

CONTENT, CONVERSATION & COMMERCE

WPP ON SOCIAL COMMERCE IN CHINA

NOVEMBER 2019

FOREWORD



China's online marketplace has rapidly evolved since the launch of Alibaba's Taobao over a decade ago. Since then, China's consumers in upper-tier cities have developed more sophisticated tastes, while those in rural China have become more particular about what they purchase, in order to obtain the best value. Established e-commerce platforms like JD.com and Taobao are facing increasing competition from new players such as Douyin, Pinduoduo and Xiaohongshu. The pervasive influence of word-of-mouth (WOM) and instant gratification has led to a rise in 'casual shopping'. Artificial intelligence and machine learning curation, and influencer recommendations are forcing China's largest e-commerce platforms to find new ways to support brands' Direct to Consumer (DTC) e-commerce presence.

Chinese shopping habits differ from the rest of the world, because of the tremendous reach of e-commerce and high penetration rates of social media. Social commerce, which is the buying and selling of goods on social media apps, is emerging as the most disruptive trend in years. With unique functions such as Key Opinion Leader (KOL) live-streaming, social activations, content sharing and referral selling, social commerce is challenging the status quo of traditional commerce. It has forced multinational companies to adapt, while giving domestic brands a level competitive playing field.

Through an analysis of traditional players and emerging platforms within the social commerce landscape, we offer you a look at a new reality that is disrupting the entire industry and the way people shop in China.

We hope you enjoy reading this, as much as we have enjoyed putting it together for you.

Sincerely,

Patrick Xu CEO, WPP China

November 2019

A WORD FROM WPP'S PARTNERS



Chen DuyeVice President of
Marketing Bytedance

At Bytedance we believe in early stage discovery of brands. Traditional ecommerce serves best to satisfy functional needs, not really to motivate consumers down new paths of product discovery. We purposefully built Toutiao and Douyin with the intent of precise targeting and to motivate 'swing', 'undecided', or 'unaware' consumers. Pop-up stores, POI marketing, intelligent coupons, for examples, are effective ways to link e-commerce stores and close the marketing loop online and offline. Xiaomi's collaboration with Douyin is an excellent demonstration of attracting consumers at an early stage. Users get motivated through the highly engaging and targeted advertising on Douyin but also by watching product videos of Xiaomi tailored for the Douyin platform.



Liu Hualei General Manager Alimama and Taobao Affiliate

Social commerce centers on goods as the core, relying on relation chains and flow pools to achieve e-commerce transactions, which are essentially a decentralized traffic distribution platform for acquisition. Alimama and Taobao Affiliate introduced the concept of 'omni distribution' last year, which refers to the integration of market place forces into the distribution of goods. Every person is a buyer, seller, and contributor to the supply chain, the market place, and the sales and promotions process.

In 2018, the Taobao Affiliate program has resulted in the distribution of RMB 30 billion in sales commissions. Taobaokes, are college students, full-time mothers, convenience store owners, right through to the world's biggest brands.

Through social media sharing, social commerce has lowered the threshold for market entry of new brands and shortened discovery of products for consumers. Compared with the shopping model through brand and commodity searching, social commerce is a discovery-based shopping model based on trigger mechanisms such as trust and interest. This approach is also one of the various marketing scenarios for Alibaba's commercial operating systems.

The facts show that social commerce currently has huge growth potential in multi-tier cities.



Victor Tseng
Vice President,
Corporate Development
Pinduoduo Inc.

Pinduoduo's motto is "Together, More Savings, More Fun" – this perfectly summarizes our value proposition. By aggregating users' demand based on their preferences, we can help them realize more savings and do so in a fun and engaging manner. Interaction is at the core of the shopping experience at Pinduoduo. Pinduoduo was born into the mobile Internet era, which has drastically changed consumers' behaviors, including their shopping experiences. Instead of solitary and need-based experiences, consumers' interactions, sharing, browsing, and discovery became a crucial part of their retail experience, be it online or offline. We have leveraged our distributed Al infrastructure and pioneered the "team purchase" model, which encourages consumers to share their discoveries and experiences conveniently with their social contacts, creating a sense of community. Brands on Pinduoduo can leverage our in-app games and recommendation feeds to reach over 443 million users.

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Expertise at WPP that can drive your e-commerce transformation from e-commerce to social first.

SOCIAL COMMERCE

INTRODUCTION

Social Commerce, formerly a subset of e-commerce, is now challenging mainstay e-commerce platforms and also creating new commercial models for brands. Social commerce leverages influence (both paid and organic), to capture users' attention and stimulate purchase through any social or e-commerce touchpoint.

The "now" consumer does not just want the immediacy of a purchase; he or she wants to be immersed in an experience, to engage with like-minded individuals, and to share their perspectives within their network.

It has grown as a result of changing consumer behavior and brand building that is highly reliant on what people say and how brands are showcased in their lives. The combination of innovative forms of content (e.g. live broadcasting) and an increase in impulse buying have blurred the lines between consumer and creator, and social commerce platforms are capitalizing on these developments.

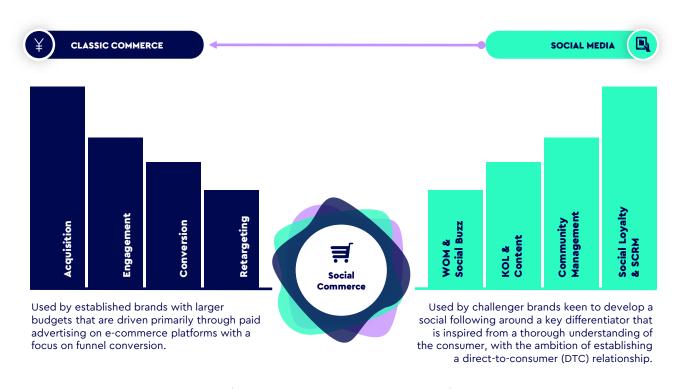
Consumer "voice" has always existed, but it has never been as quantifiable, manageable and actionable as it is today.



SOCIAL COMMERCE

PIVOTING FROM COMMERCE TO SOCIAL FIRST

As we pivot towards social commerce, the approach to planning e-commerce activities has also changed. We now not only look at how best to acquire, engage, and convert the consumer, but also investigate social specific metrics within e-commerce platforms, like building word-of-mouth, identifying the right influencers to distribute content, managing communities of people that are interested in specific types of product, and last but not least, creating rewards and CRM-led incentives for audiences to buy from a brand online.





Many advertisers are giving equal weight to both paid traffic conversion and organic conversion. This also means that commerce is not seasonal or campaign specific. It has evolved to become, like social, always on.



The challenge, however, will be for marketers to remain competitive in social commerce and make sure they can differentiate their brands from others, in a direct-to-consumer marketplace.



We believe it is the social aspect of e-commerce that will continue to help advertisers and agencies build brand equity in what has traditionally been a 'promotions' and 'percentage-off' environment.



Brands that continue to depend purely on 'classic' commerce play with a focus on last-mile conversion through paid advertising, may unintentionally cannibalize long-term brand equity in exchange for short-term gains.

DIRECT-TO-CONSUMER (DTC):

THE DRIVING FORCE BEHIND SOCIAL COMMERCE

Why are brands going DTC?



Nike Tops

L'ORÉAL

TESLA

Automakers



Daily Fresh announces "Daily Pingping". Has The Battle of Social Commerce Platforms Started? HomeFacialPro's Mini-Program Achieves Cosmetics Sales Records Just Days

After Launch

HomeFacial Pro

Beauty Creates

Forecasts As Direct-to-Consumer Strategy Pays Off Tencent and L'Oréal Pioneer New Marketing Solutions For "Digital China"

Unlikely To Follow Tesla's Online-Only Direct Model

SOURCE:

- Pan Yuk https://www.ft.com/content/855491a6-0495-11e9-9d01-cd4d49afbbe3
- Tencent https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/tencent-and-loreal-pioneer-new-marketing-solutions-for-digital-china-300675238.html

 Jeremy Alicandri https://www.forbes.com/sites/jeremyalicandri/2019/03/10/automakers-unlikely-to-follow-teslas-online-only-
- 3) Jeremy Alicandri https://www.forbes.com/sites/jeremyalicandri/2019/03/10/automakers-unlikely-to-follow-teslas-online-only model/#41f8a96112a8
- 4) https://news.qudong.com/article/550903.shtml "每目优鲜推出"每日拼拼" 社交电商平台混战开始"
- 5) http://www.ebrun.com/20180619/282696.shtml "上线数目的homefacialpro小程序已拿下战绩"

Brands are actively looking at ways to engage with consumers directly, through the use of data, via platforms. Our client leaders have reported direct-to-consumer sales for some brands to be as high as 25-40% of overall revenue, and for others as high as 100%.

While international brands are experimenting quite successfully with social commerce and direct-to-consumer, predominately around Alibaba's Singles Day Festival, it is Chinese brands that are benefitting based on pure social commerce strategies.

Consumers are demanding a better experience, which includes personalization of products, packaging, and communication as standard offerings.

New standards of segmentation and communication, enabled by the use of data and innovative platforms, have led to the rise of personalized communication.

Word-of-mouth (WOM), while known historically to be the number one creator of brand trust, was previously a difficult factor to measure.

Today, through social intelligence and direct-to-consumer surveys, we are able to quantify the impact of investments we make on influence (both paid and organic).



Transparency in data and direct acquisition of data empower brands to be less reliant on intermediaries. DTC is beneficial to brand owners because it gives them direct access to consumer data, absent of distributor and wholesaler intervention.

5Cs OF SOCIAL COMMERCE

FROM CONTENT TO COMMERCE





01 | CONTENT

Content created by consumers, or by influencers on social and commerce platforms serves to elicit customer interest in a product. e.g. live streaming and product demonstration etc.



02 | CUSTOMER VOICE

Consumers share feedback on using the product on review pages, BBS and social media. Many consumers refer to what others are saying before making a decision.



03 | CONVENIENCE

Consumers are increasingly expecting platforms to simplify and reduce steps in their path to purchase.



04 | CONVERSATION

Consumers and influencers have discussions on the product and its benefits, gauging product efficacy and feature benefits.



05 | COMMERCE

Consumers buy a product online or use an e-commerce platform to analyze pricing, then continue their purchase through an online or offline retailer.

SOCIAL VS. CLASSIC E-COMMERCE

KEY DIFFERENCES IN SHOPPING BEHAVIOUR

As seen earlier, the planning frameworks for social commerce as opposed to classic commerce differ enormously. The same can be said about the way consumers behave while shopping today on e-commerce platforms. In fact, it is this behavior that is driving the need for new approaches to planning social commerce. Typically, marketers would take a classic e-commerce approach to the traditional consumer funnel. Today however, while the steps to build the sales funnel are the same, the mechanics for doing so in an e-commerce context are different. The "now" consumer follows trends and has unplanned brand experiences and interactions with retail at home, at work, on the go, and before they go to sleep. As brands come to understand this, they take on new approaches to enable consumers to bookmark products, buy products that they can later return with flexible return policies, and reward consumers for referrals and for being brand advocates.



Shopper Characteristics

ACTIVE BROWSING

Planned Search

Needs-based active search of a product or an item you are looking to buy and for it to be delivered on a predetermined date.

PRODUCT COMPARISON

Rational Discovery

Compare products that offer similar functional benefits, or are comparable in features, design, or utility.

VALUE PURCHASE

Discount & Festivals

Choose whether to wait for a seasonal discount or promotion to make a purchase versus buying the product at listed price during a non-promotional period.

CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

Share or Not to Share

Decide whether to leave feedback on your purchase. Not all buyers are motivated or rewarded to share thoughts on their purchase. Typical Buying Steps

Interest To Purchase

Browse Products

Make a Purchase

Experience & Comment

WOM & Repurchase

SOCIAL COMMERCE

Shopper Characteristics

FOLLOW TRENDS

Social-First

Buying

Steps

Unplanned Exposure

Consumers discover new trending products from influencers and peers. They are passively looking for lifestyle upgrades that offer greater utility, more talkability and social cache.

BROWSE & BOOKMARK

Fear of Missing Out

Bookmarking and managing a shopping cart that is always full. Giving followers an opportunity to create a shopping board that is reflective of dreams and desires.

BUY NOW, THINK LATER

Instant Gratification

Consumers are rewarded with having first access to limited distribution products endorsed by an influencer or celebrity thereby making them feel privileged, and giving them social currency.

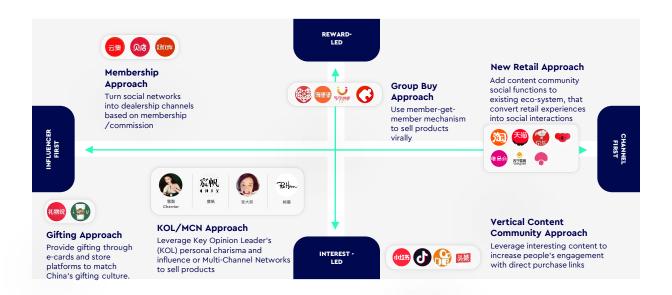
REDEEM & RECOMMEND

Rewarded for Show & Tell

Motivated by member-get-member incentives and commission earnings, consumers are more willing to make brand recommendations to their social networks. Offer benefits that tie them to a social-first loyalty program.

SOCIAL COMMERCE

KEY APPROACHES TO MANAGING SOCIAL COMMERCE



There are four key approaches a brand can choose from to run a social commerce program. We provide a framework (shown above) that explains the various approaches.

On the X-axis, our social commerce activities can be influencer-led and platform agnostic; or they can be platform-led, in which case brands will have to collaborate directly with influencers or KOLs of that platform or have a multi-platform reach.

On the Y-axis, our social commerce activities can be reward-led; in other words, a brand or influencer rewards the consumer for sharing brand information or referring customers to result in the sale of a product.

Or, finally, they can be interest-led, where brands focus their marketing activities on a vertical channel within a larger platform, leveraging its editorial content, consumer communities, influencers, and linking platform activities to a store from where you can purchase a product.



We have also observed that the type of approach marketers choose is tied closely to factors like product category, brand maturity, and product availability.

IN SUMMARY

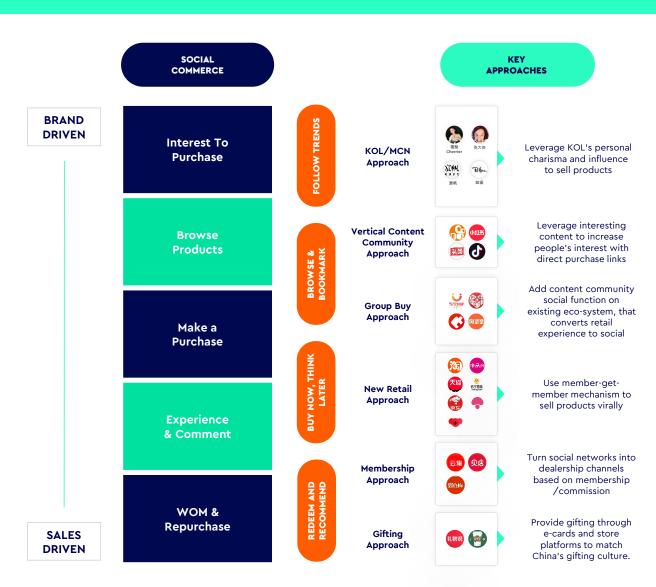
TOP-DOWN APPROACH AGAINST CUSTOMER JOURNEY

Typically, approaches that create mass awareness of a brand or product are more brand-driven, and approaches associated with reward or loyalty in CRM are more salesdriven.

In the context of social commerce, brands utilize influencers to identify and best explain product benefits, and to share user experiences of a product. These are achieved by borrowing from an influencer's personality to build brand equity and its credentials. From experience, this is always a balancing act between brand-led and Influencer-led initiatives.

Gifting and membership tactics help brands continue to create a network of organic influencers, who are sometimes rewarded with limited-edition products and the opportunity to gift to friends.

While the customer funnel is typically brand-driven, in the world of social commerce it is influencer-led and propagated by users and fans.





CHAPTER 1.

STATE OF THE INDUSTRY

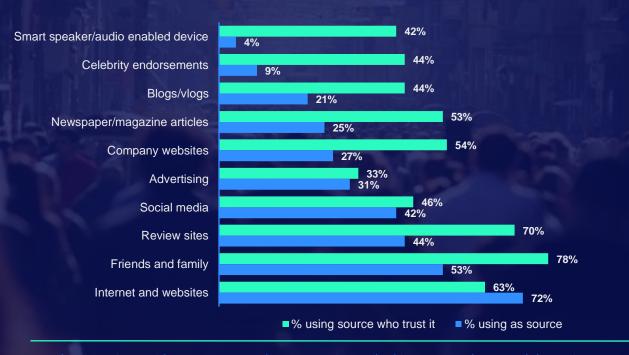
CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR:

THE 'NOW' CONSUMER



What consumers say is the most effective source in influencing other consumers' purchase decisions.

Consumers' Brand Information Sources and Their Trust in Those Sources



Based on interviews with 5,000 connected consumers in Brazil, China, France, the UK and the US (1,000 each). Source: <u>Kantar Media</u>

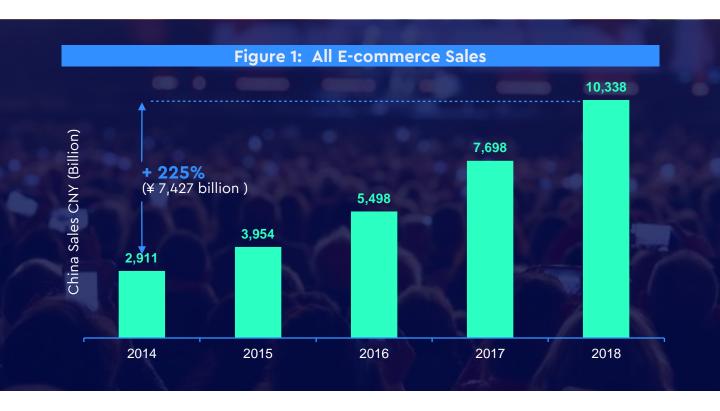
The rapid and undeniable rise of social commerce in China cannot be understood without acknowledging the ubiquity of social media and its high penetration rates. There are however more profound and deeply rooted psychological forces that are driving this change.

Word-of-mouth, whether it's consumer reviews or insight shared by friends, creates more trust than any other source of information as demonstrated by recent qualitative research conducted by WPP's Kantar.

The second is **impulse buying**, a recent phenomenon that has developed as a consequence of increasing disposable income, flash sales, Singles Day, Chinese New Year promotions and influencer sales. Social commerce platforms use such promotional strategies to encourage purchases and to fulfill instant gratification.

CHINESE E-COMMERCE MARKET:

STEADY YEAR-ON-YEAR GROWTH





Since 2014, e-commerce sales have more than doubled. This is thanks to seasonal events like Singles Day, the increased adoption of digital wallet usage within rural China, and the creation of market places for buyers and sellers on the same platform.



Growth in e-commerce sales over the past 5 years has been driven primarily by continued consumer confidence in the Chinese economy and the addition of mobile digital wallets Alipay and WeChat pay, which have made the purchase journey a seamless experience.



There are currently 650 million e-commerce users in China, averaging an annual spend of CNY 6,104. During the past 5 years, e-commerce sales have grown by 255%, a total increase of CNY 7,427 billion.



Chinese shoppers in both rural and urban China are benefitting from growth, either through steeper discounting of products, or through greater choice among both imported and domestic products.

CHINESE E-COMMERCE MARKET:

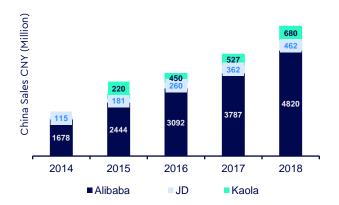
DAWN OF COMMERCE WITH SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS



The biggest contributors to conventional commerce are Alibaba, JD, Kaola, WeChat, PinDuoDuo, and to a lesser extent, Xiaohongshu. They are driving adoption of social commerce but have also challenged traditional commerce platforms to be more content- and influence-led. Interest-led ecommerce platforms' contribution to the overall market is much smaller in comparison to these leading platforms, however they are highly influential in creating initial demand of a product before mass adoption.

NetEase's Kaola, which was one of AliBaba's biggest competitors in the cross-border ecommerce space, has recently been acquired by AliBaba to service China's increasing demand for quality imported products. Kaola controls 25% of the cross-border market, as of 2019.

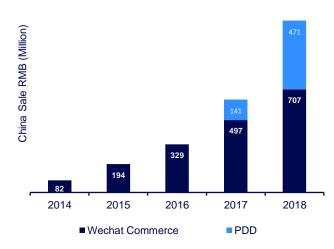
Figure 2: Major Conventional Channel E-commerce Sales



The Chinese e-commerce landscape has seen many players come and go, yet Alibaba and JD have weathered the storm. The former has dominated the conventional e-commerce market, generating roughly 90% of total transactions since 2014 (see figure 2).

Figure 3: Three Major Social Commerce
Channel Sales

Social commerce channels have had a late start but they are steadily catching up. WeChat Commerce has grown seven-fold since 2014 and Pin Duo Duo has almost doubled in sales since 2017. While Xiaohongshu has yet to release their official earnings, their dramatic active user growth rate hints at their growth into a future social commerce giant.



TRADITIONAL E-COMMERCE PLATFORMS:

ESTABLISHED PLATFORMS STILL DOMINATE MARKET



Consumers on Alibaba's flagship platform Tmall spend more than on any other e-commerce platform, and they also represent the highest number of active users. The strategic implementation of social commerce mechanics and content both help to maintain active user growth and contribute to gross merchandise value (GMV) per active user.

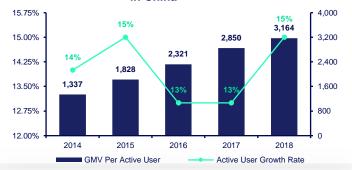




Tmall reached over CNY 2,131 billion GMV (Gross Merchandise Value) in 2018, occupying the largest piece of the pie within China's e-commerce market. In 2018, it achieved CNY 5,682 GMV per active user/year, the highest amongst all e-commerce platforms.



JD Active User Growth & GMV Per Active User in China



Despite the fluctuation of active user growth rate, GMV per active user on JD has increased more than 230% in the past 5 years, reaching CNY 3,164 in 2018.



Kaola Active User Growth & GMV Per Active User in China 138% 4.750 105% 3.722 3,627 110% 3,800 3,024 83% 2,850 55% 1.900 28% 950 0% 0 2014 2016 ■ GMV Per Active User Active User Growth Rate

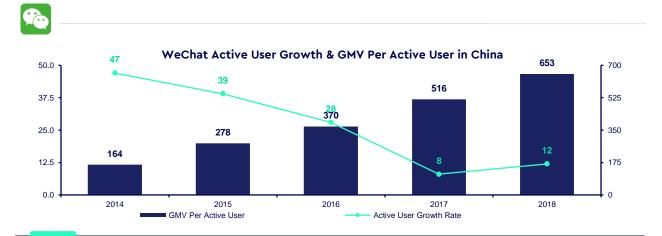
Established in 2015, Kaola has maintained double-digit active user growth rates. As a leading cross border e-commerce platform, it enjoys a higher GMV per active user (averaging above CNY 3,300). In 2018 spending per active user reached CNY 3,627, significantly higher than JD.

SOCIAL COMMERCE: WECHAT & Xiaohongshu

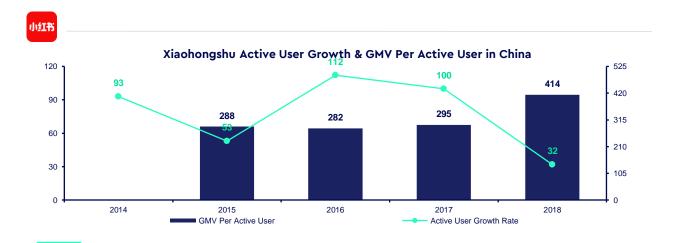
PERSONALIZED CONTENT & INNOVATION



Growth of users on WeChat continues to increase, however, the ticket price of all products purchased is considerably lower than that of Alibaba. Similarly, Xiaohongshu, which is a leading product curation platform, is steadily increasing its average GMV per active user. This is a clear indicator that social-driven purchases are progressively contributing to e-commerce growth.



WeChat saw fast growth in active users between 2014-2016. Despite a slowddown between 2017-2018, it had gained over 1 billion active users by the end of 2018. GMV per active user increased rapidly, yet the latest figures are below CNY 700, much lower than Tmall/JD/Kaola that each average above CNY 3,000.



Xiaohongshu has been quick at acquiring new users, growing 78% on average YoY over the past 5 years. Since it first launched e-commerce functionality on its platform in 2015, Red Book's GMV has increased by 100% each year.

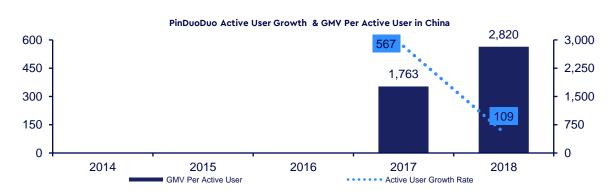
SOCIAL COMMERCE: PINDUODUO & DOUYIN

BITE-SIZED CONTENT & GROUP BUY

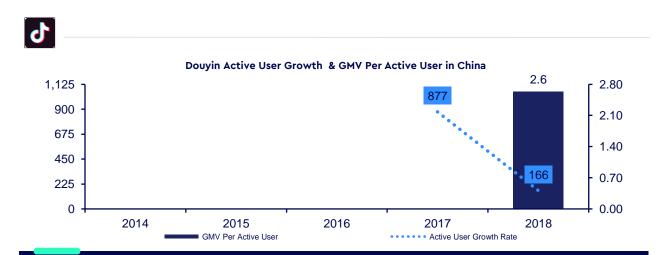


New entrants like Little RedBook and Douyin that have a fast growing user base are looking at how to capitalize on their audience growth by linking user growth to purchasing power. Marketers will have to see how they can best leverage both of these platforms to either help create awareness of a brand, or to help support penetration of new products within lower-tier markets. There is some notable evidence of success but careful monitoring of these platforms is still required.





PinDuoDuo's focus on group-buying and adopting artificial intelligence/machine learning (AI/ML) has resulted in 100% YoY growth of its active users. GMV per active user has increased from CNY 1,763 to CNY 2,820.



Douyin came onto the scene in 2016. In 2018, it first announced that its monthly active user base had reached over 300 million in China and over 500 million worldwide. It also launched e-commerce functions in December 2018, with the objective of driving traffic to online and offline stores.

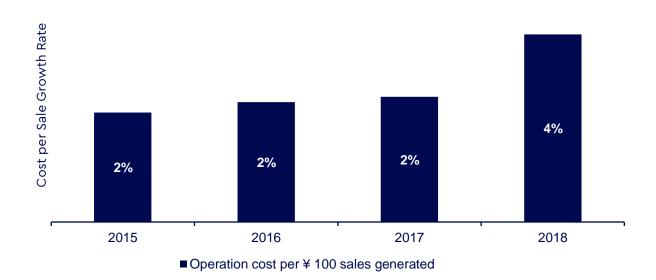
FACTORS SUPPORTING SOCIAL COMMERCE GROWTH

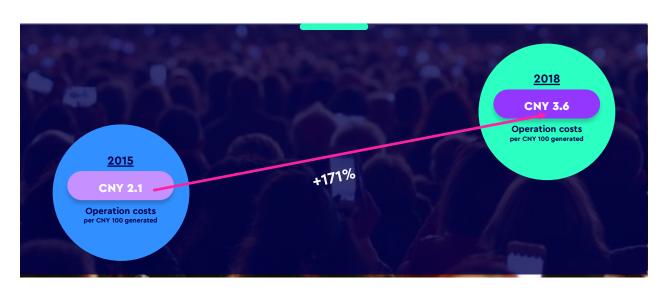
INCREASING COST OF OPERATION FOR E-COMMERCE



The cost of operation of e-commerce platforms continues to increase year-on-year. Increased competition and dependency on platform resources (e-store management and commission paid to platform) per sale generated is anticipated to continue to increase beyond 2018. The most dramatic recent increase was in 2018 (see figure 2). For every CNY 100 sold, CNY 3.60 is attributed to platform operation costs, which has grown 1.7X since 2015.

Top 5 E-commerce Platform Operation Cost





FACTORS SUPPORTING SOCIAL COMMERCE GROWTH

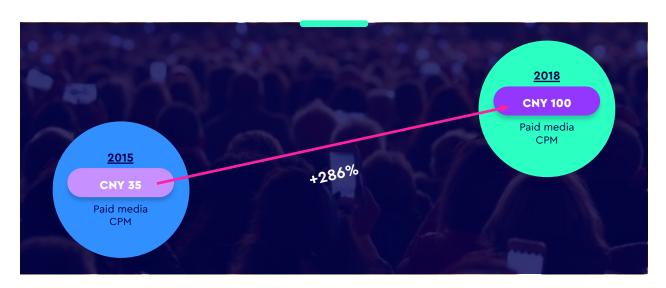
INCREASING COST OF MEDIA FOR E-COMMERCE PLATFORMS



The advertising and promotional expenses for leading e-commerce platforms have also increased notably from 2015 to 2018. CPM (cost per thousand impressions) costs have increased by 286%. This is forcing brands to uncover new ways to create reach, in particular creating unique reach through influencers and distribution of content within e-commerce platforms.

Figure 1: Top 5 E-commerce Platforms Advertising CPM Cost





THE LAST MILE:

MAKING SURE CONSUMERS CONVERT



Brands are investing in the last mile.

Paid advertising is being challenged by other more efficient formats of media that drive consumers to stores. China's walled ecosystems have made room for social features on e-commerce platforms to drive conversions that are not dependent on paid ads.

On one hand, this has resulted in the creation of social-first e-commerce platforms. On the other hand, it has also resulted in e-commerce platforms incorporating influencer and usergenerated content (UGC) to take on a central role in traffic creation to stores.

These are some of the key features that brands are leveraging to create awareness and drive last-mile conversions on China's largest ecommerce platforms.

		天猫	A Title	T	小红书	4	%	
Application Year of Creation		Tmall	JD	Kaola	Xiaohong shu	Douyin	WeChat	PDD
		2003	2004	2015	2014	2016	2011	201
Brand Stores	Brand stores	✓	✓	✓ ,	✓ ✓	✓	✓	√
	Brand video, banner, content	✓	✓	✓	✓	√	✓	√
	KOL Content	√		✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Livestream	✓	✓	✓			7	0
	Brand interaction (Share/comment/follow)	√	\		✓			
	Community News Feed	√		√		188		
Commerce Asset	Q&A forum sponsorship	1		√		- V		
	Hot topic		-		✓	-63		480
	Search position		1		√	-		1
	Time capsule						✓	
	Mini Program			Ale			√	
	Moment Ads in feed				✓	✓	✓	√
	Member get Member games	1			1			✓
	Open Page Ad	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		√
	Advertising Banner	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Themed festivals	✓	✓					√
	KOL Content	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
	Community Feed	✓		✓	✓			
	Customer Service	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	√
	Online Pop up Store					✓		
	Brand stickers				✓	✓	✓	
	Recommendation List							✓
Eco System	Application (iOS & Android)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
	Website	✓	✓	✓			✓	
	Mini Program	✓	✓	✓	✓			√
	Mobile Site	✓	✓	✓				

SHISEIDO:

6 REASONS WHY IT WORKED



With the objective of illustrating social commerce further, we share the example of Shiseido, a leading Japanese skincare brand. Notably, Shiseido is one of the leading beauty and cosmetics brands in China. Here are some of its best practices to keep ahead of competitors in the e-commerce space, through creating social- first experiences for its consumers.

For example, Shiseido delivers segmented and targeted messaging on WeChat and Weibo. It offers reward for referrals, offer points and limited circulation to members, or first-to-see-and-buy opportunities for new products. Shiseido actively invests in KOL content within Taobao to convert customers and has a presence on owned, paid, and earned platforms.



Pulse Stimulation: WeChat & Weibo



 Create social buzz and stimulate interest & sales based on seasonality



• E.g. Shiseido #520 lipstick gift package





KOL-Driven Social Commerce Platform: Douvin



- Apply KOL's influence & immersive video experience to stimulate desire & drive traffic to the online store
- E.g. Shiseido WASO series





Reward-Driven Social Commerce Platform: Yunji



- Reward referrals, offer points and limited circulation to members, or first-to-see-and-buy opportunities for new products
- E.g. exclusive member sales for most popular product lines





UGC-Driven Social Commerce Platform: RED



- Create limited edition
 'celebrity' products that
 stimulate 'must-have' desire &
 instant purchase
- E.g. Shiseido Ultimune Power Infusing Concentrate (Red Waist)





E-commerce platforms with social function: Taobao/Tmall



- Invest in KOL content within Taobao to convert
- E.g. Shiseido whitening trials





Group-Buy Social Commerce Platform: PinDuoDuo



- Stimulate skincare products by member-get-member activations
- E.g. Aqualabel Gel Cream Oil





6 MODELS OF SOCIAL COMMERCE & KEY APPROACHES

6 SOCIAL COMMERCE APPROACHES:

HOW TO ENGAGE THE 'NOW' CONSUMER

SOCIAL COMMERCE



In planning social commerce within leading e-commerce platforms, marketers need to take into consideration engaging with vertical communities to author content specific to the product. Communities within vertical channels are typically mobilized to recruit early adopters. Brands benefit from these communities as they produce efficient editorial content, are active on BBS (bulletin board) content distribution network, have captive audiences, and are rewarded for bridging their content with purchase.

Endorsements and education from influencers are also critical for penetration. With an increasing number of people following celebrities and category experts, brands cannot ignore the audiences' need for product demonstrations and trials and product comparisons.

A fundamental principle of social commerce is reciprocity. A number of gifting platforms have also emerged that allow brands to seek favors from consumers in exchange for rewards.

Group buying ensures that products are being sold in lower tier markets and helps with reducing stock. This is an effective way of recruiting pricesensitive customers and cross-selling them other portfolio products in the future.

While seeking new buyers and managing awareness building activities, marketers should not ignore brand loyalists. To ensure that they are rewarded for purchases made, brands should create omni-channel mechanics, scoring mechanisms and rewards that allow them to be the first-to-know and first to try new products. Loyalty program points should be redeemable, on both offline and online platforms.

Ideally, brand experiences should enable the convergence of the online with the offline. Brands with experiential products should be actively looking for ways to sell to consumers online by linking the consumer from online to offline, or by creating offline experiences that would drive consumers online to transact through a digital wallet. Such linkage allows brands to pair buyers' online and offline purchase history.

APPROACH 1:

VERTICAL CONTENT

Leverage interesting content to increase people's interest with direct purchase links

PRODUCT & PLATFORM

Clarins' Double Serum. RMB 560/30ml



APPROACH

Clarins encouraged consumers to write authentic and positive feedback online, which created a "must-have" attitude towards its star product Double Serum and encouraged instant purchases.

IMPACT

Awareness of Double Serum product and trial for first-time buyers.

01.

02.

03.

04.

Launch Product Hashtag



Clarins launched the #ASerumDeserveInfinit eBuy# topic on Xiaohongshu, by rewarding users who generously re-post the hashtag.

Dominate Social Feeds



Positive UGC interaction increased the exposure of Clarins when users searched the keyword 'serum'.

Link Editorial with Purchase



Increased exposure and product credibility resulted an impulse desire for ownership and the direct cart link allowed Clarins to effectively capture this moment.of desire.

Buy from Product Page



Referral promotions reinforce customers' desire to finalize their purchase.

RED NOTES

2,777 14.87M

VIEWS

















APPROACH 2:

KOL PRODUCT LAUNCH

Leverage KOL's personality and influence to sell products

PRODUCT & PLATFORM

Redmi Note 7. RMB 999



APPROACH - KOL PRODUCT LAUNCH

Short videos provide a bite-sized look at a product or brand. By leveraging CEO Lei Jun's charisma and influence, Redmi successfully reached a new audience through a reach KOL strategy which converged with Lei Jun's launch event giving people access to first-to-see, know, and buy the new device.

IMPACT

The Redmi Note 7 sold out within one hour after launch.



02.

03.

04.

Launch Limited Sales Product



Redmi created an online pop-up store on Douyin to launch the Redmi Note 7. They invited a diverse set of KOLs to announce the launch.

KOL-Led Awareness



Each KOL's post drove further interest in the new product launch and heightened consumer anticipation.

Live-stream Product Sales



Lei Jun's (Xiaomi CEO) live-stream on Douyin was the perfect blend of entertaining and informative content that drove audiences to pre-order the new device.

Be The First to Buy



A '2-click' pre-order through a pop-up store maximized conversion from audiences watching Lei Jun's live-stream.

pre-order **5.58+M**

VIEWS **300+M**

LIKES **3.39+M**















APPROACH 3:

GROUP BUY PROMOTION

Use member-get-member mechanics to sell products virally

PRODUCT & PLATFORM

Adolph Shampoo. RMB 51 300ml



APPROACH - GROUP BUY PROMOTIONS

This approach encourages users to share and recommend their choices to their friends and family through social media platforms, including WeChat and QQ. When their friends join the team, they can each get discounts. Users can also join an existing team to enjoy the discount.

IMPACT

More than 100,000 shampoo packs were sold on PinDuoDuo



Adolph Shampoo Launch



The group buy mechanics of PinDuoDuo encourage audiences to purchase in groups. They can buy Adolph Shampoo at a heavily reduced price.

Limited Time Group Buy Offer



Emphasis on reduced price and 'limited time offer' product bundle further encourages consumers to encourage more referrals to shop.

Share With Friends



PinDuoDuo reminds users to share a referral

Upsell Consumer on Purchase



Consumers are recommended other products to buy.

SOLD 100,000+









APPROACH 4:

GIFT-DRIVEN OCCASIONS

Provide gifting through e-cards and store platforms to match China's gifting

PRODUCT & PLATFORM

Zheng Gong Fu Sticky Rice Dumpling Gift Box. RMB 26

礼物说

APPROACH - GIFTING

Gifting is a huge part of Chinese culture and this has given rise to gift-focused platforms like GiftSpeaks. There are several opportunities throughout the year that leverage these occasions as well as birthdays and promotional dates.

IMPACT

RMB 50k GMV in sales and 15 million impressions generated through a single Dragon Boat Festival.



Zheng Gong Fu Rice Dumpling



GiftSpeak's miniprogram and app provide a wide range of gifting options and recommendations around each occasion to help people choose gifts more efficiently.

Discover Gift Offers



Discover gifts that are specific to Dragon Boat Festival.

Click Zheng Gong Fu Gift



An intuitive interface provides further convenience by displaying only the most relevant options.

Send to Friend



A simple WeChat transaction completes the order and ensures delivery to gift recipient.

IMPRESSIONS

15M+

GMV CNY

50,000+ During 2018
Dragon Boat Festival





APPROACH 5:

MEMBERSHIP-DRIVEN PURCHASE

Turn social network to dealership channels based on membership / commission

PRODUCT & PLATFORM

Mengniu Just Yogurt. RMB 74.9 / 200g x 24



APPROACH - MEMBERSHIP DRIVEN PURCHASE

Mengniu offers yogurt subscriptions through social commerce platform Yunji. Yogurt beverages are sold at lower prices and consumers are offered sales commissions. Yunji motivates every member to become a community distributor of yogurt.

IMPACT

150,000 Mengniu Just Yogurt units were sold by Yunji members within the first five days.



02.

03.

04.

Mengniu Just Yogurt



Yunji released Mengniu Just Yogurt on its platform, with a reduced membersonly price

Buy Yunji Membership



Mengjiu encouraged users to pay for VIP membership so that they can buy Mengniu at discount, and enjoy other exclusive discounts and rewards.

Member's Only Price



Limited time members-only price to buy Mengniu Just Yogurt.

Receive Special Offers



Once they become members, they receive commissions from other users' orders that came through their shared links, motivating every individual to share within their network.

SOLD

150,000+

BOXES

REWARDED

Unlimited

(based on number of invited members)





APPROACH 6:

NEW RETAIL

Link online and offline retail experiences with social action

PRODUCT & PLATFORM

Swisse Grape Seed. RMB 128.



APPROACH - LIVE-STREAM SHOPPING EXPERIENCE

Cross-border brands can invite KOLs to visit physical stores and live-stream their shopping experience on Tmall's social community. This encourages consumers to discover more about the products resulting in increased sales.

IMPACT

A live-stream gained 34,632 likes and 6,559 viewership within 11 hours.



02.

03.

04.

Online offers



An Australian KOL conducted an 11-hour live-stream to introduce and sell healthcare products through a pharmacy store on Taobao.

Interactive Live-Streaming



Enticing live-streams with rich visuals and catchy headlines were the first step to drawing in readers.

Product Demonstrations



Product demonstrations ensure the authenticity of the product and source of orgin.

Purchase incentives



With the buyer already interested, purchases were finally achieved through special promotions and discounts.

VIEWS

6,559

34,632

LIKES











CHAPTER 3.

WPP SOCIAL COMMERCE EXCELLENCE

H&M

Ogilvy

Vertical content approach

KOL approach

0

Group buy approach

Gifting approach

Membership approach



New retail approach



LEVERAGING KOL'S AND MEMBERSHIP DATA TO DRIVE GROWTH



STORY

The Chinese market has become an increasingly complex ecosystem for fashion brands like H&M. While players in this space continue to spend big on established e-commerce platforms, they are also seeking to engage new audiences through social content. In this highly competitive landscape, we had to think not only fast, but smart in order to attract the interest of a sophisticated young audience and to continue to meet H&M's growth targets.



SOLUTION

After analyzing key business processes, we created a virtual personal stylist which could predict what shoppers wanted and offer them products tailored to their needs. The personal stylist was a data-powered system that collected millions of multi-channel data points in real time and transformed unique customer insights into personalized content. Users were encouraged to share their personal styles within their network. Those who drove further engagement earned rewards, and we effectively converted social influence into sales.

For more: https://vimeo.com/312638640



IMPACT



400% WeChat Follower Increase



5 X INCREASE E-commerce Traffic



WUNDERMAN THOMPSON

Vertical content approach

KOL approach

Group buy approach

Gifting approach

Membership approach

New retail approach





TRANSFORMING OFFLINE RETAIL INTO A SOCIAL EXPERIENCE



STORY

MAC has been in China for ten years. We helped the brand grow from being just another cosmetics brand to the category leader in lip care. The brand's launch on Tmall helped it to achieve prominence, but still, MAC wanted to do more in the offline space. Our challenge was to translate their online success into a first-class retail experience worth talking about. We decided to make it possible for young women to experiment with the playful and exciting new colors from MAC. Something very difficult to achieve in an e-commerce-only world.

SOLUTION

We kicked off this project by obtaining a thorough understanding of MAC's Gen Z target audience. Though focus group discussions, cognitive walkthroughs, and exit interviews, our research team was able to gather rich insights from this young audience in real time. We designed the new retail shop with product and consumer interaction at its heart. MAC's consumers could experiment with new lip colors, take selfies, and get instant feedback from their community of friends before deciding which one to buy, and later re-purchase online.

For more: https://www.wpp.com/featured/work/wunderman-thompson---mac-cosmetics-interactive-experience-centre



IMPACT



4 x Sales Revenue



4 x Products



350% more
Time in Store



2 x Basket

^{*} Each showcase utilized the approaches checked in the panel above





Vertical content approach



KOL approach

Group buy approach

Gifting approach

Membership approach

New retail approach



GAMIFYING LUNCH THROUGH VERTICAL CONTENT



STORY

41% of Chinese consumers eat from a fast food chain at least once a week and big brands and local businesses are constantly innovating to attract as many hungry mouths as possible. Furthermore, the rise of delivery apps such as Eleme and Meituan has reduced in-store foot traffic and made the competitive landscape even fiercer.



SOLUTION

Despite being the first and most popular fast food chain in China, we knew KFC could not continue its growth based on reputation and chicken wings alone. We launched a collaboration between KFC and Onmyoji, a niche game with a loyal fanbase. In Onmyoji everyone must draw cards but not everyone has the good fortune to get the card "Shinigami", a rare character. This campaign invited users to "come to KFC to get your Ouqi" (good luck).



IMPACT



3 MillionBuckets Sold



400% Traffic Increase





MEDIACOM

Vertical content approach

KOL approach

Group buy approach

Gifting approach

Membership approach



New retail approach





STORY

The personal computer market in China is highly competitive, and Dell was attempting to reach one of the most challenging demographics: young students. As Singles Day Festival drew closer, we decided to employ a new strategy to reach Dell's desired target market.



SOLUTION

We understood that this was the most interconnected age group in China, and the least likely to be influenced by traditional media. We applied social listening tactics to see who and what guided these students' behaviors. After thorough analysis, we selected a range of small and medium KOLs that were directly connected with our target audience through common interests such as fashion, electronics, or video games. These KOLs then forwarded the brand activity in their shared WeChat groups and encouraged group members to participate. This strategy effectively converted the KOLs' influence over Dell's target audience into an interest in the brand, and ultimately drove online sales.



IMPACT



2 X Traffic







Vertical content approach



KOL approach

Group buy approach

Gifting approach

Membership approach

New retail approach





STORY

In China, everyone shops online, spending billions on toys, electronics, and clothing, but one thing they don't buy is food.

This was a problem for our client Oreo which inspired us to create a bespoke commerce experience with creative content built through digital interaction integrated with physical product experience.

SOLUTION



The first phase was Oreo Colorfilled. We invited famous illustrators to create designs people could use to build their own Oreo package. Next, we created the Oreo Music Box in collaboration with Tmall. To play music, you placed on Oreo cookie on the music box, and if you took a bite, the music changed. By repositioning Oreo into categories that consumers were looking for, we were able to reach a much wider audience and ultimately sell more Oreos. People searching for electronics discovered the music box, and so did people searching for toys. Finally, we launched the Oreo DJ Deck whereby you could compose your own songs by playing the biscuits on the mixers.

For more: https://www.vmlyr.com/work/play-oreo



IMPACT



46,657,092 Impressions



RMB 1MM Music Box Sales in first hour



3x SalesFrom Previous year



CHAPTER 4.

SOCIAL COMMERCE CAPABILITIES & PARTNERS

6 KEY CAPABILITIES NEEDED FOR SOCIAL COMMERCE



Business Strategy & Plan

A strong understanding of a brand's business ambition supported by insights into the category. We leverage the best that social commerce has to offer, in order to help build a brand and achieve strong growth and sales conversion.

2 Market Research

Gathering and analyzing market data, including market size, the key established players as well as emerging players along with the identification of customers segments through research.

3 Social Commerce Infrastructure & Store Front

Developing an understanding of what infrastructure a brand needs, forecasting future assets that it needs to build, and ultimately setting up the brand's storefront, that is ready to convert social referrals both online and offline.

4 Content Development

Content created by a brand or KOLs, both paid and earned, enabling the activation of consumers at each stage of the customer funnel, and across all e-commerce touchpoints.

5 Content Distribution

Utilization of Promoter Generated Content (PGC) and influencers to activate audience interest in a product, understand the benefits of the product and ensure unique reach. These can be achieved through paid display strategies to drive store traffic and brand following on social platforms.

6 Audience & Data Management

Organizing your customer base within specific segments, and developing tailor-made messaging and mechanisms based on those segments. Implementing sCRM loyalty programs to allow brands to have a recurring relationship with their customers.

Based on extensive research into the types of services that are needed by clients to fulfill end-to-end e-commerce operations, WPP has identified 38 specialist functions and six core capabilities that brands require to fulfill their social-first e-commerce ambitions. WPP in China provides the unique offer of integrated total commerce solutions under one roof.

WPP in China offers a full suite of social and e-commerce services and expertise across its agencies and network of partners.

From business planning and brand strategy to commerce offerings, WPP in China has a team of more than 150 market experts and over 500 specialists with in-depth knowledge and experience to help companies develop total commerce solutions. WPP's team of in-house expertise and partner networks combine the best offerings across communications, experience, commerce and technology.

BUSINESS STRATEGY & PLANNING







*WUNDERMAN THOMPSON



Define Vision & Model

Outlines the long-term view of the company as well as its key objectives and how it will achieve its vision.



02.

03.

04.

05.

06.

Business Model & Process Design

Illustrates the capabilities and resources required to create, market and deliver a value proposition through social commerce, and to generate profitable revenue streams.



Organization Structure

Determines how rules, roles, and responsibilities are directed within a company in order to achieve the predefined objective on social commerce.



Financial Model

The process of creating a summary of a company's expenses and earnings that can be used to calculate the impact of a future event or decision.



R&D And Operations Model

Developing a C2M (customer to manufacturer) model through social commerce to restructure a company's R&D and operations model.



Supply Chain Model

Restructures the network between a company and its suppliers to produce and distribute products to the final buyer through social commerce.

MARKET RESEARCH







KANTAR





01.

02.

03.

04.

Market Size & Market Share

Identifies the market trends and opportunities in social commerce by researching market size and market share.



Key Players & Emerging Players

Analysis of the current key players as well as emerging players in order to understand the latest marketing practices.



Identification of Target Segments

Developing a go-to-market strategy through a comprehensive study of the market's audience and audience segmentation.



Competitive Environment

Identifying the threat of new entrants and substitute products as well as the bargaining power of suppliers and buyers within the social commerce ecosystem.

SOCIAL COMMERCE INFRASTRUCTURE AND STORE FRONT SETUP









Weimob 微盟







01.

02.

03.

04.

Mini Program Setup

Creation of Mini Program that will enable customers to interact with brands through advanced and functional features.



Official Account Setup And Maintenance On Social Platforms

Smooth landing on social platforms



Store / Official Account Design & Optimization

Design of store or official account and personalized landing serving influencer audience. Ongoing optimization of design and store mechanics.



E-commerce Fulfilment

Enable customer service support, logistics & warehouse setup, and establish the variety of products available for sale and promotion implementation

CONTENT DEVELOPMENT





01.

02.

03.

04.













Creative Idea

Overall creative direction that communicates the value of the product and evokes an emotional response from the consumer.



Copywriting

The voice of a creative execution that serves to communicate the emotional and functional benefits of a brand or product.



Content Production

Development of content assets and communication angles to engage with shoppers and influencers on an always-on basis.



Influencer Guidelines & Mechanisms

Influencer guidance on do's and don'ts in development of product content ready for distribution. Social mechanisms to test mechanics and rewards for engagement and recurring sales.

CONTENT DISTRIBUTION





02.

03.

04.











Communication Strategy

Recommendation of key conter

Recommendation of key content assets and how best to leverage key approaches on social commerce platforms against an activation idea.



Paid Media & Operations

Development of paid social advertising plans and retargeting plans using mPlatform.



Influencer, MCN and Promoter Generated Content

Management of influencers across platforms to ensure delivery of content. Planning always-on and burst strategies on influencer use.



Reporting and Insights

Detailed reports of all activities from a predetermined period of time delivered along with key insights based upon the performance of the brand.

AUDIENCE & DATA MANAGEMENT

01.

02.

03.

04.





JING digital







Audience Data Management

Management of customer data across different channels and sources on a single cloud platform. Big data algorithm application to generate insights for business process and go-to-market strategy.



Data Modelling

Creating data models within information systems to efficiently store and represent data in the form of easily understood diagrams.



Analytics and Reporting

Dashboarding of data and contribution of sales resulting from social influence. Single view of all e-commerce channels from source through to conversion.



Membership System

Implementing of sCRM loyalty program on WeChat (OA or Mini Program) that allows brands to have a recurring relationship with customers and drive them to online or offline retail channels.



CAPABILITY EXPERTS AT WPP



James Bay

Managing Partner Commerce, Wunderman Thompson

James leapt from the tiny island of Singapore into the world of e-commerce during its infancy (the dot.com era), conceptualizing and building commerce sites from the late 1990s, before moving into the world of advertising creative. A 20-year digital veteran who was not satisfied with just creating interactive advertising campaigns, for James advertising has one purpose, driving business results.

In his eight years in China, James has launched the commerce presence for a portfolio of top global brands including Nike, Converse, Estee Lauder, La Mer, MAC Cosmetics, Tom Ford, Wyeth and Bacardi- many of which are regarded as best-in-class on Chinese e-commerce.

#Creativity #Commerce #Startup #Luxury #Influencer #MultiChannelNetworks #DigitalEcosystem



Mickey Zhang
CEO, [m]Platform China

Mickey Zhang joined GroupM in 2012 as Search & E-commerce Managing Director and was appointed to Managing Director of Xaxis China in 2014, responsible for leading Xaxis operations throughout China. From May 2016, she has taken additional responsibility of the Programmatic Buying Unit (PBU) as well as Plista under GroupM, responsible for driving the whole group's growing success in data, tech and the programmatic buying area.

Prior to joining GroupM, Mickey led award-winning sales teams at Baidu and Google, providing integrated search-marketing solutions for direct response clients in retail, travel, education, gaming, and other Internet service industries and establishing a record of revenue achievement, strategic development and service of major accounts. Mickey started her digital experience at eBay China as a digital marketing analyst in 2003.

#Audiences #DMP #Programmatic #Performance #MediaPartnerships



Jerman Zhang
Managing Director of E-commerce GroupM China

With 19 years of e-commerce experience, Jerman leads a team of 150-plus e-commerce marketing specialists across Shanghai, Beijing, and Guangzhou, providing e-commerce strategy, marketing, advertising and analysis services for a variety of well-known brands including Huawei, Adidas, Danone, Pfizer, LVMH, etc.

Before joining GroupM, Jerman held several key roles in e-commerce marketing and operations at eBay Eachnet, 2duche and Baixing since 2000.

#Data driven #Integration #Efficiency #Performance #Double11



Bob Wang

VP of Strategy, Social & CRM Ogilvy Shanghai

Bob is a professional marketer with over eight years of experiences across integrated marketing, social CRM, marketing automation and PR.

In his eight years at Ogilvy, Bob has worked on numerous clients across different industries and markets. After being rewarded with Cannes Gold for the Great Chinese Names for Great Britain campaign, he dived into the "science" side of the business, and currently leads a team of 12 consultants & strategists, providing consultancy and solutions regarding digital & social strategy, content/channel targeting, social loyalty, and CRM.

 ${\tt \#Brands\ \#E-commerce\ \#StoreOptimization\ \#DirectToConsumer\ \#PathToPurchase\ \#CustomerJourney\ \#Loyalty\ \#CRM\ \#SocialSelling}$

In China we have over 500 social e-commerce experts.

Group M has over 500+ e-commerce media experts. Like one of the largest teams in China, WPP is also the biggest spender during China's major shopping season including Singles Day festival, averaging over RMB 8 billion in GMV for over 50 clients year-on-year.

46



Justin TeoChief Experience Officer / Head of MarTech, Geometry China

Having worked and lived in Greater China for the last 13 years, Justin understands the importance of relevancy and speed of localization in order to win the local market. With experience on both client and agency side, a more holistic approach is usually preferred by Justin to identify and maximize a business opportunity.

Working with leading brands in Asia applying multi-disciplinary knowledge from insight to conversions and everything in between, Justin has consistently found ways to innovate and rejuvenate traditional business. Finding and driving business growth via a more effective and efficient strategy has kept Justin's passion burning for the past 20-plus years in the marketing and communications.

#BelowTheLine #Experiential #CXJourney #IMC #NewRetail #Technology #Ecosystem #ConsumerInsight



Bolin Wang

Managing Director Content+ Mindshare China

Bolin Wang heads up the innovation content solutions department at Mindshare, Content+. Content+ exists for the sole purpose of creating branded experiences for consumers that they really care about.

In six years, he has transformed a two-member start-up into a 30 member team of diverse specialists with a range of expertise. Under his leadership, they deliver IP based panentertainment engagement solutions across interactive video, gaming, e-sports, live streaming, short-form video, social commerce activation, offline experience and much more.

Bolin leads a team that partners with the very best in youth culture and pan-entertainment business. They have long term strategic partnerships with top interaction entertainment and production companies throughout China and specialize in connecting #1 IP with our client brands, particularly in entertainment and gaming. With them, content+ has won over 100 industry awards in the last two years.

#content #social #KOLs #influencer management #programming #video #livebroadcast #contentIP



Clement Wu

Chief Digital Officer, Mediacom China

Clement has 16 years of working experience in the advertising industry. He has worked across different agencies as well as client-side, including with Mediacom, Starcom, OMD Colgate-Palmolive, Adidas, Danone and many others. He rejoined Mediacom in 2018 within a specialized digital operations role which oversees the digital performance of all clients.

#Media #Planning #Efficiency #OmniChannel #DigitalPerformance #ROI



Ali Zein Kazmi

VP Partnerships & Strategic Development, Asia, Ogilvy China

Over the past 15 years, Ali has worked in digital content, social, media and strategy roles with leading agency networks in China. He started his career in Beijing in 1999 in a marketing management capacity for a telecom value-added services company, and four years later transitioned to develop and manage brand assets on digital channels for the mobile devices, hospitality, spirits, and FMCG industry.

Since 2015, his focus has been developing Ogilvy's technology and platform capability by partnering with Chinese startups to develop Ogilvy's marketing technology infrastructure. In this role, he is also strategic counsel for brands that are building direct-to-consumer relationships. With Ogilvy's capability leaders he has co-developed the Ogilvy Marketing Suite, a made-for-China marketing automation solution powered by leading technology players in this market. Today, he leads the Partnerships capability for Ogilvy across Asia.

#OgilvyMarketingSuite #socialCRM #influencer management #martech #digitaltransformation #consulting Ogilvy China



CONTENT, CONVERSATION & COMMERCE

WPP ON SOCIAL COMMERCE IN CHINA

NOVEMBER 2019