

JWT acquires Always Promotion Network

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JWT's strategy in China is the same now as it always has been. We strive to be, bar none, the most strategically insightful and creatively relevant advertising agency in China. We strongly believe that China is a market with scale, one in which companies can not succeed long-term without strong brand equity – that is, the ability to sustain a price premium over time rooted in consumer loyalty.

We further believe that the distinction between "local brands" and "foreign brands" is misleading. Any product can increase profitability and sales based on international communication standards. As proof, JWT now generates more than 50% of its revenue from Chinese companies. (Current local clients include China Unicom, Metersbonwe, Xue Jing beer, Yili dairy, Konka television as well as many others. Our largest MNC clients include HSBC, Ford, Unilver, the Diamond Trading Company, Nestle, Kraft and Unicharm.) We have achieved this through constantly strengthening our strategic and creative product.

That said, we realize that mass media advertising is only part of the equation. All clients require synergies between their above-the-line advertising and below-the-line tactics. It is critical to develop a unifying idea, one rooted in consumers' fundamental behavior and preference, and extend that idea through different media, right down to the store level, in a manner that triggers short-term sales while reinforcing a consistent brand image. That is why JWT has recently undertaken a variety of diversification initiatives including the establishment of RMG Connect (an interactive design and applications company), the acquisition of New Sun (one of Guangzhou's largest and most respected local agencies) and a strategic alliance with Cohn & Wolfe (one of the leading CONSUMER public relations companies in both America and Europe).

The acquisition of Always is another important step fulfilling JWT's through the line capability. The company, led by Cai Hua, an inspired Beijing University educated entrepreneur, will dramatically expand our ability to activate our clients' creative in practically any supermarket, stadium or shopping centre on the mainland. From roadshows and in-store sampling to promotional initiatives and door-to-door surveys, Always leverages one of the nation's largest promotional network and most expansive specialist communications capabilities. The company's extraordinary efficient network management capability, combined with JWT's gold standard creative product, will represent a uniquely powerful presence on China's communications industry's battlefield.

Always will continue to be independently managed in every area except financial reporting (which must conform to WPP's standards and practices). Furthermore, Cai Hua and his team are consummate business professionals boasting peerless experience and expertise in promotional management. JWT will not "force" Always to work with any JWT client; instead, we will work together to identify jointly beneficial areas of collaboration. (Importantly, Always will also be free to work with any WPP company or any other company for that matter, assuming no client conflict.) We will be tied together not by rigid reporting structures but, instead, a mutual respect for each company's strengths as well as a shared ambition to forge the best possible integrated communications for our clients.