

Hawaii News

# Chinese Nu Skin distributors flock to Hawaii destinations

By [Allison Schaefer](#)

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Five Nu Skin couples, with the men in their official aloha shirts, re-created the "Victory Kiss" display dockside of the battleship Tuesday.

Xingzi Song, a Nu Skin distributor from Chengdu, China, who sold enough of the product to win a company trip to Hawaii, was so excited touring the Battleship Missouri Memorial on Tuesday that his grin rivaled the length of the popular tourist attraction.

"I'm very excited to be here. I could not sleep when I found out the convention would be in Hawaii. This is my first time to the United States and to Hawaii," Song said through a translator. "I love it — the sky, the air, the people. I plan to come back every year."

Song is one of the roughly 4,000 Nu Skin distributors who make up the largest incentive tour from China, Hong Kong and Taiwan that Hawaii has hosted. The company spent more than \$20 million to bring top producers to Hawaii and would have increased its investment if it could have brought all 6,000 qualifiers to Hawaii, said Avis Chau, Nu Skin Enterprise's Hong Kong-based vice president of success inspirations. More than 2,000 Nu Skin qualifiers were denied U.S. visas and sent to Bali, Indonesia, instead, Chau said.



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#### BY THE NUMBERS

**4,000**

Nu Skin distributors attending the company's Hawaii convention April 5-20

**6,000+**

Hotel room nights booked for attendees

**\$8 million**

Amount of corporate spending in isles

**\$1 million**

Tax income generated

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"This was the first time that we've gone to the Americas. It's the first time that we've ever encountered a visa problem. We aren't sure why it was so high — maybe visa reforms," she said. "People worked really hard for this trip, so it was a little disappointing for some of them."

Groups traveling to Hawaii typically have a 10 to 15 percent visa rejection rate, according to Jadie Goo, who serves as the Hawaii Tourism Authority's brand manager for China and Taiwan. Nu Skin had about a percent visa rejection rate when it traveled to events in Sydney and Dubai, Chau said.

Hawaii's tourism leaders can't set U.S. travel policies, but they have long championed ease of access. Like most tourist destinations, Hawaii wants a greater share of China's burgeoning and lucrative outbound visitor market. The number of visitors from China is forecast to grow to 173,479 by year's end. Still, visitors to Hawaii from China each spend \$365 a day on average, the highest of any market.

Visitor industry members say the good news is that even with the visa restrictions, thousands of Nu Skin distributors came and are pumping money into Hawaii. The better news is that their tourist and travel visas will last 10 years, so they could easily return.

"Anytime we can get a new visitor, the likelihood of them having a good experience and wanting to come back is high," said John Morgan, Kualoa Ranch president.

Participants, who came in five waves from April 5 to 20, are occupying more than 6,000 hotel room nights at the Sheraton Waikiki Hotel, the Moana Surfrider and the Sheraton Princess Kaiulani. A smaller group of Nu Skin VIPs also is staying at the Kahala Hotel & Resort, the Grand Hyatt Kauai Resort & Spa and the Westin Maui Resort & Spa.

The HTA estimates Nu Skin's impact at about \$8 million in corporate spending and nearly \$1 million in taxes. Nu Skin requested five days of exclusive duty-free shopping hours at DFS Hawaii. It rented a hangar to host five nights of galas at the Pacific Aviation Museum Pearl Harbor. Nu Skin business has sold out portions of Kualoa Ranch and the Battleship Missouri for five days.

"Typically, April is not a busy month. This helped out quite a bit," Morgan said. "When something like this happens, our shoulder days get busier, too."

Anne Murata, Pacific Aviation Museum's director of marketing and business development, said Nu Skin was the largest group to book a hangar since Amway China came to Hawaii several years ago.

"Amway China brought 1,600 guests, but Nu Skin has brought 1,100 to 1,500 for five nights," Murata said.

Nu Skin has been the first group other than movie companies to charter the Battleship Missouri Memorial, said Shufen Chang, the memorial's Asian sales and marketing manager.

"We're so excited. Their social media reach is just massive. They've got thousands of friends," Chang said.

Nu Skin also has put the isles on track to reach Hawaii Tourism China's 2017 goal of filling 15,000 hotel room nights with meeting, convention and incentive visitors. They augment the eight other Chinese incentive groups that have put 1,000 hotel room nights on the books this year.

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