



WHY BRANDS STRUGGLE IN CHINA

**HOW TO KNOW IF YOU ARE
READY FOR THE MARKET**

A TYPICAL CASE OF FAILURE

Let's take a look at a case study: A famous brand entered China and opened a Tmall store only to close it after only a couple years in business.

Around the time this brand closed the store, they released a very simple official statement to the press. The press release focused on stiff competition from “Taobao counterfeits” pushing them out of business.

BUT, I happen to know that's not the real reason they decided to close up shop.

How did I know? Thirty days before closing the store, we met with the CFO of their China division for an audit on their Tmall store.

There were actually two “real reasons” for their demise in China, neither of which had anything to do with counterfeits.

It doesn't matter how big you are. China can eat you alive very quickly. Mistakes are easy to make here, and they're killer. China is a minefield.

Whether you're small or large, this is the secret to success:

Success is highly nuanced.

THE MAGIC OF TAobao

When he created Taobao, Jack Ma built something very unique, but very few people understand it. So when I talk to people they throw things at me like; “Taobao's a flea market”, “it's a fake market”, “it's C2C”, “it's eBay”.

In reality, it's none of those things at all. I want to show you exactly what it is.

When you use Taobao for the first time it's a magical experience. It is an extremely powerful platform, and more importantly, it's a transformative way of purchasing and interfacing with merchants.

Confronted with new opportunities, people tend to lose out in four ways: They don't see it coming, they turn their nose up at it, they don't understand it, or they're too late to adapt.

- Jack Ma



PURCHASING A FLOOR LAMP ON TAobao

Shopping on Taobao is unlike anything most people (outside of China) have ever experienced. To illustrate this, I had Dana, one of my account managers, do a simple demonstration of the power of this platform. I asked her to look for a high end floor lamp for our office. What you see are screenshots of her mobile device as she runs through a process of finding and purchasing this floor lamp.

So let's start.

1. Dana types in a keyword “floor lamp” and gets a typical sort of Amazon search engine listings.
2. She clicks one of the listings, and grabs discount coupons with a tip tap of her fingers.
3. While on the same page, Dana clicks on the customer service icon and flips a link automatically to the CS (Customer Service) department with the product link.
4. The CS representative (a real human being) greets her within 1-2 seconds. Dana asks her first question: “Can I change the lighting of the bulb?”



Type in keyword :
"high-end floor lamp"
on Taobao app (1 sec)



Grab discount
coupons on the
product page (4 sec)



Send the product link
to CS rep to start the
chat (14 sec)



Ask the CS rep: "Can I
change the lighting of
the bulb?" (17 sec)

PURCHASING A FLOOR LAMP ON TAobao (Continued)

5. While waiting for the CS to respond, Dana decides to go to “Buyer’s Collection” by clicking on a button embedded in the chat. “Buyer’s Collection” is similar to Pinterest where she can see unboxing reviews, what all the other purchasers have done with this product, what they feel about it, and so on.
6. In a few seconds, the CS responds to her first question. Look at the seconds count. She sent the question at 17 seconds and got a response from a human being at 25. That’s eight seconds.
7. Dana asks another question, then she goes down the list and thinks, “I want to talk to other consumers who have also bought this product.” She clicks on the embedded button called, “Ask Everyone” which is a place where consumers who bought from the merchant can talk to consumers who haven’t yet. The merchant can’t interfere much like Airbnb and Uber.
8. Meanwhile, in order to do that she has to follow the store - that’s similar to Twitter or Instagram



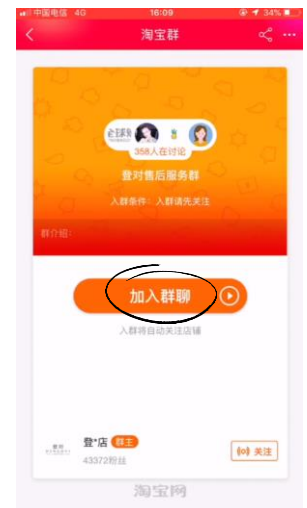
While waiting, browse product photos from “buyer’s collection”



CS rep’s first response: “lighting can be adjusted” (25 sec)



Ask another Q. While waiting, click the second feature “Ask Everyone” (27 sec)



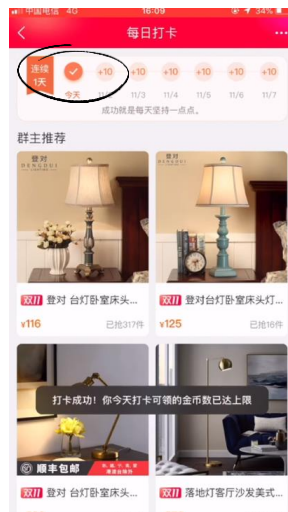
Before asking questions, I need to “follow” the store (29 sec)

PURCHASING A FLOOR LAMP ON TAobao (Continued)

9. She has to check in - that's Four Square. She get her points - that's gamification.
10. After going through multiple Q/A sessions, Dana makes her mind and customizes the order. At the end, with a thumbprint with Alibaba, Dana's made a purchase.



When admitted into the chat, **daily check-in** (32 sec)



Check-in for today to **receive points** (34 sec)



Ask the group "Is it difficult to set up lamp?" (38 sec)



Ask CS "Do I need to purchase a battery?" (42 sec)



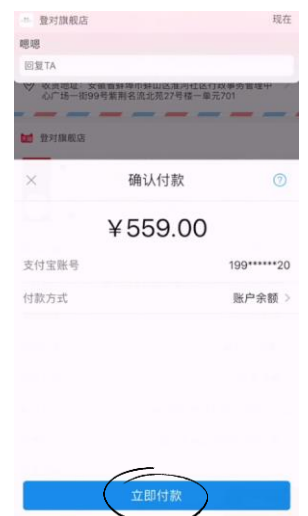
Pick the color and **add to shopping cart** (53 sec)



CS: "You need to buy a separate battery" (1 min 5 sec)



Click "buy", and submit the order (1 min 17 sec)







Pay using Alipay and end the shopping journey

That Entire Process Took **1 MIN, 17 SEC**

You can experience the combined functionality of 10+ applications on your phone in **every single** Taobao merchants store.



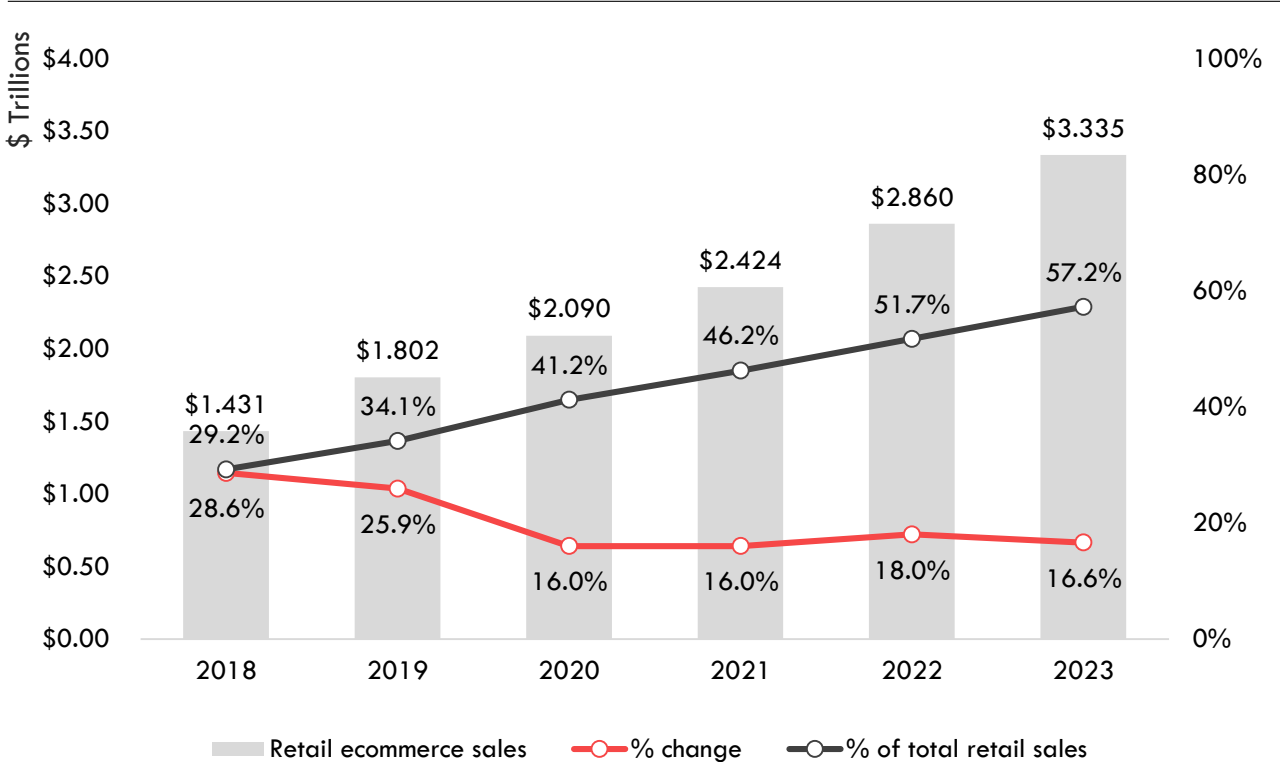
WHAT WORKS GLOBALLY DOES NOT WORK IN CHINA

What works globally, does not work in China. Automation is a myth. This is a high touch, very intense place to do business. If you're not ready, you need to be honest with yourself and admit it. Here's why...

Let's start with competition in the Chinese ecommerce space. Back in 2015, there

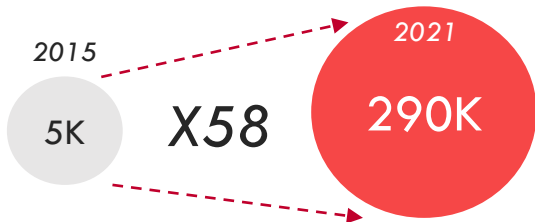
were 5000 foreign brands. It was already big yet growing rapidly. Now fast forward to 2019. That number has grown to 190,000 brands! **Bottom line: it's getting crowded, and you can't mess things up.** Every little strategic error has the potential to take you down. If you're not competitive in any way - you die.

Figure 1: Retail Ecommerce Sales In China, 2018-2023



Note: Includes products or services ordered using the internet via any device, regardless of the method of payment or fulfillment; excludes travel and event tickets, payments such as bill pay, taxes or money transfers, food services and drinking place sales, gambling and other vice goods sales; excludes Hong Kong | Source: eMarketer, May 2020

Figure 2: Number of Foreign Brands on Tmall, 2015 vs 2021

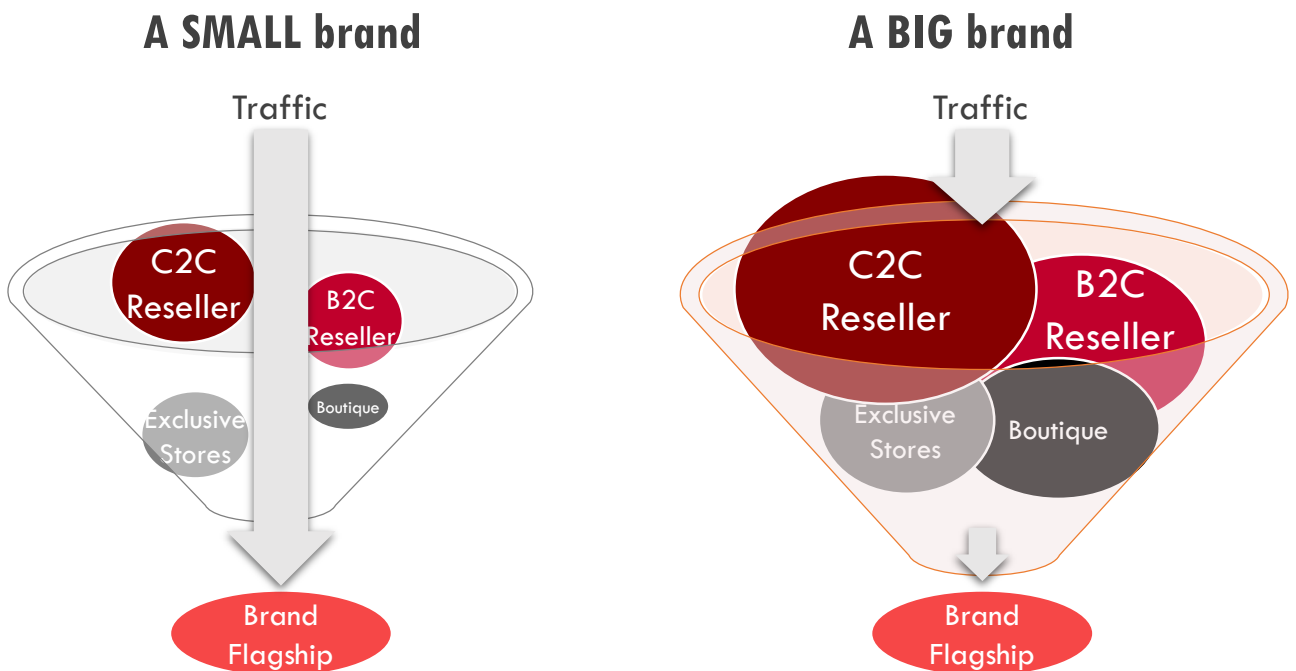


Alibaba signed up **290,000 international brands** for its massive **Singles Day** sale in November 2021, up from 5,000 in 2015.

Keep in mind that **you're competing with everyone INCLUDING YOURSELF for traffic**. When you're small and you launch a store, everyone can find you. You can easily find the flagship store. The minute your business is worth having - is worth someone else going and buying and selling your product, and trading on the arbitrage - your ecosystem looks like the "big brand" on the right, where many other players will capture traffic that would otherwise go to you.

You have to understand how to recapture and control your traffic, and with it the unauthorized revenue.

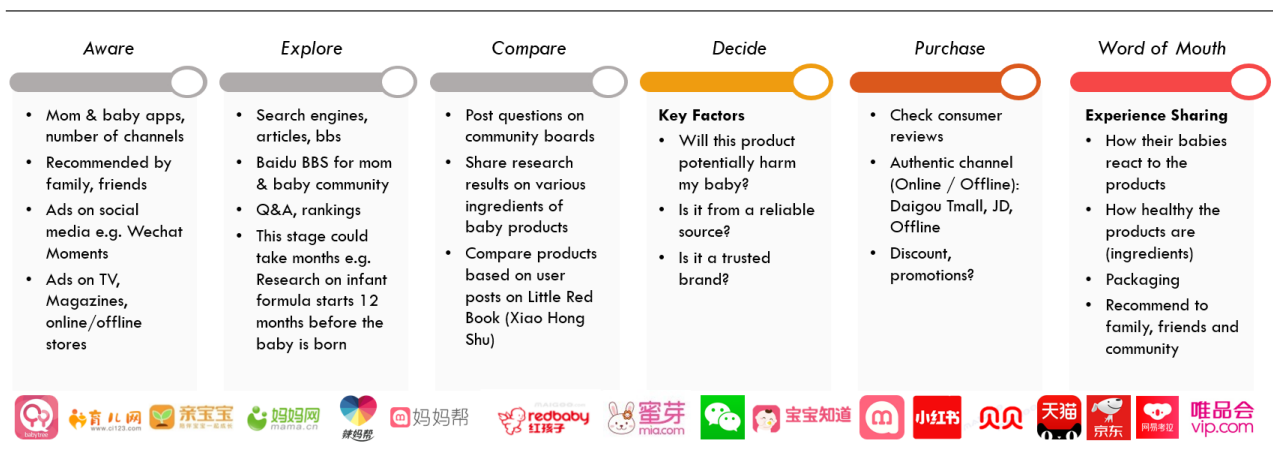
Figure 3: You Compete With Everyone (Including Yourself) For Traffic



CHINESE CONSUMERS HAVE MUCH HIGHER EXPECTATIONS

Chinese consumers are super picky. They have extremely high standards. The norm here is a free gift, same day delivery, dealing direct with brands or factories, receiving everything they want with top notch customer service all the way through checkout and delivery. Consumers can take their time, and they do.

Figure 4: Consumer Journey When Buying Infant Formula



- Word-of-mouth convinces Chinese parents to make purchasing decisions, 55.6% put peer experience and KOL recommendations in highest regard, and then consider more immediate decisions such as brand names/reputations, price and product origins.
- Apart from the most known WeChat and Weibo, Chinese parents also like to use ones specifically focused on the parenting experience e.g. Baby Trees, Qinbaobao, Mamawangqingliao, and Mamabang, post 90s mothers also like to communicate on RED (Xiaohongshu).

The above figure shows a consumer journey for a French infant formula brand that wanted to launch a Tmall store. They wanted to go direct to commerce, without doing any market research or designing an activation plan for the launch.

When we showed this consumer journey to the client, he was amazed: “Whoa, the consumer made the decision 12 months ago!”. Not to mention the number of channels they explore before making a

purchasing decision. Chinese moms become “self-trained experts” going through in-depth research, comparisons, asking friends and family, etc. On average they’re spending at least 12 months before they finally decide which infant formula brand they want to buy.

It all starts 12 months in advance, and you have to optimize 10+ platforms BEFORE the consumer gets into Taobao and Tmall to makes a purchase.

CHINESE CONSUMERS ARE SUPER DEMANDING

On Tmall, the amount of images required for a single product page is often ten times what you'd typically see on an Amazon listing or even a brand's official website. The minimum photo shoot for any product is five images from different angles, model shots and a 360 degree video. That's the MINIMUM to get in now.

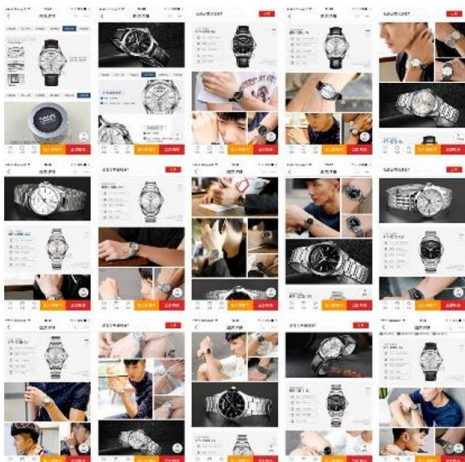
Your brand assets have to be robust and beautiful. You have to write excellent copy and content, and manage the in-platform store Twitter in order to constantly engage consumers. You can't just leave an empty shelf. And forget using robots for customer service. There are actual human beings that want to buy from you and you have to interact with them.

On top of that, you have to prove that your product is authentic. This is actually more difficult than you think because the forgeries and the people that fake and squat in China are very clever, and they can look more authentic than the real thing. So you have to take videos of your factory and your executive team. You have to prove that you exist and it's your store.

More important, you have to have prompt and responsive INSTANT customer service. If you miss 15 seconds, you're out of the game as the consumer bounces to a new store. It's a place where winner takes all.

Figure 5: Some Rules to Follow as a Tmall Merchant

TYPICAL PRODUCT PAGE ON TMALL



SOME RULES TO FOLLOW...

LARGE NUMBER OF
PRODUCT IMAGES

The minimum photo shoot for any client is 5 images and a 360 degree video.
So your brand assets have to be robust and beautiful, and you have to write a ton of copy and content, and manage them.

CLEAR DESCRIPTION
& AUTHENTICITY
OF PRODUCT

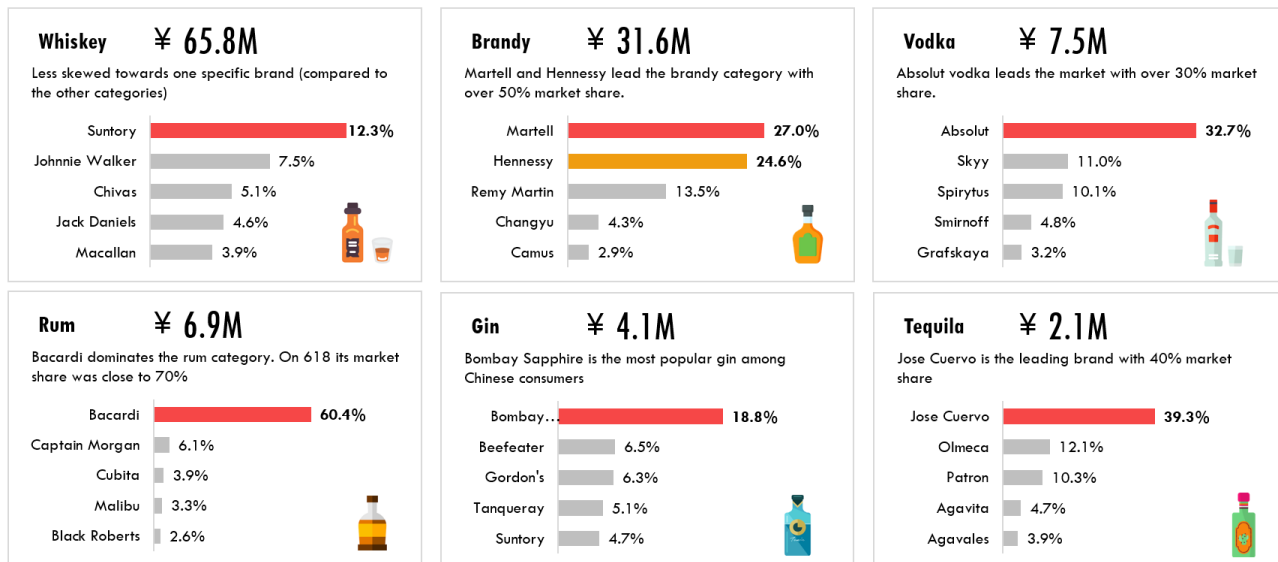
You have to prove that you are "REAL".
This is more difficult than you think because the people that fake and squat in China are very clever, and they look more authentic than the actual branded products.

PROMPT &
RESPONSIVE
CUSTOMER
SERVICE

Chinese consumers expect prompt response via online chat channels 24/7.
If we miss 15 seconds, you're out of the game, they've bounced to a new store.

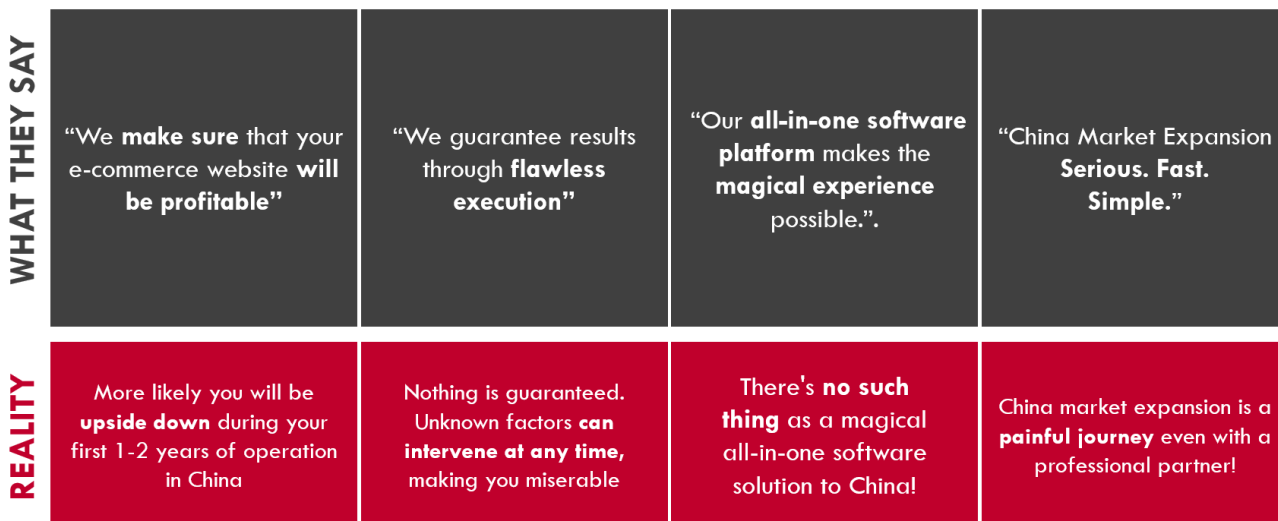
Figure 6: China Is A Place Where Winner Takes All

SPIRITS CATEGORY SALES & TOP 5 BRANDS ON ALIBABA (JULY 2020)



BRANDS ARE TOLD FAIRY TALES OF EASY SUCCESS

Figure 7: Brands Are Told Fairy Tales of Easy Success



THERE IS NO MAGIC BUTTON

Beware of partners for Tmall, JD or other platforms in China that say things like, “We guarantee results.” “We’re going to make you profitable from day one,” and “Our software platform is a magical experience.”

I don’t know about you, but there’s no all-in-one software that’s magical outside of China. Can you imagine inside China? And even worse are the empty promises of “serious, fast, simple, easy, cheap, we can get it done.” That’s just not the reality.

That doesn’t mean you can’t build a successful presence here. All my clients do eventually. But you have to be realistic...there is no magic button.



3 QUESTIONS

FOR SUCCESS IN CHINA

These questions are what we ask ourselves when we have brands come to us to gauge if they're well positioned for success in China.



IS THE BRAND STRONG ENOUGH?

Brand strength is often misunderstood. This is the delta between awareness, knowing who you are and actually caring enough to buy what you're selling.



IS THE BRAND COMMITTED?

Are they committed to do it, and do it right?



WILL THEY RESOURCE IT PROPERLY?

Resources are more than capital. Brands need to have the right team, assets, marketing, and product mix.

AREAS WHERE BRAND STRUGGLE

STRATEGY

- What's my **BUSINESS MODEL**?
- Have I done enough **MARKET RESEARCH**?
- What **LOCALIZATION** efforts did I put in?
- What is my **BUDGET** for this business?
- Do I have a local **TEAM**?

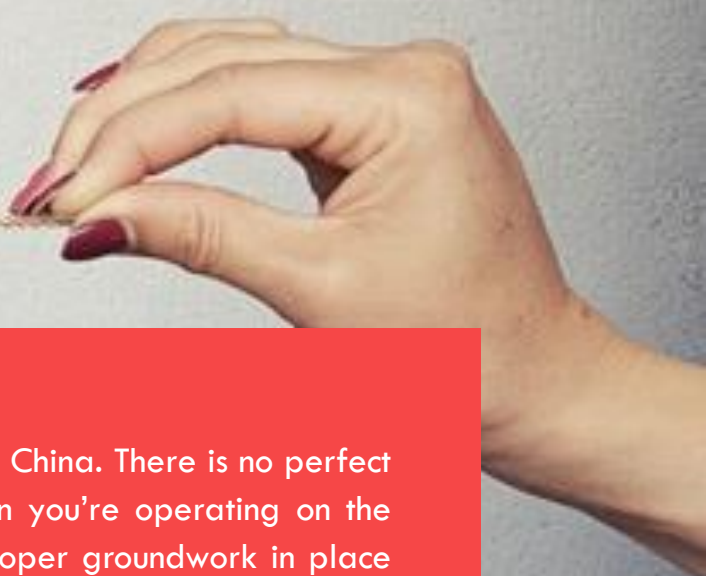
STRUCTURE

- How are my products being **DISTRIBUTED**?
- Do I have **CONTROL** over IP & inventory?
- What are the **COMMERCIAL TERMS**?
- Do I have the right **SET UP**?

EXECUTION

- How am I going to **ACTIVATE** my brand?
- How will I effectively **OPERATE/OPTIMIZE** my online store?
- Are my **PARTNERS** reliable?
- What are the hidden **EXTERNAL FACTORS**?

THERE'S A LOT OF **FRICTION** THAT YOU MUST CONFRONT



Everyone is going to encounter problems in China. There is no perfect situation. Even within a success story, when you're operating on the ground here things happen. Putting the proper groundwork in place can help you avoid problems before they start.

Strategy and structure are things you must get right before you enter China.

Next, we'll be looking at how things can go wrong. I've met with more than 500 brands. I've seen just about everything you can possibly imagine. The case studies I'll share will be valuable to you if:

- You are in the market and have similar experiences, or
- You haven't gone in yet and you want to know what to avoid.

SQUATTING: IP THEFT

In China, it is vital to control your IP. Competitors can squat on your traffic, your trademark, contracts, exclusive rights, etc. if you're not careful.

Let's look at a case study, an American personal care brand that failed to do the basic research to understand how Chinese people search for them online.

There were four Chinese characters people were already using to refer to this brand. Instead, the brand hired a fancy agency in New York to design a Chinese name for the product without realizing they were already very popular in China.

They launched a Tmall store and they got no traffic or revenue. When we came in, the first thing we noticed was they didn't own the rights to their own name. They had a big problem, because the distributor who registered the four characters can keep the name forever. They're generic characters. And you can't easily get it back. Don't let that happen to you. Get your trademarks, do the research and then reap the rewards.

Figure 8: Strategy – Squatting: IP Theft



AMERICAN PERSONAL CARE BRAND

BACKGROUND



Parallel importer (distributor) already **registered brand's Chinese trademark**

Brand **did not do proper market research** to see what Chinese call their brand

RESULTS

LOST TRAFFIC

Distributor controls all the traffic rights:
All ad/marketing/search is based on the Chinese name

Notes:
In terms of trademarks, China is a "first-to-file" market.

PRODUCT-MARKET FIT FAILURE

To succeed in China, you need to have a good product-market fit. I recently met with a New Zealand meat brand who was having issues with this. When they came to us, was already too late for us to fix it. Here's what they did.

A couple of people in their product development department thought that because they like stir fry, that Chinese people would love little cubes of lamb in a bag.

Now, this could be good. Could be bad. There's no way to know without doing the research. All it would take is to go down the street to the nearest Chinese restaurants and find one item with that on the menu. It's just not in China anywhere. No one is eating it.

Unfortunately, the company neglected checking for a product-market fit, so they're underwater. They've got three truckloads of product in China and half a million (USD) wasted on a product that Chinese consumers don't want to buy.

Figure 9: Strategy – Product-Market Fit Failure



ITALIAN SPORTSWEAR BRAND

BACKGROUND

Re-launched the brand in China, using Tmall as one-and-only sales channel

RESULTS

Product was **priced too high**, did not meet **consumer taste**, was perceived as **“dead-brand”**



NEW ZEALAND MEAT BRAND

BACKGROUND

Ordered 20-foot container of **frozen mini cubes of lamb and beef** for China market

RESULTS

Containers full of unsalable meat! Lack of basic product & consumer research

DECISION MAKERS LOCATED OUTSIDE OF CHINA

Although there are many ways things can go wrong, the biggest mistake that I see on a daily basis is people who aren't in China making decisions on the business and strategy for China.

Recently, I met with an American personal care brand. This group is quite large, and the global CEO had a close relationship with the global CEO of another large consulting firm (also based in the US) who said, "Hey, we can run Tmall for you."

So the brand hired the consulting firm based solely on their personal relationship and it was a total disaster. We were brought in to audit their Tmall operations. The APAC director was horrified. Their store was performing so badly that Tmall was about to de-list it. Alibaba had to get involved, remove them, and put on a new distributor. It's embarrassing because the brand is actually quite successful in Asia. But when your Tmall store has ranked this bad, it tarnishes your reputation and destroys your brand equity.

You can fix these things. Don't let people with no China experience make decisions on how you operate here.

Figure 10: Strategy – People Not In China Making Decisions



AMERICAN PERSONAL CARE BRAND

BACKGROUND

Brand's CEO in the U.S. **nominated a global consulting firm as operator** of its Tmall store

RESULTS

With no hands-on experience managing & operating on Tmall – **lackluster performance**



GERMAN SPORTS CLUB BRAND

BACKGROUND

Corporate office in Germany signed an **exclusive deal with a global distributor**

RESULTS

The distributor **hired an incompetent TP based in LA** - store sales were anemic

MALICIOUS INTERFERENCE

The next pitfall for foreign brands in China is malicious interference. Unfortunately, this is outside everyone’s control, but it happens to us all the time. For example, we were operating a very large German pharmaceutical group’s OTC medicine portfolio on Tmall’s health platform called AliHealth. We had about 12 brands in the store and it was doing very well.

About halfway through the year, offline retail distributors of pharmaceutical companies in China got very angry that Alibaba took so much business away from their retail operations. They banded together, and got Ali’s license to operate as a pharmacy marketplace revoked. All the flagships got shut down, and then everyone was forced to go through distributors.

Figure 11: Structure – Government’s Malicious Interference



GERMAN PHARMACEUTICAL GROUP

BACKGROUND

We (As a TP) Operated Brand’s Tmall Store

On/Offline Pharmacies Sued Alibaba For Taking Market Share



RESULTS

GOVERNMENT REVOKED ALIBABA’S MEDICAL LICENSE + SET NEW REGULATIONS ON TMALL

- All flagship stores in Tmall medical/pharma category shut down or operated by licensees
- Service providers cannot manage flagships unless they have online or offline pharmacy licenses issued by the government

HIJACKING

You hear about airplane and car hijackings, but how about product hijacking?

A distributor who held my client’s exclusive rights in China decided to sell her company. However, after she sold the business and left the country the buyer, the new distributor, decided to stiff her. He said, “You know, I’m not going to pay. We have a contract, I bought your company but I’m not going to pay half of it.”

The buyer then started running his business as usual and ordered a couple million RMB worth of product. When it arrived in the port of Tianjin it suddenly disappeared in customs. The next day he went down to his warehouse to find it locked. After he broke in, he discovered that the warehouse was completely empty. He had his E-commerce team try to sign in to Tmall store and found out he was locked out.

The old distributor (who he had stiffed) had locked him out using her relationships. She held the product for ransom, forced him to pay her what he owed plus another million for her troubles. It crushed my client’s business for six months.

This is the risk you run when you offer exclusivity to people without clauses to get it back.

Figure 12: Structure – Hijacked By a Former Distributor



POISONOUS AGENDAS

If you've worked in business, you're no stranger to competing agendas. Unfortunately sometimes in China, it can get ugly.

We are currently working on taking over operations for a new client's Tmall store. It's a backpack brand that has historically been very successful. One of the employees in their Shanghai office told management, "Hey, I'll find you the best operator for backpacks. Don't worry about it."

He didn't do that at all. Instead he went and chose a distributor that he could make a behind the scenes deal with in order to earn commissions on the side. And he presented the contract to his boss in Chinese. Of course, this was so his Australian boss couldn't read the contract to see that they were signing away perpetual rights to Tmall and JD. So it's taken nine months, lots of lawyers and a lot of expenses to undo what this employee and his poisonous agenda put into place.

Figure 13: Execution – Poisonous Agendas of Local Staff



AUSTRALIAN BACKPACK BRAND

BACKGROUND



INTERNAL STAFF
IN CHINA OFFICE

"Instead of running an official RFP for Tmall operations, I'll find us a distributor specialized in backpacks!"

RESULTS

- Signed exclusive authorization letters **without an "end date"**
- Privately negotiated a deal - **getting commission** from the distributor under the table
- Tmall distributor incompetent but was **able to force brand into a buyout...**and they had to pay!

DANGEROUS PARTNERS

In China, you must chose your partners wisely. My client's a skin care brand from New Zealand learned this the hard way.

The person that they hired as their head of international business was based in Auckland and didn't know anything about China - but said she did.

They were fortunate enough to be one of those brands that is activated by accident in China. They had very successful business cross-border and the new manager wanted to legitimize it and put it through authorized distribution. A guy came to them and convinced them that he was a TP and a good candidate for the business. The new manager quickly gave this man a five year exclusive without doing any background check.

About a year into the relationship, he was very hostile, and they didn't know what was going on until they found out that he was actually an arms dealer. The man manufactured dangerous weapons and sold them to Kazakhstan. But, because of the contract that was hastily put in place they are stuck for the next five years unless he decides to give it up.

Figure 14: Execution – Dangerous Partners



NEW ZEALAND SKINCARE BRAND

BACKGROUND

Hired Staff for China Online Business...

Who Had NO IDEA About China Business

RESULTS



Due to lack of experience, the staff **didn't do background check** when hiring distributors...

Signed an exclusive contract (5yrs) with a guy (claimed to be a TP), who was an arms dealer – A “hot head” and **former Chinese exporter for dangerous weapons!**

SABOTAGED BY LOCAL COMPETITORS

When you're successful, you can attract the unwanted attention of competitors who will go to great lengths to try to stop you.

We had a very high profile launch for a client on 11 11, which went very well. This resulted in our client taking market share away from existing brands in the category. Immediately, one of the key competitors launched an attack. They hired a third party to start creating fake orders to try to hurt our ranking system. About a third of the orders per day ended up being fake. Tmall has a seven day unlimited right of return, and they were using that against us.

They also called the government bureaus and triggered aggressive audits, costing the store a million RMB. Lastly, they hired some thugs to go squat in the showroom.

Fortunately, we did get the client out of this situation. It took about three months, but things are fine and for the most part have returned to normal.

Figure 15: Execution – Sabotaged By Local Competitors



AMERICAN APPAREL BRAND

BACKGROUND

High Profile Tmall Launch

One and Only Foreign Brand Within Category

Successful Online & Offline Operations

RESULTS

FAKE ORDERS

1/3rd of orders were competitors making use of Tmall's unlimited 7 day, right-of-return policy.

AGGRESSIVE AUDITS

The commerce department and the tax authority both have tried to **fine and hamper the brand's operations**

GANGSTER THUGS

Gangsters show up to the brand's physical showroom and refuse to leave, intimidating the office staff

I'm sharing these worst-case scenarios because I want you to really consider the following question...

ARE YOU **REALLY** READY FOR CHINA?

Check out our sabotage map on the next page.

Competitors have gone to great lengths to try to thwart our clients. Turns out, we are far from alone.

I was contacted by countless others sharing their stories of sabotage in China. From harassment by thugs, to extra “regulations”...and even a bit of human feces (I wish I was making this up) doing business in China is NOT for the faint of heart.

Offline distributor registers brand's Chinese trademark

Copycats controls all the traffic rights

Local Police chief and two van loads of Police arrives to pick up his "Present"



Lawyers failed to register the correct trademark in Chinese in the right categories



The commerce department and the tax authority both try to fine and hamper the operations

SQUATTING

A disgruntled customer files complaints on I&C Bureau and find ways to get paid

ABUSE OF AUTHORITY



Human waste on office walls

Gangsters show up to the brand's physical showroom



Supplier hires thugs to accelerate the payment process

Shopping mall tenants hiring thugs and threatening the business

GANGSTER THUGS

Government audits resulting from vengeful former employees/competitors

Competitor sues Tmall under our brand's name

Local staff signs an exclusive authorization letter without an end date

Fake bulk orders placed by competitors making use of Tmall's unlimited 7 day, right-of-return policy



DIRTY PLAY

20 ppl Illegally occupying restaurant tables and not paying



Privately negotiates a deal getting commission from the distributor under the table

Competitors using personal accounts to leave fake reviews and harm your reputation

POISONOUS AGENDAS

YOU KNOW YOU'VE GOT
A **WINNER** IF...



UNIQUE PRODUCT

- Category leader in home market
- Product is niche, one of a kind
- Right product-market fit, not “me too”

CONTROL OVER CHANNELS

- Competitive supply chain, high quality
- Inventory and price controls
- Minimal channel conflict

PRE-ACTIVATION

- Known to enthusiasts, hobbyists or professionals, iconic
- Bought by Chinese travelers, traders and overseas students

SOLID MARKETING PLAN

- Competent marketing team
- Will invest (enough) in activation
- Can afford the long game

UNIQUE PRODUCT

First of all, we're looking for some type of uniqueness. Don't come to me with a vitamin C tablet. There's already a thousand brands selling vitamin C tablets. I need to see something that is unique.

You need to be a leader in your own way. Either you've created your own sub category, you have an iconic product, you're in a great position, or you're just lucky and Chinese tourists buy your stuff.

The latter happens all the time. If you're in the fortunate position of living in a popular destination for Chinese tourists, you just need to get your products out in front of them. Activation happens like that everyday. You must also have product market fit. "Me too" products don't fare well.

CHANNEL CONTROL

You absolutely need control of your channels. By that I mean, you don't want to be in a situation like we were with the hand bag brand, where a parallel importer can buy the product and cut you on price in China. You will never win against these traders. So that's another thing everyone has to understand - that you're supply chain and centralized inventory and price control goes along with uniqueness.

PRE-ACTIVATION

Arguably the most important of all of these is pre-activation: Are you known through word of mouth?

That could be because travelers, traders, or students buy your product and sell it to their friends through the Daigou networks.

Another option is having a niche. For example, one of my clients is in the motorbike category. If you buy a motorbike, and you're going to buy a uniform to protect yourself in a race, they're one of the three brands available to buy. So they're already activated and known to hobbyists, enthusiasts, and people passionate about the things they do. So if you're in that kind of iconic, or specialized space and your products are good, you have a great shot at the title.

SOLID MARKETING PLAN

And last, you need a solid and clear marketing plan that includes activation budgets, and professional brand assets that we can actually use.

SO WHERE DO YOU BEGIN? HERE'S YOUR SELF CHECKLIST.



Do I Know Where My Brand Stands In the Market?

I mean that very specifically... Have you looked at the data that's available to understand if it's a viable option? Have you determined if it's something that you can do successfully?



Do I Have A Clear & Realistic Business Case?

If you don't, then you need to bring in help. There are a lot of people that will facilitate this for you, companies that can help you build a business case and look at the commercial viability of the project over time.



Do I Have The Right Resources?

This depends very much on where your activation level falls. Some brands are just lucky. We see this often in brands from Australia and New Zealand because there's so much cross-border trade, a lot of brands are accidentally activated. So when they look at a launch in China, it's not expensive at all, where as others might be starting from zero.



ABOUT US

Kung Fu Data's only goal is to help brands succeed in China regardless of what stage they are at: Whether it's ecommerce advisory or activating and optimizing a Tmall store, we leverage data and relationships to create that success.

CONTACT

 josh@kungfudata.com

 [/joshagardner](https://www.linkedin.com/company/kungfu-data)

 [joshgardner](#)