

Ice Cream Houses - China - February 2013

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“There is unmet demand for better-for-you ice cream products, with consumers wanting to strike a balance between health and indulgence when they consume ice cream. Ice cream houses could tap into this segment by actively offering and promoting their better-for-you ice cream products or alternatives. ”

– Lui Meng Chow – Research Analyst

In this report we answer the key questions:

- What has been the effect of the emergence of cafés, fast food and modern oriental (traditional) dessert houses?
- How can ice cream house entice more consumers despite the fierce competition with foodservice outlets?
- Is the emergence of more fusion food in the wider catering market beginning to influence ice cream houses' menu and flavour?
- How does the operator balance health and indulgence to target their consumers?

Despite the historic lack of dairy products in the Chinese diet, demand has been emerging from the growing population that has been newly exposed to Western dairy-based foods. The ice cream house sector is not new in China, with foreign ice cream foodservice outlets appearing in the country as early as the late 1980s to early 1990s, however it only expanded rapidly in the mid-2000s when China was hosting various international events.

As China's economy is growing rapidly, lower tier cities too are increasingly benefiting from the market's growth, with more consumers starting to be exposed to the ice cream parlour culture. Meanwhile, rising average incomes, greater numbers of middle class consumers and the spreading influence of Western trends mean that Chinese consumers are becoming more willing to indulge in varieties of ice cream with exotic flavours, as well as innovative ice cream products. Meanwhile, in wealthier cities, consumers who are stressed through work are increasingly willing to pay for premium treats and a cosy environment.

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