

Marketing to the Middle Classes - China - June 2013

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“In order to understand middle class needs and aspirations, companies need to understand their behaviour, demographic and socio-economic profile, and how these impact on their lifestyles, social positions and future plans.”

– Lui Meng Chow, Research Analyst

In this report we answer the key questions:

- What are the different middle class segments, what are their priorities and what are they looking for?
- What is the best way of mixing Western and Chinese products and branding in order to target the middle class?
- How much of a role does status and conspicuous consumption play in middle class spending habits?
- How can companies target those who are belt tightening but also who would like products and services that offer a compromise with price, quality and brand?
- What are the Chinese middle classes doing to improve their living in terms of happier and healthier lives? What are their key lifestyle aspirations?

Mintel predicts that there will be 35 million middle class households in China by 2015. China's cities are already home to a huge market of increasingly affluent consumers. The market will continue to grow over the coming years, meaning that it is essential to understand China's new middle class and the various transformations ongoing in China in terms of financial reform, global competitiveness, social development and even environmental sustainability.

China's vast area and different levels of regional development also mean middle class consumers cannot be regarded as a single segment. Instead, they represent multiple segments that think differently depending on their socio-economic and demographic profiles. China's Eastern coastal region for example is home to the most affluent consumers, while the Central and Western regions, which are experiencing rapid GDP growth, have a rising number of less affluent but still important middle class consumers. Many multinationals face difficulties in understanding the unique attributes of these different middle class segments.

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