

Social and Media Networks - China - May 2016

Report Price: £2463.80 | \$3990.00 | €3129.79

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“China’s consumers are actively using social and media networks. To accurately reach target consumers, online interest communities can be effective market communication channels. Public accounts of opinion leaders may help brands to boost awareness, and offering promotions via public accounts may boost consumer engagement.”

– Terra Xu, Senior Research Analyst

This report looks at the following areas:

- Leveraging the power of opinion leaders
- How can brands use their public accounts?
- Marketing via online interest communities

Social and media networks have become an essential part of Chinese consumers’ daily lives. Key players such as QQ, WeChat, Qzone and Weibo continue to dominate the market, and their growth is expected to continue.

However, Chinese consumers are also willing to join online interest communities, where they can obtain information and interact with other people who share similar interests. Communicating via these online communities can be a better way to reach specific consumer groups.

Via public accounts, companies and brands can effectively boost their brand awareness, and offering promotions can drive engagement. They should offer trustworthy information about products or brands instead of simple advertisements, so as to enhance brands’ credibility.

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This report is part of a series of reports, produced to provide you with a more holistic view of this market

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Promotions can draw consumers' attention, and consumers can help extend the influence of public accounts

Figure 7: Activities via Weibo/WeChat public accounts, January 2016

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Consumers are open to advertisements posted by celebrities

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Leveraging the power of opinion leaders

The facts

The implications

How can brands use their public accounts?

The facts

The implications

Marketing via online interest communities

The facts

The implications

Market Trends – What You Need to Know

Internet users in China are increasing steadily, and smartphones are the major devices to access social and media networks

Live streaming shows potential as a channel for marketing communication

Opportunities to communicate via online interest communities

Market Trends

Internet users in China increasing steadily

Figure 10: Internet users and year-on-year growth in China, 2008-15

Smartphones are the major devices to access social networks

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The development of connectivity ensures the growth of social and media networks

Live streaming shows potential for marketing communication

Opportunities to communicate via online interest communities

Key Players – What You Need to Know

Tencent continues to dominate the social networks

Sina Weibo helps companies and brands to expand their influence

Baidu Tieba sees fast growth, yet should be cautious so as to maintain credibility

Momo faces a challenge of lapsing users

Douban should maintain its uniqueness

Integrating social/media networks and traditional leisure and entertainment activities

Popular apps carrying out innovative campaigns to boost user engagement

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Social networks targeting niche communities

Key Players

Interest-related features and money transaction help to drive engagement for QQ

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Figure 13: Monthly active users of Ozone, December 2013-15

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Sina Weibo helps companies and brands to expand their influence

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Baidu Tieba sees fast growth in 2015

Momo faces a challenge of lapsing users

Douban should maintain its uniqueness

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More involvement, more interactions

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Using bullet screen in market communications

Innovation to boost user engagement

WeChat Moments launched one-day-only Red Packet posts

Collecting Lucky Cards on Alipay

Social networks targeting niche communities

Social mobile app targeting LGBT societies

Hotline for strangers

The Consumer – What You Need to Know

Tencent continues to dominate, and most of the consumers are heavy social and media network users

Consumers are willing to join online interest communities, and shopping is the most popular type

Besides interacting with friends, shopping becomes popular on social and media networks

Social and media networks have become information sources

Consumers' preference for public accounts varies on WeChat and Weibo, while news is popular on both platforms

Public accounts help to drive awareness, and promotions can draw consumers' attention

Consumers help to extend the influence of public accounts

Promotions drive engagement for public accounts, and expert opinions are also important

Advertisements via public accounts do not necessarily boost credibility

Mintropolitans are more enthusiastic about online interest communities

Usage of Social and Media Networks

Tencent continues to dominate social and media networks

Figure 16: Penetration of leading social and media networks, January 2016 and 2015

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Douban faces a challenge to maintain user loyalty and attract new users

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LinkedIn faces the challenge to develop unique characteristics

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Social and media networks have become information sources

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Activities via Public Accounts

Promotions can draw consumers' attention to public accounts

Public accounts help to drive awareness

Consumers help to extend the influence of public accounts

Figure 29: Activities via Weibo/WeChat public accounts, January 2016

Public accounts attract followers to attend online rather than offline activities

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Promotion can drive engagement of public accounts

Expert opinions are also important

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