



Superplatform 101

Team 3 Super Girlz

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A hand in a white shirt and dark tie is pointing towards a magnifying glass icon. The background is dark and out of focus.

China's Social Media & Entertainment Industry Analysis

01 Introduction (1)

The challenge to enter China's market has become an increasingly important topic for foreign companies of all sizes and shapes, since China's economy has continued to grow by double-digit rates over the past decade. It is destined to remain an engine of global growth for a future perspective. There for, a proper guidebook for helping managers to understand the entry to the large and complex market has become increasingly vital especially in the B2B sphere.



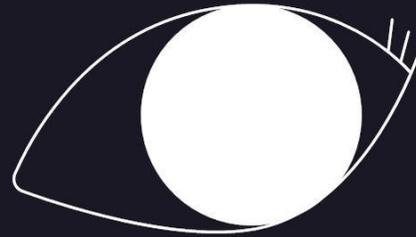
With a population that near 1.4 billion citizens, China's sheer size and scale presents barriers uniquely distinct from other markets including other Asian markets. Foreign firms usually find their access to China's market stymied through insufficient and inadequate lack of local understanding. Although the high potential to gain excess profit in China for foreign manufactured goods and services, it is noteworthy that learning where the opportunities lie and how to achieve them could be extremely essential and challenging.



01 Introduction (2)

Super platforms are generating a huge buzz of financial inclusion community due to the ability to maximize the spread of information and reach while embedding digital services into use cases. Especially in China, where entertainment and social media giants such as Douyin and Wechat have integrated a range of financial services-from payments to micro investments into their product offering.

The superplatform is like monopolies, having the trait that Super platforms cannot provide their services without scale, thus important to connect with locations. Notably, there can be several challenges, foremost is the concern of trust and internationality. A crucial network effect problem would make international borders blurred and an inadequate national response. Another challenge that might have an impact on the success for foreign manufacturers is to understand government policy and regulations.



01 Introduction (3)

As the rapid development of China's economy, it also accumulating a growing number of industry-specific regulations and principles which both domestic and foreign firms should conform to. China now has different ministries and regulatory organizations with responsibility for industry regulations and laws. For example, in the social media sector, the State Administration of Market Regulation (SAMR) plays a role in drawing up and enforcing regulations. Government regulations can impact strongly on the cost and the timeline of super platform entry. Firms are advised to examine the implications of such laws and standards prior to committing to the market.

Carrying out due diligence is an indispensable activity when entering China's super platform. The key is ultimately to verify the trustworthiness of partners and employees and to flag up any selections in the cupboard before proceeding with any investments. Additionally, Rights (IPR) strategy is the basic for the first time entry in China.



- Compared to a few major players dominating the western market, China has a more dynamic, diverse, and competitive social media landscape, despite under speech censorship, with platforms rising and falling on a faster timescale. Thanks to its versatile functionality, Tencent's WeChat has remained as the most popular social networking space. It is a super version of Facebook with ride-hailing, food delivery, mobile payment, and other services all in one app.
- Owing to its huge userbase, marketing and e-commerce have been thriving on WeChat. When it comes to microblogging, Chinese users have their local version of Twitter - Sina Weibo, with 140 to two thousand Chinese characters allowing in one post. It has been used extensively as a space for free-speech with a significant share of online users.

01 External Environment of the Entertainment and Social media Market in China (1)



- Many Chinese social networking sites have copied the successful recipe from WeChat and developed their all-rounded entertainment ecosystems with extra services like e-commerce, streaming, and gaming. Furthermore, the adoption of artificial intelligence has been rising.
- Facial recognition, hyper-personalization, and augmented reality will be used more often in social media platforms. In terms of content format, apart from short videos, live streaming is the next hype in Chinese social media. YY Live and Douyu Live are the early beneficiaries in this market trend in rural China, where fewer entertainment options are available for young people.

01 External Environment of the Entertainment and Social media Market in China (2)



02 Industry Overview and Analysis

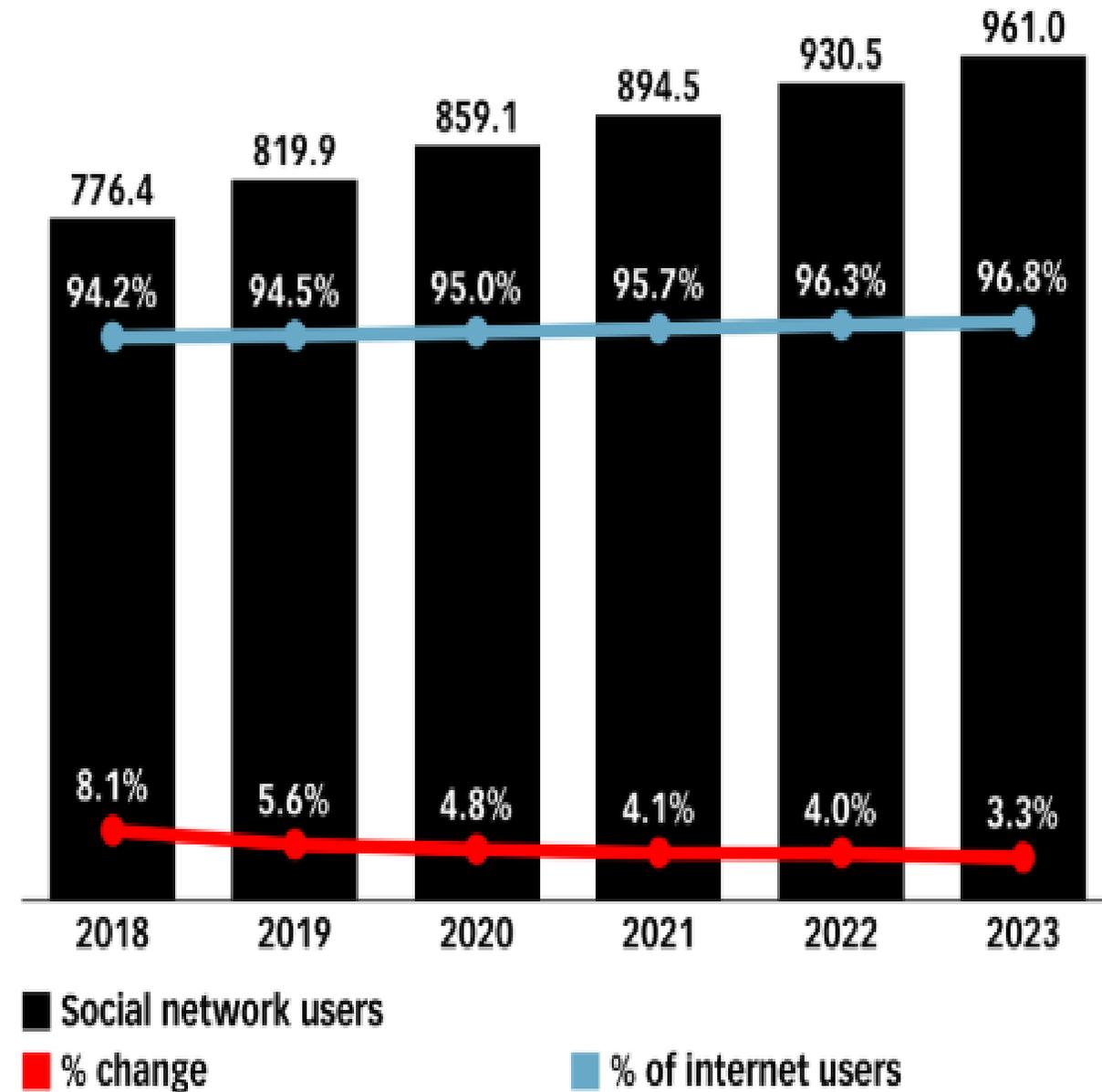
The Superplatforms (including Zhihu, Wechat and Xiaohongshu) that are analyzed in this report operates and competes in the entertainment and social media industry. This industry experienced a major **soar of 5.6%** in 2019 (819.9 million) due to the changing consumer tastes and preference, with the social networks used by 59.0% of the country's population but the penetration rate among internet users **reach 94.5%**.

The industry is now forecasted to grow at a moderate rate and is expected to **increase to 961 million** of social network users in 2023, accounting for 68.5% of the population. This growth would be mainly driven by an improving economy, increase in consumer confidence and expanding online function offerings within the industry.

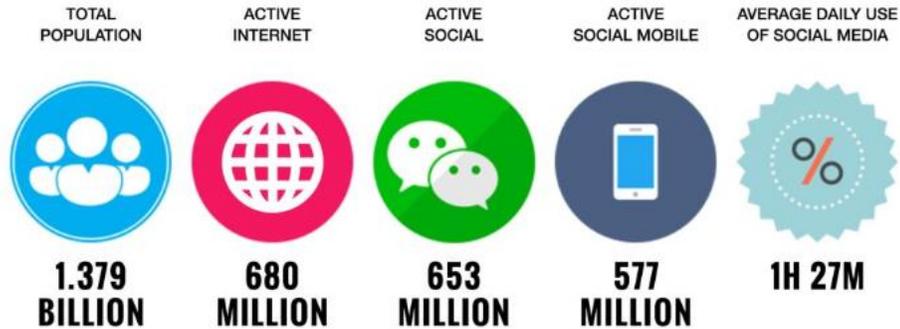
Social Network Users in China, 2018-2023

millions, % change and % of internet users

There has been a stable increase in the % of internet users from 2018-2023. The social network users rise sharply from 776.4 million to the expected 961 million during the six years. In China, 70% of social media users are under the age of 35 (30% are between 26 and 30), Internet users spend five to six more hours online per week than Americans and an average of almost 90 minutes per day on social networks, and 38% of consumers make product purchase decisions based on recommendations they read on social networks.



Chinese social media culture



China's social-media users not only are more active than those of any other country but also, in more than 80% of all cases, have multiple social-media accounts, primarily with local players (compared with just 39% in Japan).

The use of mobile technologies to access social media is also increasingly popular in China: there were over 100 million mobile social users in 2010, a number that is forecast to grow by about 30% annually.

Because many Chinese are somewhat skeptical of formal institutions and authority, users disproportionately value the advice of opinion leaders in social networks. An independent survey observed that 66% of Chinese consumers relied on recommendations from friends and family, compared with 38% of their US counterparts. Rather than being dominated by a small group of companies, the Chinese social media landscape is more dynamic, with platforms rising and falling on a faster timescale.

659 million

social media users in China



The industry's demand for online products and services are mainly driven by a number of factors which include the **attitude toward the internet, the mobile commerce, speed of delivery, disposable income and demographics.**

The **internet revolution** in China has been unprecedented. At the end of 2014 just under 50% of China's population had access to the internet, a phenomenal 649 million people are now online in the middle kingdom. Such a high internet penetration rate encourages the rise of e-commercial activities; the number of potential consumers is vast.

Increasing mobile engagement and better Wi-Fi networks are expected to further fuel internet usage. As the internet penetration rate increases so do the percentage of users shopping online. Increasingly crowded, congested and polluted urban areas are a key factor in encouraging consumers to go online



In regard to the growth of **mobile commerce**, this form of technological consumption is a relatively new phenomenon in China, it is therefore seen as an exciting and dynamic way to shop. The process of integration arguably encourages online e-commerce. Consumers lives are increasingly centered around their Smart Phone.

The **improved delivery times** for online orders is another essential factor due to effective investments into logistics, infrastructure and warehousing capabilities Alibaba is reportedly even testing drones to quickly deliver goods in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou. All this is contributing to increased demand in the Chinese e-commerce market. In a sense, it is a more 'individual' shopping experience.

This industry is highly sensitive to the macroeconomic factors that affect the growth in **household disposable**. For instance, if the recession appears, the decline in household disposable income due to increased unemployment and stagnant wages would cause a downward pressure on the revenue and profitability margins in the industry.



03 Suggestions on the Successful Market Entry

1. Understand your audience

The consumption habit in China vary from that in western countries. Most notably, even though they value brands influence, they are less loyal to a particular brand and are always sensitive to price.

2. Focus on the content :adopt to Chinese style

Whatever product or service you offer; you will have to localize it to your Chinese audience. For instance, a Chinese audience prefers lovely cartoon style content far more than a western audience. Social media marketing in China and using strategic Chinese social media management principles can be very fruitful for companies that are ready to gain exposure overseas. Doing market research, choosing the right Chinese social media platform, and localizing for the Chinese market are the first steps

03 Suggestions on the Successful Market Entry

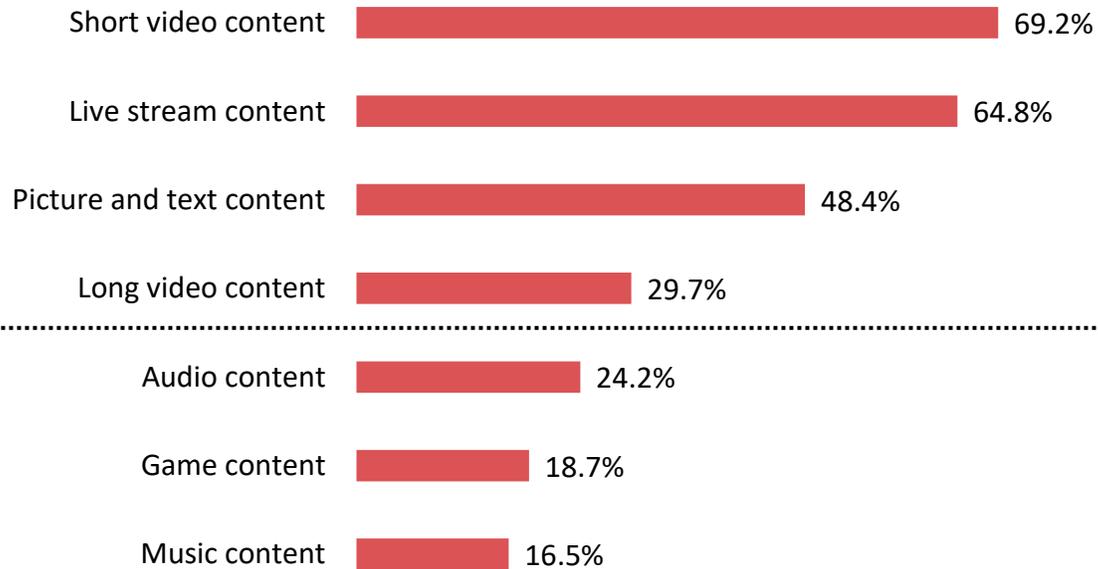
3. Xiachen marketing strategy

Most foreign companies focus on the major cities such as Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou, considering that this is the way to go. However, these cities are oversaturated with businesses marketing through popular Chinese social media and e-commerce platforms. Why not considering smaller cities like Chengdu, which is a better opportunity for western manufacturers since there is less competition but still provide a large consumer base. This strategy is referred to as Xiachen, sinking into lower Tier markets in China.

04 Content Marketing in China

Around 51.7% brands are planning to increase marketing expenses on content marketing in next year.

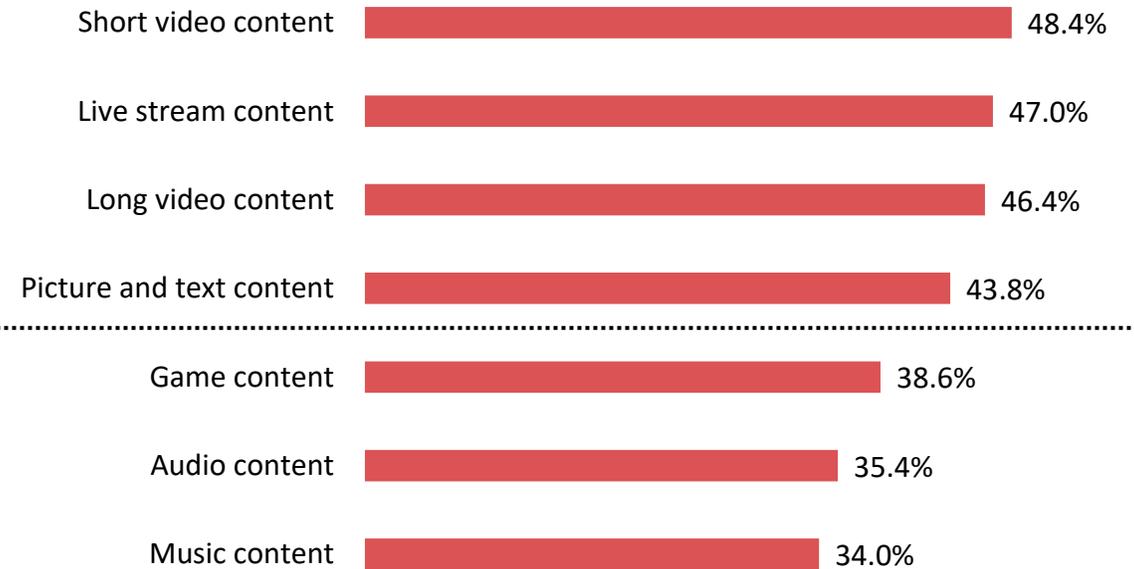
Brands content marketing preference in China 2020



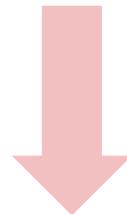
Public exposure

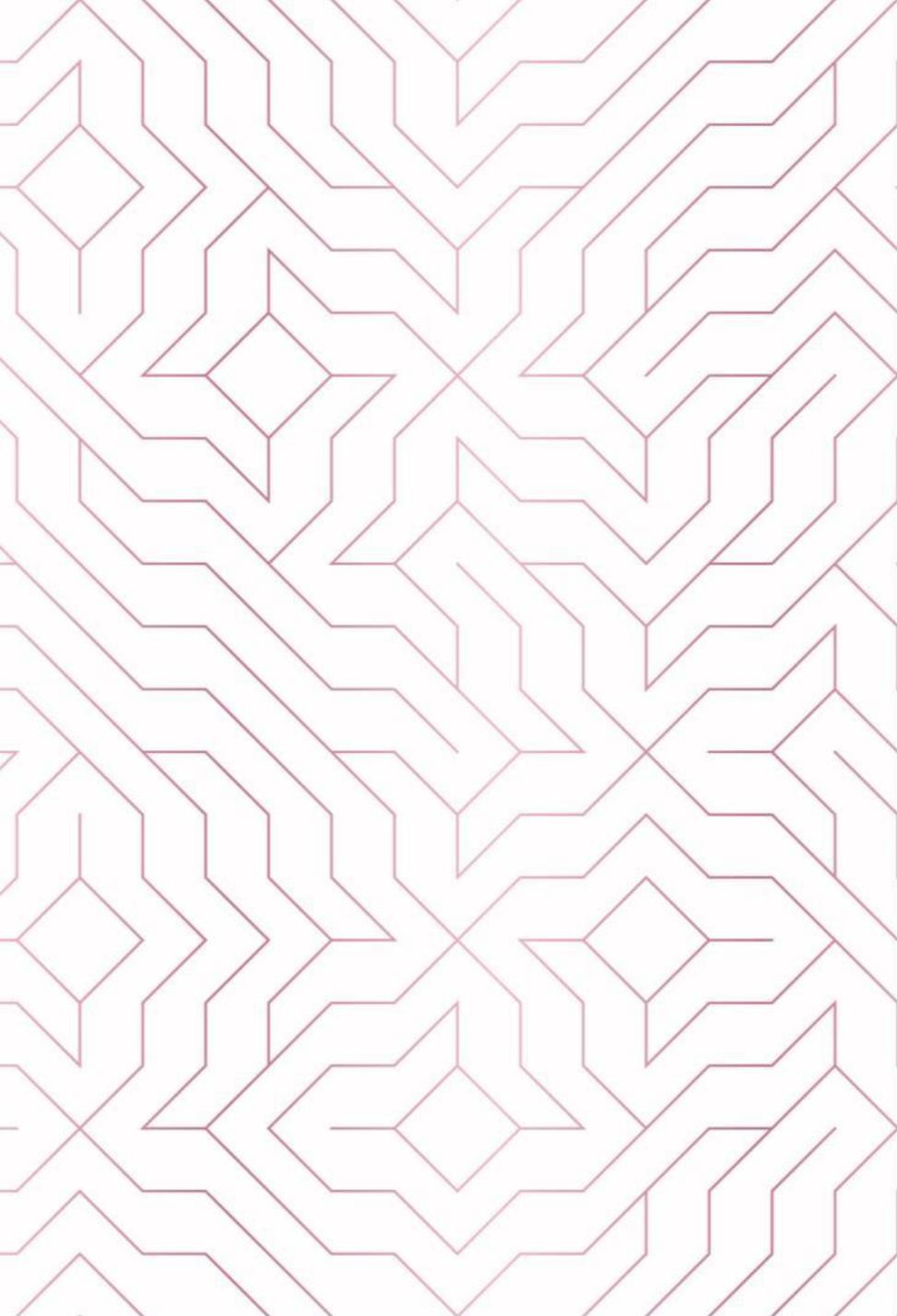


Internet users content marketing coverage in China 2020



Vertical communities exposure





Long Video Platforms

Development Status & Features



Long video platforms gradually focus on providing high-quality content instead of content that only used to pass the time.



Differentiation pricing is another trend which based on the high-quality and differentiation content. Differentiation pricing means platforms would provide different types of plans which have different prices. Then customers could choose any of them depend on their demands.



In the aspect of contents, the web variety show and web series are the two main content. The web variety show, especially, is very popular among young people and it also provides a chance for companies to promote products.

Main Platforms

The first three platforms, IQIYI, Tencent Video and YouKu, are mainly involve tv series, self-made website series and self-made web variety shows. They have similar positioning and have small user differences. They were established earlier and have covered most of network users.

Bilibili is a little bit different, it mainly involves anime shows, games and user-generated content. Gen-Z and millennials make up more than 80% of its users.



BiliBili

Function

- Use generated content in the form of long video
- Anime shows
- Game agency businesses
- Self-made variety shows and web series
- Live streaming
- Selling products (mainly products are about ACG)

BiliBili

User portrait

- Users aged from 18 to 35 account for 78%
- Male: Female is 57:43
- The proportion of users who have a bachelor degree or above is 10% higher than other platforms
- Gen-Z has a relatively high power of consumption and their consuming behavior are closely related to social behavior.

Marketing in Bilibili

- Collaborating with uploaders
- Creating an Enterprise Account
- Advertising in Bilibili

Collaborating with Uploaders

Except creating videos, uploaders could also use these videos to attend an online campaign. These campaigns are organized by Bilibili which will increase videos exposure.

Fanta joined Bilibili in 2020. It created a virtual image called “net orange” (网橘) to represent itself. The image, “net orange”, is like a funny and curious teenager. It narrows the gap between brands and customers.



Creating an Enterprise Account

Firms could also create enterprise accounts and create content by themselves. The key point is to balance the features of brand and platform. For example, creating a virtual image, using a relaxed and pleasant way to interact with customers.

Fanta created an account for its virtual image and uses it as a presenter to communicate with users.



Advertising in Bilibili

There are two ways to present advertisements in Bilibili:

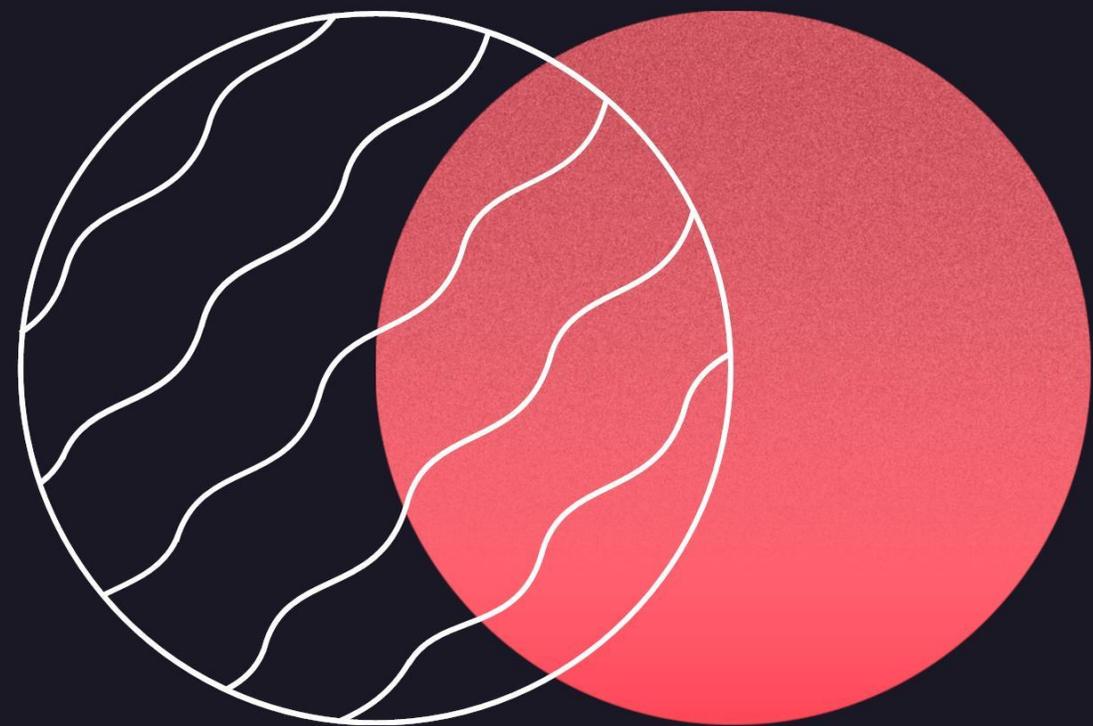
- be shown on the opening screen of the Bilibili application
- be shown between videos on the recommended page

Advertisement



Long Video Useful Links

1. [Gen-Z and Bilibili: China's GenZ are Hooked on Bilibili's Conversational Content](https://www.parklu.com/genz-bilibilis-conversational-content/)
<https://www.parklu.com/genz-bilibilis-conversational-content/>
2. [What Bilibili do to link brands and users](https://socialbeta.com/t/opinion-on-bilibili-marketing-solution-202006) <https://socialbeta.com/t/opinion-on-bilibili-marketing-solution-202006>
3. [Official introduction of marketing in Bilibili and the cooperation platform](https://e.bilibili.com/product.html)
<https://e.bilibili.com/product.html>
4. [More details about Fanta's marketing in Bilibili](https://www.163.com/dy/article/FL29FVRN0519C4LQ.html)
<https://www.163.com/dy/article/FL29FVRN0519C4LQ.html>



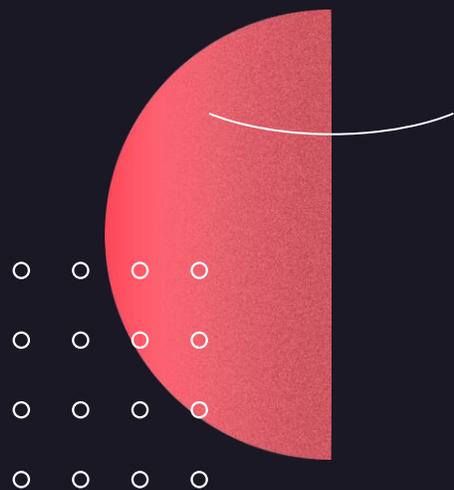
Short Video Platforms

抖音 Douyin

Douyin

抖音 (Douyin) is nowadays one of the most popular applications in China. It is a video sharing social networking platform owned by the Chinese company ByteDance.





There is indeed a wide range of type of videos shared on it, they can go from dance to comedy or even education and generally last 15 seconds for the short ones, 1 minute to 3 minutes for the longer ones (with exceptional permission of uploading videos up to 3 minutes only for users that reach a certain threshold).

Douyin was firstly released in the Chinese market in September 2016, and in 2017 also outside of China, and there is also an international version known as TikTok.



TikTok



抖音短视频

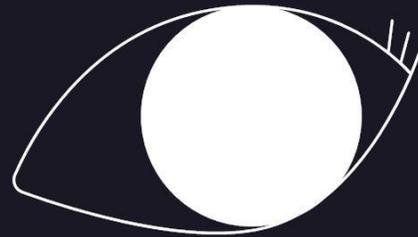
There is a wide range of users for Douyin: from primary school children to middle aged adults. This age range is slightly older than the international version Tiktok, where the main users are teenagers and young adults, but it is younger than Kuaishou, where users are mainly middle-aged adults and a lot less compared to the public of Douyin, considering also a huge difference in downloads of the applications.

Furthermore, the users from Douyin are mainly from tier 1 or tier 2 cities, which are developed metropolitan regions in China.

This is an important factor for their ability to purchase on the application, on which will depend the advertising of products or services.



Douyin's main function is sharing entertainment videos. Internet celebrities do not make profit directly from sharing videos because the platform does not reward users who receive a certain level of visibility and views.



Main Types of Ads on Douyin

- Live video streaming
- Small ads for “same products” of the videos
- Brand’s official accounts
- Open screen ads
- Feed ads
- KOL marketing

Live Video Streaming

Live videos on Douyin are one way to make profit from the same platform (more on Live Video Streaming section), from which the public can give them “presents” that equal to a certain amount of money. This way, the internet celebrities can also bring products or services of companies that sponsored them or from their own shop in front of their fans and increase the visibility of these, in addition with their own tryouts and suggestions. This type of advertising is highly popular with small brands and shops on Taobao, for example.



Smalls Ads on Videos

Another way normal internet celebrities can profit from their content on Douyin is to directly sharing and suggesting products or services in the short videos shared on the platform. This can be done by adding a link in the description or the comments section of their videos, or by adding the link that leads to the selling page of the product directly in a given box.

This is because, differently from the international version TikTok, DouYin has an additional function that can easily lead the viewers to the Taobao or other online shop websites that sell the product aforementioned. This function is shown as a little yellow box on top of the name of the video-sharing-user, with written “same products as the ones shown in the video”.



Official Accounts

Brands and companies can also create their own official Douyin account and share videos and advertisements on them. An example would be Starbucks China or KFC.



Open Screen Ads is also a very popular choice of advertising for big companies. These are displayed every time the app is opened.

There are statistic ones, like posters, and dynamic ones, displayed as videos. They can last from 3 to 5 seconds. These ads are charged by Cost Per Mille or Cost Per Thousand impressions.

The advantage of this type of ads is the lack of interference and a strong visual impact, and there are of course some restrictions on the kinds of ads allowed.

There is no limit to the number of open screen ads that can appear to a user per day, but for new users, there will be no screen ads within 7 days.

Open Screen Ads



Feed Ads



Feeds Ads can last from 5 to 60 seconds and are seamlessly integrated in the Douyin feed to help advertisers achieve the purpose of marketing promotion.

These also have no interference and are displayed in a full-screen format in the Douyin suggested feeds.

The original information flow is connected with the brand's Douyin account, supporting it to accumulate fans and visibility.

The main advantage brought by this type of ads is the fact that it allows users to share the advertising content with friends or on other social platforms, helping therefore in spreading brand awareness.



Last but not least, we have the marketing strategy brought by KOLs, which equals to Key Opinion Leaders.

These are influences that promote the product, service or brand using their creativity in the form of videos.

Brands sponsor the KOLs to feature their products or invite to participate in different challenges, or also asking them to make dedicated videos talking about the product or the brand.

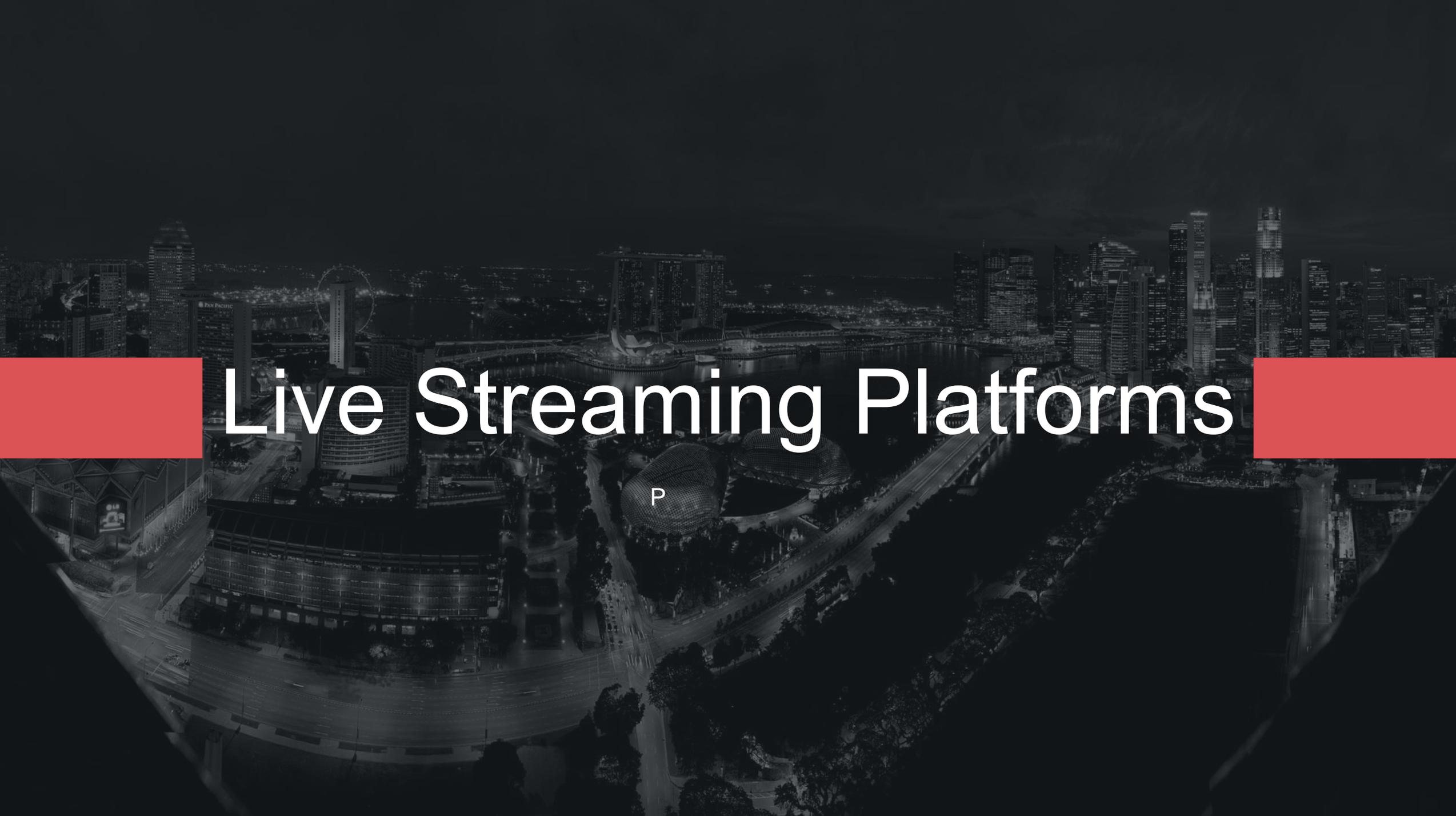
An example would be the “giant” KOL Li Jiaqi (李佳琦).

KOL Marketing Strategy

Kuaishou OR Douyin?

Another short video platform would be 快手 (Kuaishou), which however, as also stated before, has an older user's age, it is not as popular as Douyin is China, which can be justified also by the number of downloads, and the contents in it are not really recommendable to be used for marketing promotion.

Therefore we highly suggest using Douyin as the main short-videos platform to work on.

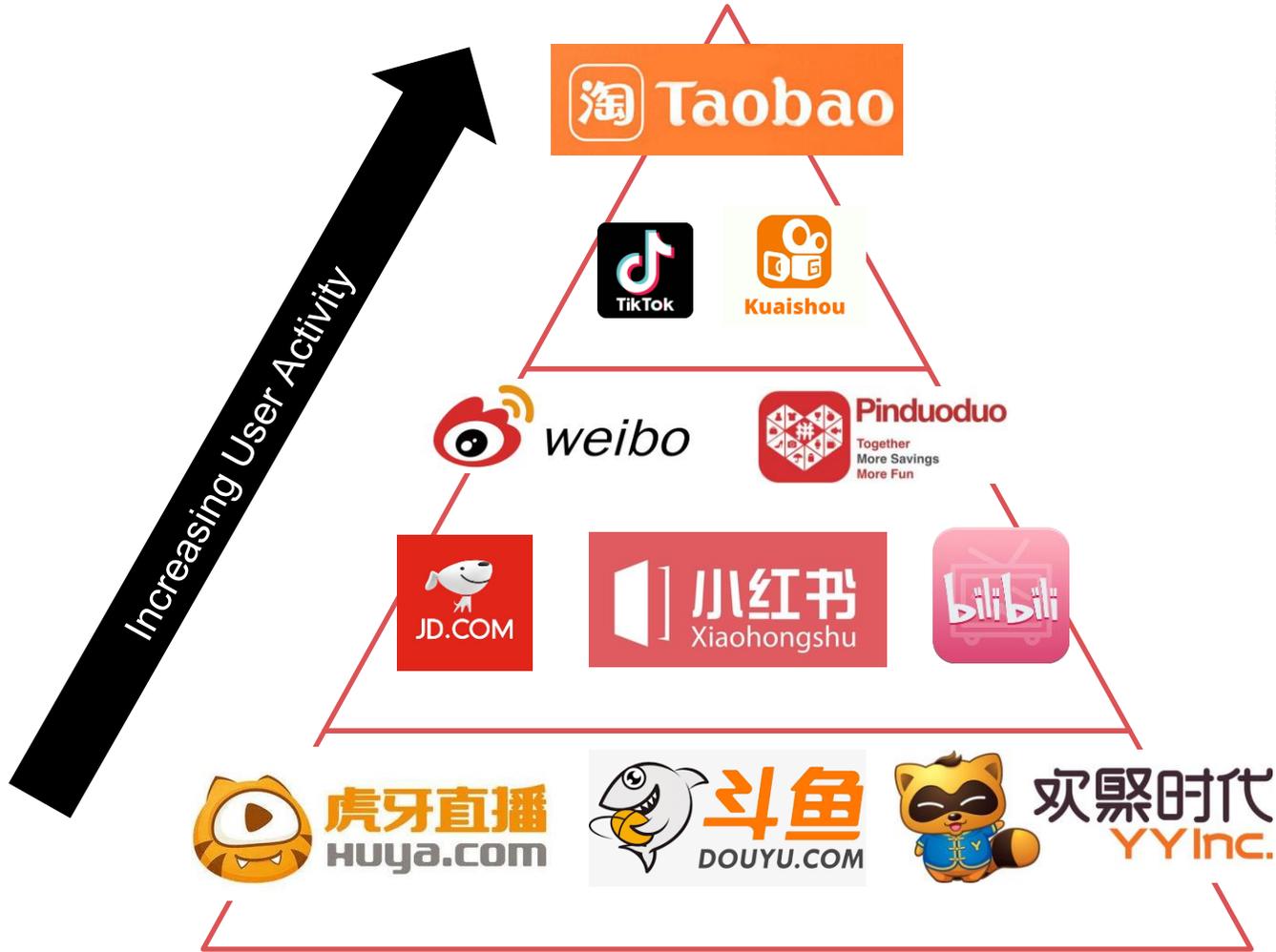


Live Streaming Platforms

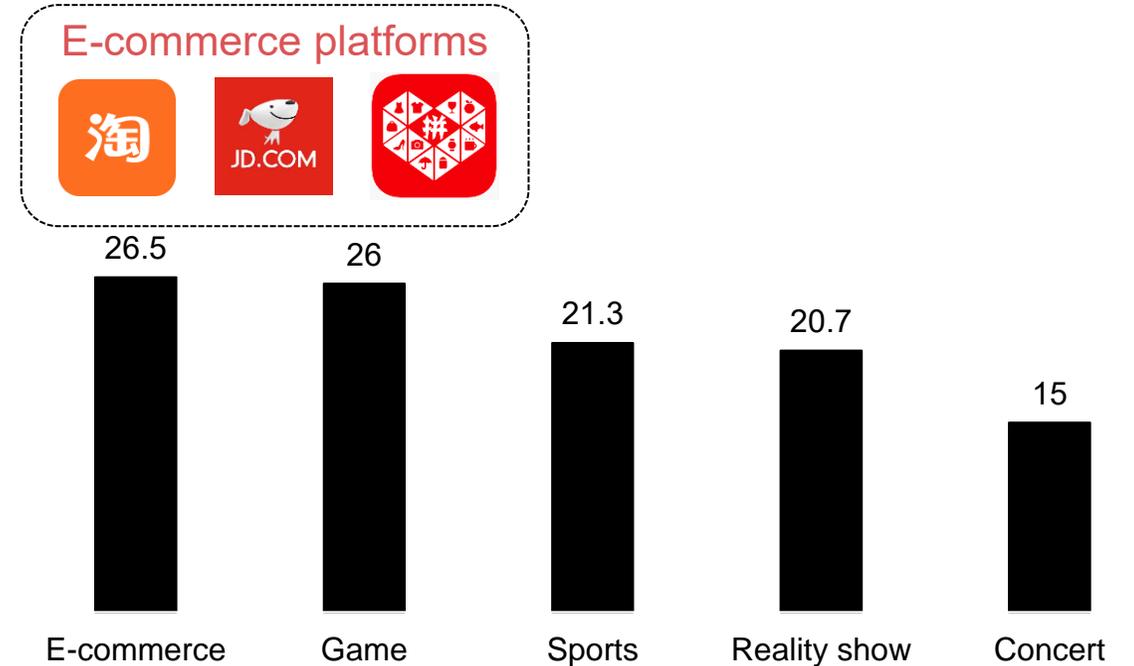
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01 Overview

Live Streaming Platforms



China's top 5 live streaming contents types in 2020Q1
(thousand people)



Chinese live streaming started in the gaming industry in which the user scale of traditional live streams slowed down, e-commerce live streams have the great growth potential and contribute to new changes in the live streaming industry.

*including platforms with built-in livestreaming features and independent ones

02 Brief History

E-commerce Live Streaming

Meilishuo and Mogujie are two Chinese fashion e-commerce firms where users were encouraged to share own insights and product in 2011. Users would get commission returns after being purchased by the content "Amway". Driven by these content-driven shopping guide communities, e-commerce platforms explored new business models in 2016. The early content producers are the predecessors of bringing online celebrities.

Live streaming e-commerce grew rapidly from 2019. Taobao live streaming on Double Eleven Global Shopping Festival in 2019 led to nearly USD 2.8 billion in transactions; Mogujie live streaming accounted for 31.5% of the company's total Gross Merchandise Volume (GMV).



02 Customer Analysis

E-commerce Live Streaming

Ecommerce live streaming is booming in China. In the first half of 2020, over 10 million live broadcast e-commerce took place. On average, there were more than 50,000 e-commerce live broadcasts per day, and 260 million daily viewership.

- Users consist of about 58% of men and 42% of women
- Millennials born in the 80s and 90s accounts for over 80%, 60% viewers are between the ages 31-40.
- Customer segment is dominated by first- and second-tier cities, where second-tier cities account for 42%
- Food and beverage as well as beauty and personal care are two main product types

Users are mostly rational.

Top 3 reasons for purchasing products through e-commerce live streaming in 2020H1



Top 3 reasons for returning products after purchasing in 2020H1



02 Typical Live Streamers

E-commerce Live Streaming

Live streamers broadcast in real time with products or services they are selling on online platforms, building an interactive shopping experience. Viewers can see items in action and get answers instantly. With exclusive limited-number and limited-time offers, they are motivated to purchase immediately from embedded links.

KOLs, celebrities and business people can all be live streamers.

- KOLs (Influencers) are livestream hosts, they have private traffic. They interact with fans to promote products, improving conversion rates.
- Celebrities also join the live streaming in China. They gather popularity faster and help to publicize brands.
- CEOs or salespeople introduce products with depth and professionalism. They can speak with authority in front of the camera, increasing product reliability and customer trust.

02 Customer Live Streaming Platform

E-commerce Live Streaming

KOL host site

KOL

Product display

Comment display

Add comments/questions

Product links

Purchase items



Applied coupons or discounts

02 Two Common Live Streaming Methods

E-commerce Live Streaming



Brands work with popular KOLs and/or celebrities to broadcast live, and use their follower effect to promote sales of goods.



Business people take part in publicity campaigns as product experts, sales by strengthening consumers' trust in product promotion information.

02 Taobao Live

E-commerce Live Streaming

Taobao is a popular online shopping marketplace in China and owned by Alibaba. Its e-commerce live streaming platform with the highest traffic, accounting for 79% of all e-commerce live-streaming transactions.

Platform name	Taobao Live
Live streaming start year	2016
Site traffic	DAU:12 million MAU:75 million
E-commerce GMV	USD 28 billion
Traffic features	Head KOLs receive huge amounts of traffic, forming a scale economies effect
Product type	A variety of product types, beauty/fashion/fashion/jewelry best selling
Top 3 KOLs	Austin (Jiaqi Li) Viya (Ya Wei) Cherie (Xue Li)



02 Taobao Live Streaming Methods

E-commerce Live Streaming

Live streaming methods	Strengths	Weakness	Trends
Finding KOLs to bring goods	Fast results, high conservation rates	High cost, launch risk	Brands used to rely on these two marketing methods.
Participating in PGC contents (Live variety shows)	Content driven traffic,	Require video production professionals	
Self-building live broadcast teams	Brand self-control, low risk	Live streamers management and training	The coronavirus reveals the importance of live streaming, an increasing number of brands begin building own live broadcast teams. Meanwhile, marketing service companies see opportunities in live broadcast operations.
Working with live broadcast operation agencies	Low cost, low effort	Low brand control, strong ROI focus	

03 Brand Live Streams in China

Case Study

Automobile industry



Car sale

Beauty industry



Aurora Essence campaign

Fashion industry



LOUIS VUITTON
Louis Vuitton X
《League of Legends》



Peekaboo Bar campaign

Food and Beverage



Beverage sale

Sport industry



Fan engagement

Tech industry



Home appliances sale

Tourism industry



Tourism products sale



Furong town in Hunan province tourist attraction tickets

03 Ctrip Live Stream (1)

Case Study

The coronavirus threatened China tourism industry and online travel agencies, including Ctrip. In order to accelerate the recovery of travel business and company's performance, Jianzhang Liang (executive chairman of Ctrip) visited Sanya, the capital of Hainan province and hosted live streaming on Ctrip platform "Boss Live" in March 2020.

He showcased hotel rooms and restaurant packages, attracting over 510,000 viewers, creating hotel sales of



03 Ctrip Live Stream (2)

Case Study

RMB 10 million during the one-hour live stream. With subsequent orders, Liang's first live broadcast sold a total of 20,000 room nights in Atlantis Sanya and 15,000 room nights in Ibonn Apartments, generating RMB 35 million marketing revenue.

This was just a start for Liang's live streaming journey. Two days later, Liang flew from Sanya to Guizhou, resulting in hotel sales of RMB 20 million. Then Ctrip "every Wednesday" live broadcast became a routine.



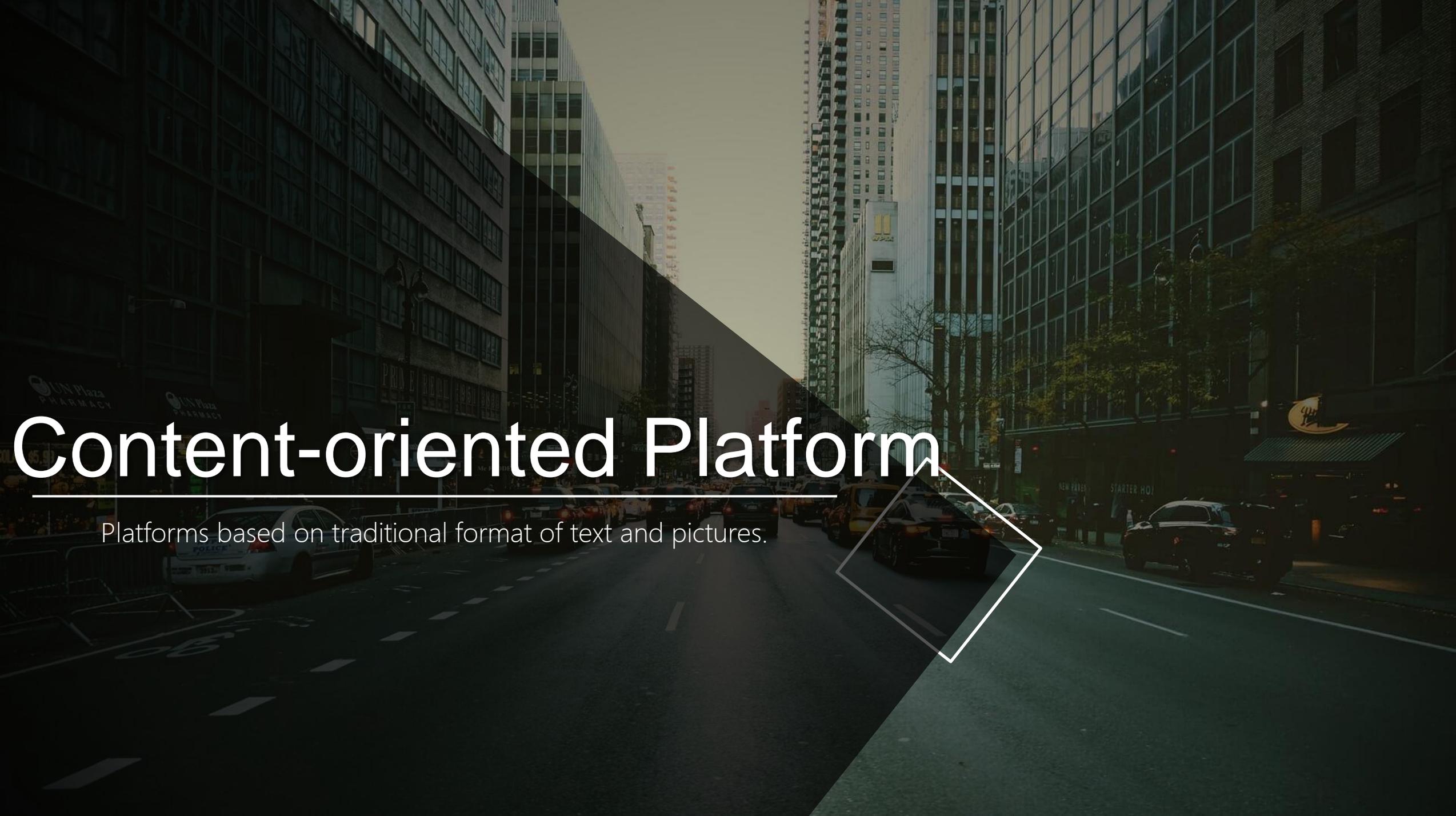
03 Ctrip Live Stream (3)

Case Study

From April to June 2020, the number of live Ctrip viewers increased by 61.72% from 9.77 million to 15.80 million, total GMV increased by 53.26% from 180 million to 277 million in June. On average, Ctrip's popular products were sold for up to 8,000 nights per minute. Liang has completed 24 live broadcast sessions by August 2020.

"Boss Live" is now a popular platform for online travel agencies to promote products. Ctrip also carried out 8 local live broadcasts in Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand and other countries in 2020.





Content-oriented Platform

Platforms based on traditional format of text and pictures.

01

Content-sharing platforms

Advertising based on content namely graphics and texts is a widespread technique used by many companies to present their products, services, and company images, which is an efficient and effective way of content marketing.

To inspire a way for a foreign company to best utilize content-oriented platforms, I will give some suggestions afterward. However, the focus here is not a step-by-step guide to Chinese super-platform since another guidebook has already dealt with it but recommend a shortcut, explain why, and give suggestion on how to advertise on it.

~~Content-oriented platform~~

A comprehensive introduction to Chinese platform can be found here: <https://kawo.com/en/ultimate-intro-china/>



02

Comparison between Zhihu and Little Red Book

Indeed, there are two leading platforms in content sharing but the question here is which of them can finally win the title of “shortcut” .

Content-oriented platform

2.1 What are they

(1) Zhihu

Zhihu (知乎) launched in 2011 backed by multiple investors of ByteDance, Baidu, and Tencent is a Q&A community. In 2019, the monthly active user has reached the number of 34 million and remains increased. Zhihu provides marketing opportunities mainly through Q&A campaigns where the brand can answer a question related to its range, product, and service, therefore, it shares some features with Quora. Zhihu is characterized as a highly professional and credible platform for Chinese netizens to acquire expert insight and knowledge.



1. A more detailed introduction to Zhihu can be found on: <https://www.dragonsocial.net/blog/zhihu-marketing-guide/>

2. Source form KAWO

(2) Little Red Book



Little Red Book (小红书) launched in 2011 belonging to Tencent, is a UGC App based at Shanghai, China, and target urban female in post-95s. By now, the active monthly user is over 85 million . It intentionally builds a highly-engaged community of savvy users who research and review products extensively on the app before going shopping and allows users including well-known influencers to post and share product reviews, travel blogs, lifestyle stories, among others, via short videos and photos. Besides, it encourages and rewards high-quality content posts and videos and emphasizes “authenticity” . It also offers a premium user experience by using a recommendation algorithm to create a customized homepage based on users’ browsing and searching history. As a result, it has successfully attracted a large number of highly loyal users, which is good news for brands looking to advertise there.

This platform harbours two main functions, the feed page and an in-app store page. Therefore, it means Little Red Book is not only a place for advertising but also for ecommerce. However, I will not discuss the ecommerce perspective here because it is more suitable for retailers rather than service sector and the focus in this part is about brand advertising.

Detailed introductions to Little Red Book can be found here:

<https://daxueconsulting.com/latest-facts-and-insights-about-xiaohongshu/>

<https://melchers-china.com/explaining-little-red-book-and-its-market-potential-for-premium-brands/>

Source from ZP online survey and KAWO

PHOTO FROM
PIXABAY





PHOTO FROM PIXABAY



2.2 What is the difference?

Generally speaking, Zhihu is more a comprehensive Q&A community with the main purpose to ask and answer questions based on knowledge, while little Red Book concentrates on authentic experiences and reviews. Following are couples of further comparisons between Zhihu and Little Red Book from the perspectives of 1) how to get a recommendation, 2) content generator, 3) the main feature of demographics, 4) function, 5) community atmosphere, through which the main features of each platform will be unveiled.

(1) Function

Content-oriented platform



Zhihu: knowledge acquisition platform/
O&A community

Little Red Book: shopping guide/
product testing and sharing platform



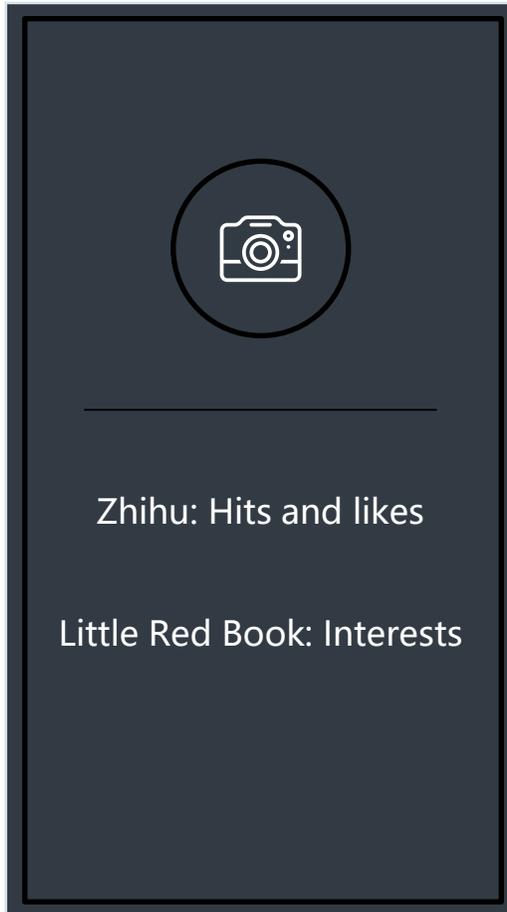
The picture on the left is the homepage of Zhihu listing some questions such as the opinion towards the relations between Harmony OS and Android, and a new insight in cancer treatment by curbing the transfer of mitochondrion.

Another on the right mentions the technique for making sauced ducks, the recommendations to fruit stores at PDD, and so forth. Regarding the survey conducted by ZP, around 50% of people reported that they use this platform to acquire information about the newest product or service.

Source form ZP online survey

(2) How to get recommendation

Content-oriented platform



推荐 国家主席习近平发表二〇二一年新年贺词

- 1 听完国家主席习近平发表的2021年新年贺词，你有怎样的感触？对于自己的2021年有什么期待？
2928万热度
- 2 你会在12月31号发什么跨年文案？
1714万热度
- 3 如何评价CODM使命战场限时活动？
1703万热度 大咖提问
- 4 国家卫健委称新冠疫苗为全民免费提供，这一成本会有多大？你想去打疫苗吗？
1692万热度

重庆平价西餐王者 奶油意面好吃到哭 1115

自学日语最好的学习顺序 值得拥有 852

8.2 晚餐 | 一人食 2106

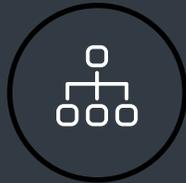
装仙女太累了 3.4万

The blue and orange rectangular in the screenshot of Zhihu and Little Red Book highlight the number of likes and hits of each platform. According to these numbers, it is clear that the content is ranked from the highest to the lowest level which, to some extent, decides the visibility of the post.

However, when it comes to Little Red Book, content prioritised in a feed more by activities customized via the algorithm. For example, the screenshots are taken based on my browsing and searching history so the first two posts about food recommendation and Japanese learning are placed at the top though they only have around 1000 likes, while the least interested one about makeup is at the right bottom despite more than 300000 likes.

(3) Content generator

Content-oriented platform



Zhihu: mainly high quality
insight of experts and
professionals

Little Red Book: average
people

徐斌
基础信息
他的徽章
上海秦兵律师事务所 主任律师
房地产、法学、法律等 4 个话题下的 优秀回答者
550,196 赞同 · 82,474 喜欢 · 245,955 收藏 · 56 专业认可
现居北京, 曾在上海住过
从事 法律 行业
个人认证
法律盐究员
上海秦兵律师事务所 主任律师

Nordenbox
基础信息
他的徽章
电影制作、电影、影视评论等 3 个话题下的 优秀回答者
379,588 赞同 · 75,030 喜欢 · 201,697 收藏 · 2 专业认可
编辑推荐、知乎圆桌、知乎周刊和知乎日报收录 73 个回答、4 篇文章
现居北京
从事 创意艺术 行业
职业经历
知乎公共领域编辑计划 · 志愿者
中航工业 · 顾问
教育经历
北京电影学院 · 导演系

云雨天涯
好好生活 慢慢相遇~
90后仙女独居 一人一猫下班日常
抱歉私信不回 请评论区留言...更多
74 关注 89 万 粉丝 21.6 万 获赞与收藏
Ta 的瞬间 龙粉打卡 携程打卡

文化者
贫民窟女孩
欢迎来到李同学 快乐的朋友圈
我的女孩们 一定要有光有梦有
2491299071@qq.com
2 关注 24.0 万 粉丝 66.3 万 获赞与收藏
发消息

笔记 收藏

vlog独居女孩的下班时间 · 2020年的最...
贫民窟女孩值得拥有的百元欧美潮牌包包
拼多多那些隐藏很深的小店第106集

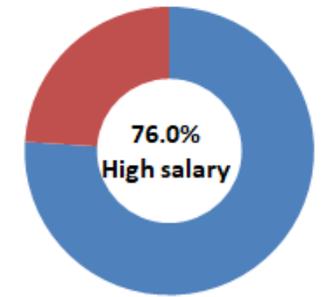
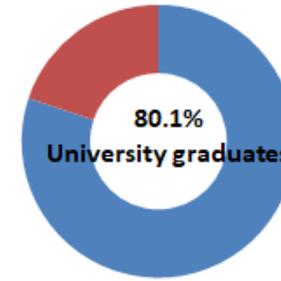
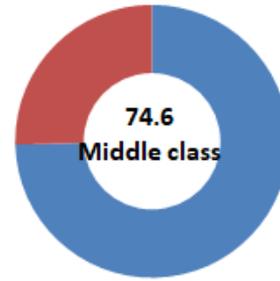
The first two profiles are taken from Zhihu, demonstrating the personal information of two popular content generators from the domain of law and art representatively. Both of them are experts in their field.

While the influencers on Little Red Book with almost 90k and 240k followers are average people sharing their lifestyles and recommended items at the stores.

(4) Demographics

Content-oriented platform

Zhihu



The charts illuminate 80.1% of users are university graduates; 74.6% are middle-class people and 76.0% users in Zhihu are with relatively high salaries. In general, they are wealthy, well-educated, and intelligent.

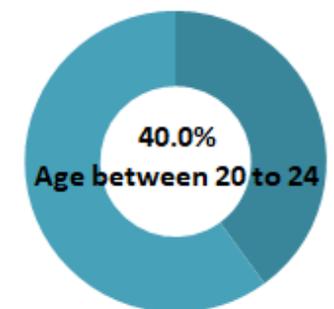
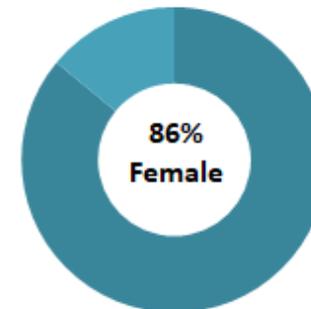
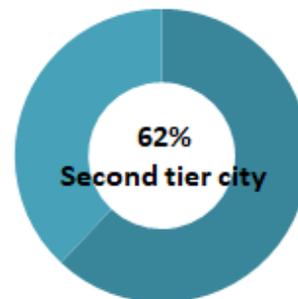
The second row of charts shows that 62% of Little Red Book users are from second-tier city, 86% are female, and 40% of them are of the age of 20 to 24 . That means the latter is ideal for companies targeting young and female consumer groups.



Zhihu: well-educated users with decent job

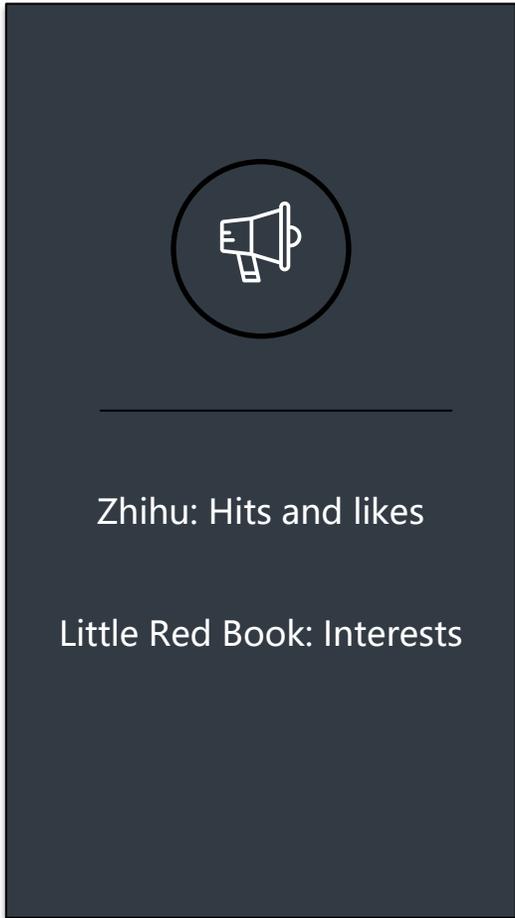
Little Red Book: young female in second tier cities.

Little Red Book



(5) Community atmosphere

Content-oriented platform



The first three pictures are screenshots from Zhihu discussing the quality of a Chinese mobile phone brand—Xiaomi. The content generator himself described the problems of the phone according to his experience with some explanations to the properties of the products while the most liked comment below is mainly disagreement based on a systematic analysis of the hardwires of Xiaomi, highlighting the advantages of it. On the opposite, it resonates with other users and gets more than 1 thousand likes when the almost identical content is posted on Red Little Book (last two pictures). Users in the latter platform take it as precious advice.



Throughout the comparison from five perspectives, the features of the two platforms are clear. Understandably, Zhihu harbors more than 34 million monthly active users who are appealing to foreign companies that desperately need visibility, however, they need to think twice before making the final decision because of the debatable environment and user portrait. Imagine that, persuading a group of critical people with professional knowledge to purchase their services would be much harder. What needs to be clarified here is that there is no means to say Zhihu is not suitable for advertising or even intimidating for companies because of fierce debates, but it could not be seen as a shortcut. In this sense, Little Red Book is more appropriate for newcomer overseas as long as the service quality is guaranteed thanks to the friendly environment, and the huge buying potential of users (62% tier two cities). What is more, the majority of content producers in Little Red Book as average people also mean the openness of this platform.

Apart from the comparison above, Zp has done a throughout survey over 8 platforms including Wechat and Weibo to find out which platform is the best to not only introduce a brand new product or service to customers but also successfully stimulate their desire to purchase. The result shows that Little Red Book lies at the top with 67% of participants reported they bought an item after seeing relevant information on it.

The advantages of using Little Red Book have been analyzed through comparisons, however many foreign firms still know little about how to advertise on this shortcut. Thus, in the next section, I will give some useful suggestions for utilization.



03

How to advertise on Little Red Book

As a shortcut for foreign companies to enter Chinese market.

In little Red Book, there are several common ways that companies normally use to make them be exposed to customers and promote their brands. Nearly all of them are suitable for business in various sectors.

Cotent-oriented platform

3.1 Types of ads

Content-oriented platform

1) In-feed ads

In-feed ads in Little Red Book normally are placed between the content of a user's feed but not at the position at the beginning or end. Because it is not intrusive to break the user's flow and always highly customizable, it is widely used on Little Red Book.

3) KOL recommendation

Key opinion leader (KOL) is comparable to Western influencer. Both of them build trust with their community and promote products on social media. However, KOLs are experts in their domain and brands use this expertise to show their product's value and inspire customer trust. In this sense, KOLs are not only help to boost trust through professional views but also engage consumers with creative posts. By now, many brands in Little Red Book have realized and utilized the power of KOL recommendation as proof of quality.



2) Celebrity endorsement

One of the advantages of using the Little Red Book is the inner cooperation with celebrities, which means the enormous fan base can help an unknown company to get visibility quickly and widely. Besides, for those big fans of the celebrity, a certain degree of product or service premium is acceptable. This is probably good news for foreign companies who are going to try some trial-and-errors so that to set an appropriate pricing policy.

4) KOC recommendation

One of the unique features of Little Red Book is the popularity of posts produced by KOC (key opinion consumer). Despite the professional insights and advice, authenticity is highlighted even more. Peers leave their comments after purchasing service in the form of posts to share their feeling, therefore is complying with the core concept of the platform as authentic. According to the online ZP analysis, participants regard the KOC as the most reliable one compared to celebrity and KOL. It thus recommended for a company to have batches of KOCs no matter how many followers they have but concentrate on building authenticity.

5) Notes advertising

A note is almost the most important way to advertising in Little Red Book. It is of the same function as a post on Facebook and Instagram, being a potent technique for the UGC community through which information is viewed and shared. A note is also one of the best ways to get visibility on this platform, unlike Instagram where the content mostly is shared with the followers, users in Little Red Book see customized notes produced by a random person just like in-feed ads but free of charge. Therefore, for companies with a tight budget, this is an ideal way to promoting their brands and get more visibility. The process of creating a note is as simple as a post on Instagram but remember to add some stickers and appropriate hashtags to make your note more attractive.

Step-by-step guide to create a note

1. All photoes
2. 1/1 Next
 - 1. Stay away from him. 别靠近他。
 - 2. Don't get high hat. 别摆架子。
 - 3. Right over there. 就在那里。
 - 4. Doggy bag. 打包袋。
 - 5. That rings a bell. 听起来耳熟。
 - 6. Sleeping on both ears. 睡的香。
 - 7. Play hot. 点击图片任意位置添加标签
3. 填写标题会有更多赞哦~
 - 添加正文
 - Hashtag
 - Add location 标记位置让更多人看到
 - 保存到相册
4. 搜索更多话题 cancel
 - 推荐
 - Vlog
 - 美食
 - 旅行
 - # 笔记本电脑推荐
 - # 笔记本攻略
 - # 好用电脑推荐
 - # 台式机推荐
 - # 不同发色的眉笔选择
 - # 新手必备画眉神器
 - # 自然又显色的眉粉
 - # 2019 我的数码好物
 - # 平价双头眉笔测评
 - # Macbook Pro2018



茶百道点单攻略 🍵 这杯喝100次都不腻!
茶百道推荐 | 豆乳玉麒麟 | 奶茶攻略 | 茶百道攻略
😂 每次去茶百道都要点这杯!!
喝了无数次终于记得拍照, 我决定公开!

3.2 Tips

However, when firms are advertising with insufficient knowledge of users' habit of using Little Red Book, it is all too easy to disappoint them through long and narrative ads. Here I will give some recommendations for the companies especially those who want to market by producing a mass of notes.

pdd水果篇 - 不踩雷

◆[灵仙水果生鲜旗舰店]: 超级喜欢吃脆柿, 之前在某宝买了一箱吃完了。现在pdd5.5斤脆柿子中果12.9元, 个头较大, 脆甜脆甜。

◆[城市果农生鲜]: 5斤西红柿🍅小果13.5元, 卖家保护蔬果有点欠缺。收到货烂了3个, 箱子都湿透了, 坏果包赔, 比较新鲜, 整体还不错。

◆[皮蛋献果官方旗舰店]: 5斤青苹果🍏, 领个优惠券8元不到。我买的小果, 收到的苹果都挺大个的, 良心商家。没有一个坏果, 都是酸酸甜甜的味道, 很好吃。一共9个果子, 我吃了10天左右, 保存时间也比较长。

◆[王小姐的农家水果店]: 5斤蜜桃🍑小果13.7元, 还是顺丰包邮, 收到的都是很新鲜的脆桃。比较小, 一次吃两个才过瘾哈哈, 减肥的人买

(1) straightforward

rather than detailed

It is all too easy for a foreign company to mistakenly give a long article of detailed introduction to their brands. The intention behind this condition is understandable because as newcomers, they eager to let customers know what they are doing, and what their business is about.

Nevertheless, majorities of people in Little Red Book are highly purposive to search information such as “the most renowned consultancy company” or “tourism agency”. What the users looking forward to seeing on the posts are straightforward bullet points with respect to price, staff's attitude, working efficiency and etc. The more proper way is to add a link at the bottom of your note or comment below telling your viewers to go there to get further information.

Content-oriented platform

3.2 Tips

Content-oriented platform



(2) Interactive

rather than narrative

Another common mistake is the neglect of interaction with people. In many notes, creators are aware of the authenticity requirements so express their own feelings in the format of storytelling but this means the scarcity of engagement from other people. A perfect note should both stimulate the purchasing desire of customers and tap the potential of others. An example here is the gifts prepared for people who actively shared the post within a particular time period.

The interaction also needs to build a friendly long-term relationship with followers. Therefore, the importance of the comment section should be highlighted. Chatting with people commented below may make them feel valued and sense respect. In return, they are more willing to trust the service advertised.

3.2 Tips

Content-oriented platform



(3) Soft sell

rather than hard

In advertising, a soft sell is an advertisement or campaign that uses a more subtle, casual, or friendly sales message. This approach is the opposite of a hard sell. An example would be that we might see people consuming a soft drink rather than talking about it. The emphasis is on telling a story and setting a mood. According to the user's habit of searching authentic content, notes should be more "soft" or "hidden" to make them feel it's a sharing rather than an advertisement. Nevertheless, links to the official website of a firm, contact method, and so on should be provided. The common ways of doing this are to put the link on the comment sector and add the company or store information to the picture next to your demonstration of a product or whatever. Indeed, adding that information to the body is nothing wrong, remember to clarify in the end that this is only a recommendation based on personal experience no matter what your real purpose is.

3.2 Tips

Content-oriented platform

4) Texts and pics rather than videos

In little Red Book, there are two different forms in notes, one is video, another based on traditional texts and pictures. A common misconception is that firms should use as many short videos as possible to advertise because it is more convenient for a product demonstration. However, there is a conducted survey proved more users incline to read the text and picture-based content because they are far more straightforward and much easier to read through with little time cost.

5) Multiple exposures

A better tactic to exert the potential of marketing is the combination of celebrity, KOL, and KOC to comprehensively understand the service itself from the basic information of company base, ranges, service to after-sales service evaluation. In this way, the benefits of all three methods in terms of visibility, expertise, and reliability are exaggerated. Apart from this, if the recommendation of a particular brand or service is mentioned several times, it is likely to build a network in which a unique UGC atmosphere and sense of belonging are generated. As a result, the service may become popular or go viral with the help of a huge fan base and various interactive activities holding among those creators.

6) Service positioning

What needs to be born in mind is that marketing is expected to be more precise and ally with the service positioning. For example, a logistic company mainly targeted to e-commerce stores can cooperate with KOC who is an online shopper familiar with express delivery. This precision will reinforce its positioning strategy and is easier to persuade potential clients.



3.3 Important links

Content-oriented platform



1. Little Red Book URL address

This is the official website of Little Red Book.
<https://www.xiaohongshu.com/?language=zh-CN>



2. Registration and cost

Following link answers the question of 1) how to create an official account? 2) how much it costs? and there are some detailed guides.
<https://www.hicom-asia.com/little-red-book-guide/>



3. Official account platform

This URL link is the address where a company can register or log into their official account. An official business account is also the first step for any company who needs further business cooperation and promotion in this platform.
<https://business.xiaohongshu.com/ares/login>



4. Business cooperation page

Here companies are able to get quotation of ads, contact to all-domain content creators, and have a throughout analysis of firms' performance after cooperation.
<https://www.xiaohongshu.com/brand>
(This page will only be shown in Chinese language)

A black and white photograph of several people in business attire leaning over a table, examining various charts and documents. The scene is dimly lit, with the primary light source highlighting the documents and the hands of the participants. The background is a brick wall. A large white diagonal shape cuts across the right side of the image, containing a red rectangular box with white text.

Case Studies - How international brands utilize social media marketing in China

Along with the analysis presented, here we provide two case studies including business from varying sectors to demonstrate techniques that would support overarching brand goals with sustained social-media efforts.

Demola Challenge



Retail

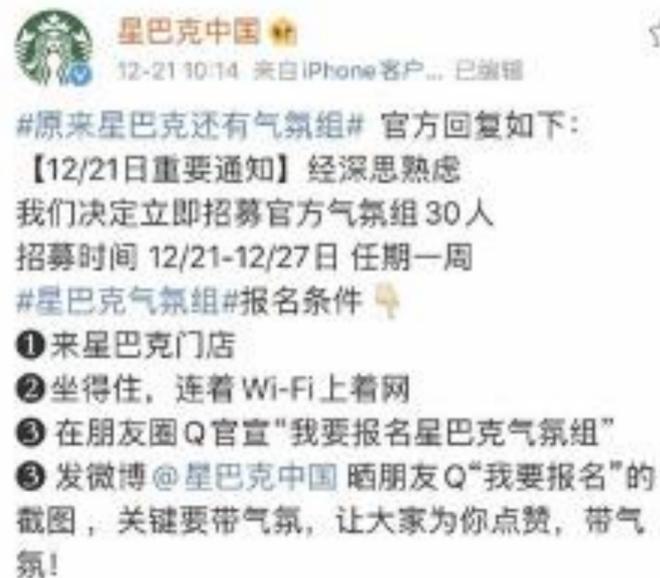
Starbucks

A multinational chain that adopts highly localized marketing methods through community building across all of its social-media efforts.

Localized marketing strategy

- An example - How to catch up with what's new in the Chinese market

A thread discussing people holding PCs and working in Starbucks went viral recently in Chinese social media, vividly calling them atmosphere promoter for the brand. Right away, Starbucks announced to officially “recruit” for this role – asking customer to take pictures of themselves doing business in the store along the hashtag and those most upvotes will be conferred the title.



Notice that this is a very prompt media marketing response as the campaign comes out within hours of the discussion thread. It not only shows the efforts Starbucks puts in marketing in China, but also echoes with its own advantage over other coffee brands – providing a comfortable talking place for customers.

Strategic partnership

Starbucks is in deep partnership with WeChat in launching its mini program function, where customers can order and pay directly through a daily social media. This is a great strategy to promote as people can order right away when they are communicating, working, or commuting.

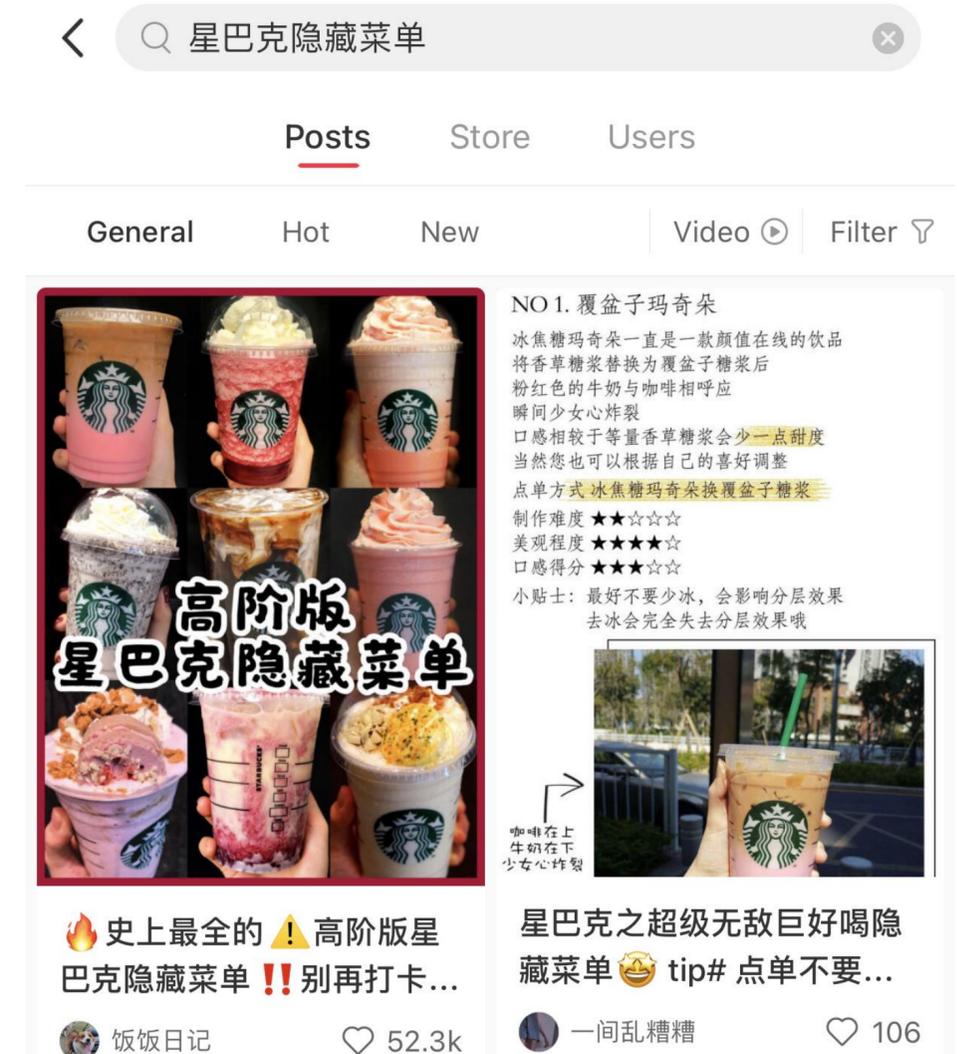


Utilize KOLs – from online to offline



Presence will not last only on digital world, how to translate into physical “must-try” icon is another strategy that Starbucks well noticed. When the first Starbucks Reserve Store opens in Shanghai, there pops up a huge number of posts in Little Red Book where KOLs posting their trip to the store – translating nearly 3 hour queue for the first few months.

Moreover, many KOLs in Little Red Book also post “hidden order options” in Starbucks, another tactics to translate online influence into real-offline buying power.



Bet on western cliches



China isn't known for celebrating Christmas but Starbucks made the marketing move to associate this festivity with American culture, and it seems to work well so far.

Even though tradition plays a really important role, Chinese consumers are more and more interested in Western culture, and this shows in their consumption habits. Starbucks doesn't communicate much about Christmas on its English website; it's different in China, where they use many Christmas-centered slogans.





Service

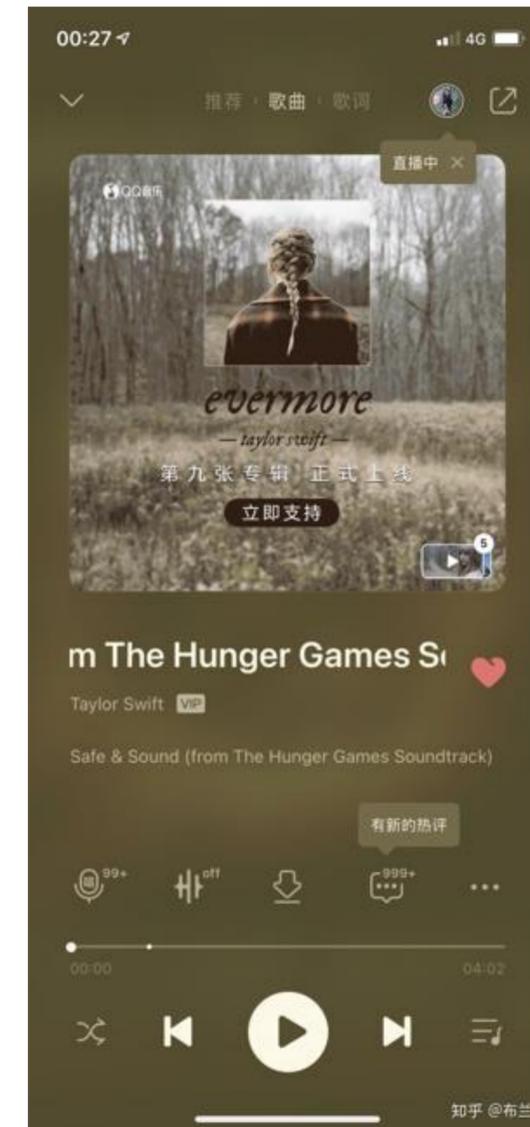
Apple Music

Though finding its road a bit harder than the retail brands, as the Chinese service market has largely been plugged with Chinese startups over the past decades, Apple Music finds its own niche.

Distinguish from local providers

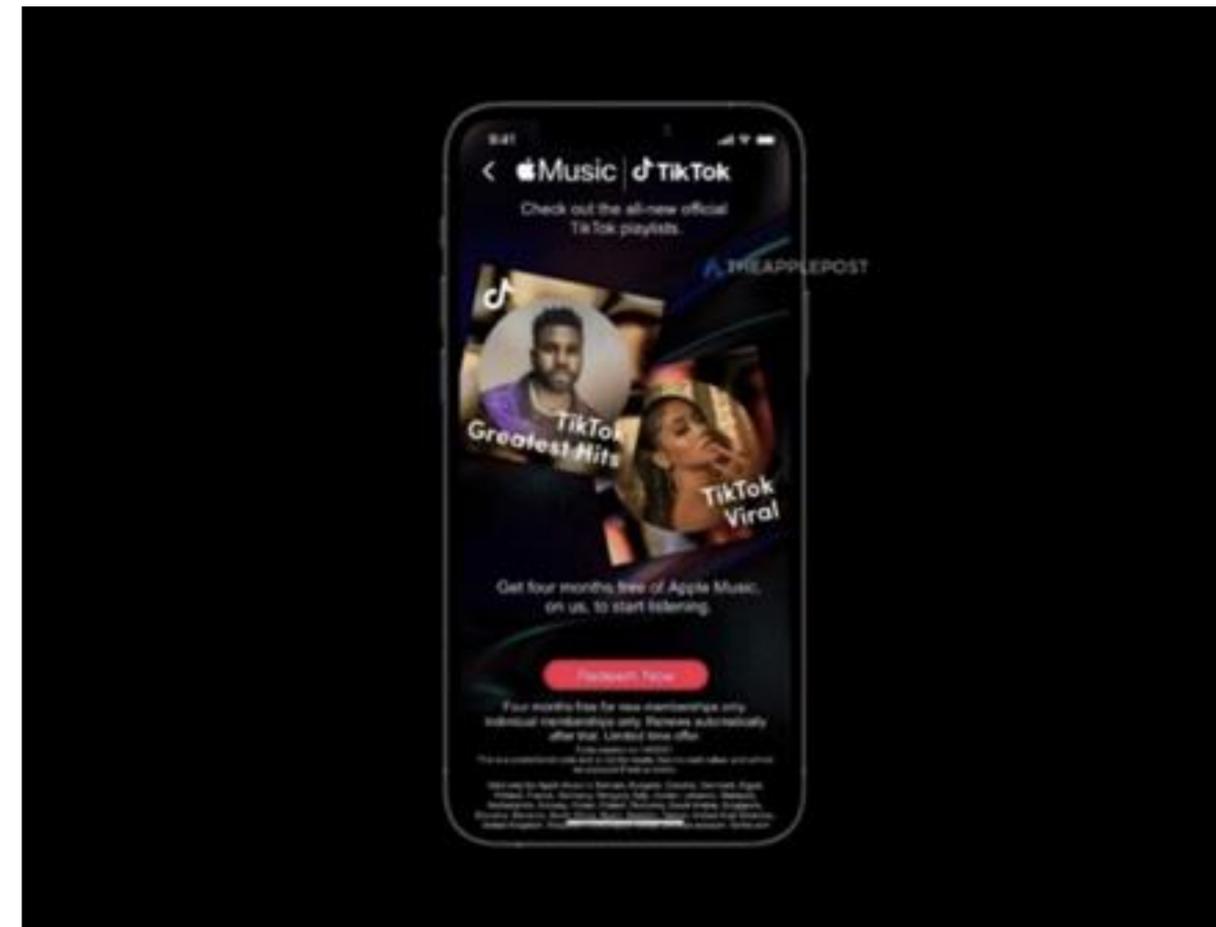
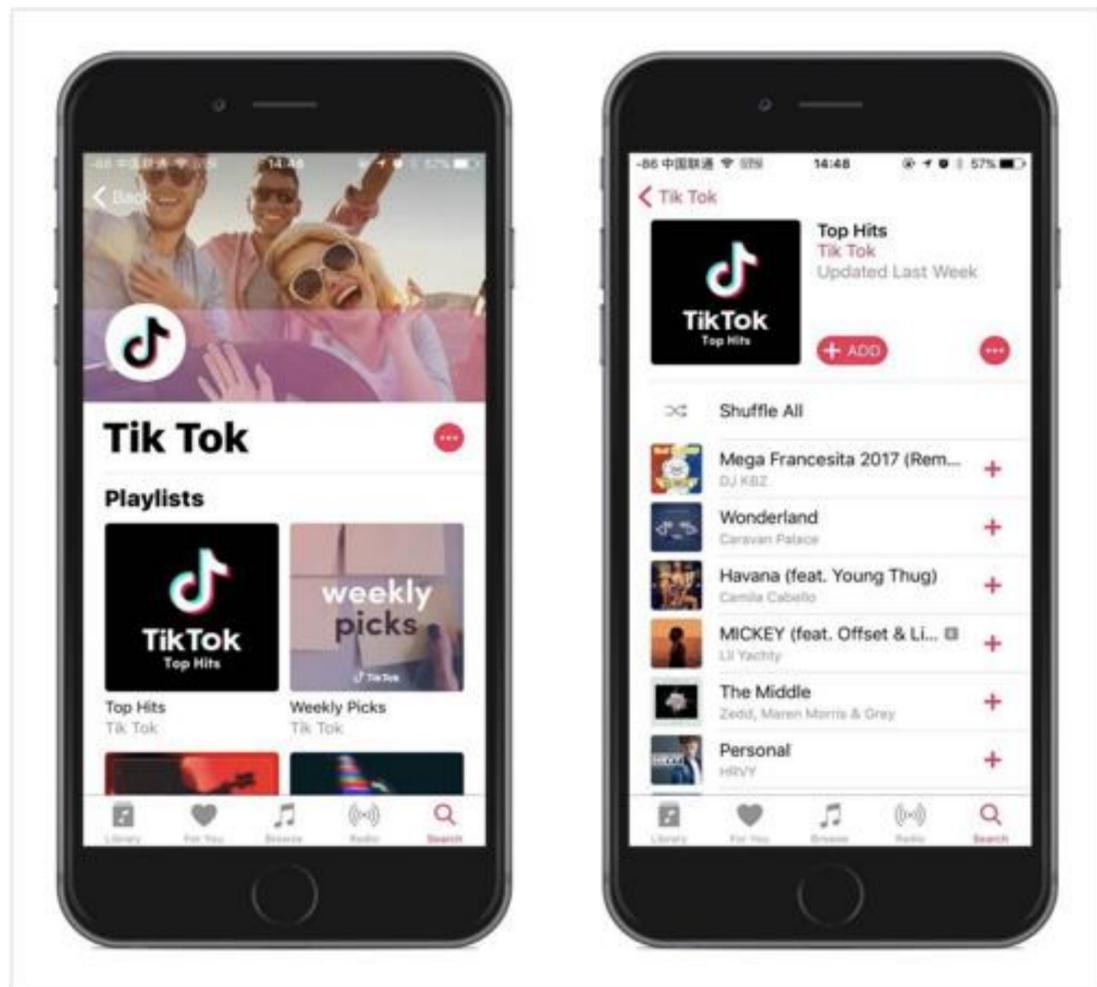
Packed with QQ Music, NetEase Music, Xiami Music, Apple Music did struggle to gain its market share when first launched in 2015.

However, till today, there are several features that distinguish Apple Music from other music provider. By sticking with the simplicity credo Apple holds all the time, Apple Music eliminates social features that permeate other Chinese music provider. Another one-of-a-kind feature for Apple Music is its clear list of different genres, which really caters real music savvies.



Strategic liasion

As short videos in TikTok went viral during the pandemic, Apple Music becomes the leading one to recognize the trend by presenting a TikTok “Viral Hits” playlist on its landing page.

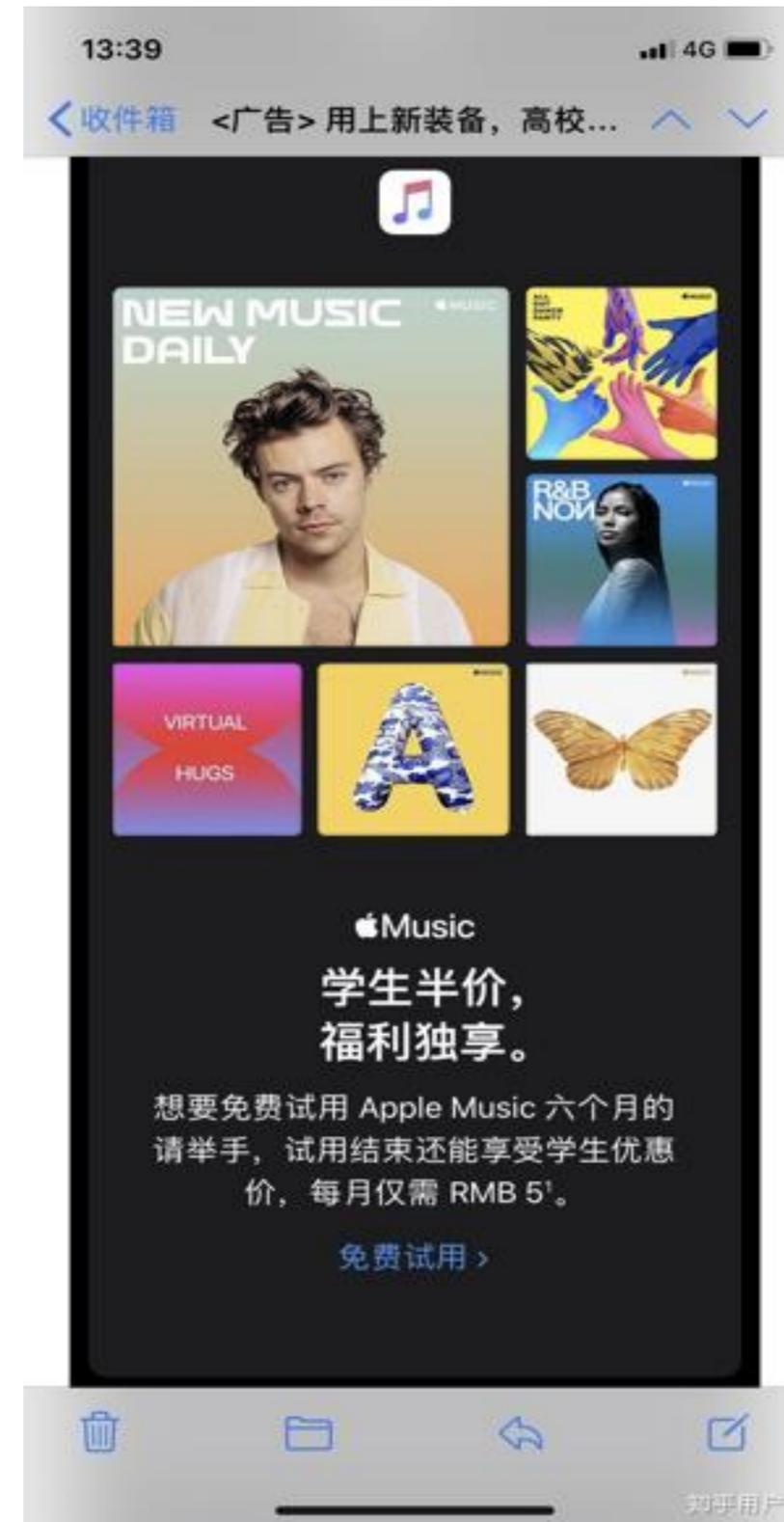


Moreover, TikTok users would see “play with Apple Music” button to enjoy the high quality tape when scrolling down short videos. Last but not least, those who subscribe Apple Music from TikTok page have the privilege of an extended 4-month free trial, which further consolidates the shared user group.

Clearly Targeted promotion

Unlike other music service providers that do not differentiate subscribers, Apple Music offers a great deal for those who are still in college – 5rmb per month to get full access to the storage. Also, it provide group subscription - not found in other platforms - which attracts families and close friends.

However, as such promotion code is sent via iCloud emails or only presented on its own Apple webpage, the marketing efficiency is question-marked. The corporation may consider making a larger presence on other trending social media webpages.



THANKS