand is one way to gain insight into the local market conditions and situations that local teams face. Visiting at least one “ideal” partner and one problematic one is optimal for a balanced experience—though adequately prepare the exec on the message he/she needs to deliver.
- 3. Meeting with the local team:** discussions with all key team members on an individual basis provides a more balanced view of the local situation than meeting in a group. Meet with the group over a meal, for more informal conversation.
- 4. Addressing the overall organization in a town hall type meeting:** solicit written questions from the group ahead of time and answer those that play into the overall message or theme that the exec is speaking on.
- 5. Communicating corporate values, plans for China, and personal commitment to building strong relationships there:** this should take place during all interactions on the trip. Having a well-thought out communication plan of what to say and how to say it, prior to the trip, is essential.

Time “on the ground” in any location is time well spent when the proper planning and preparation takes place. Use visits by key US executives as opportunities to promote corporate objectives and corporate value locally... and for Chinese officials and executives travelling abroad, the advice is the same.

For practical assistance and advice in preparing for effective US-China executive travel and meetings in China or the US, [free articles](#) or [contact us directly](#).

Betsy Neidel Managing Director

Blue Heron Holdings, LLC

www.BlueHeron8.com

Neidel@BlueHeron8.com

Tel: 1-512-565-4909

Fax: 1-512-828-6138