



BRIDGING BORDERS

STRATEGIC GUIDELINES FOR

Chinese Brands Expanding
Globally and International
Brands Succeeding in China



GLOBALIZATION TODAY
LOOKS MARKEDLY DIFFERENT
FROM THE VERSION THAT
DOMINATED THE EARLY 2000s.

THE NEW REALITY

Two decades ago, globalization was largely defined by Western multinationals

outsourcing manufacturing to lower-cost production hubs, with economies like China playing a supporting role in global value chains. Now, the flow of influence, capital, and innovation is far more multidirectional. Technology, shifting geopolitical landscapes, and changing consumer behaviors have disrupted the old model. As a result, markets

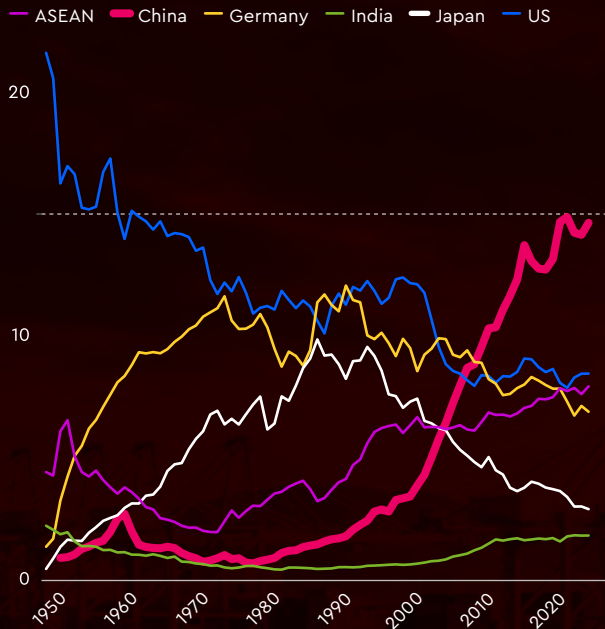
that were once viewed primarily as manufacturing backbones are now setting global trends and shaping international standards with increasing authority.

China is widely recognized as the world's largest exporter, but it is often overlooked as the world's second-largest importer. Today, China is the largest trading partner for more than 120 countries. It accounts for roughly 15% of global exports—a milestone only the U.S. reached in the 1960s—and over 10% of global imports, a figure set to rise as China's economy continues to grow. With a population of 1.4 billion—four times that of the U.S.—China's market gravity is hard to ignore.



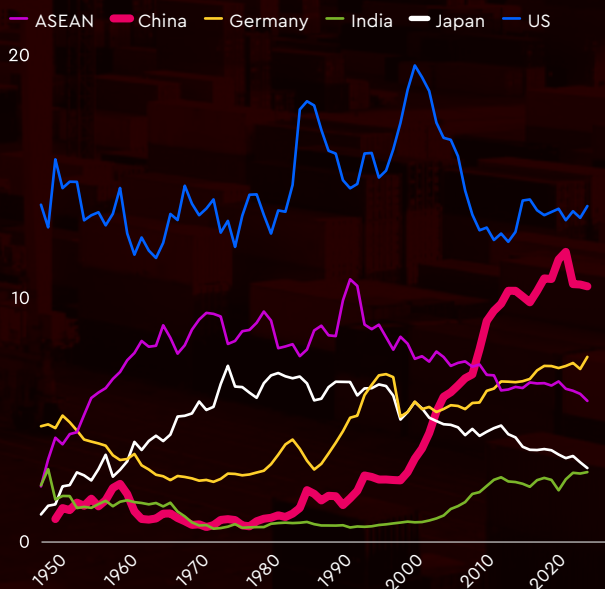
CHINA HAS BECOME THE WORLD'S LARGEST EXPORT CENTER...

Share of World Export by Country [Percent]



...AND IS ALSO THE SECOND LARGEST IMPORTER IN THE WORLD

Share of World Import by Country [Percent]



Source: Macrobond, Hutong Research

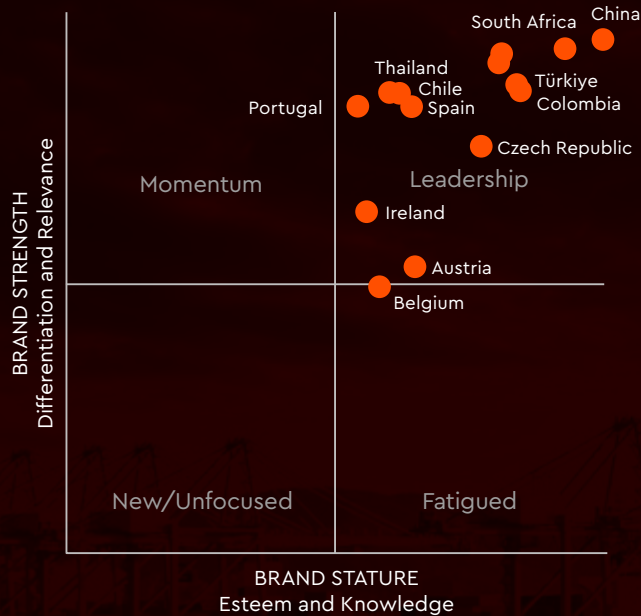
CHINA HAS EVOLVED FROM A FAST-GROWING CONSUMER MARKET INTO A FORMIDABLE FORCE IN GLOBAL BRAND-BUILDING.

No longer content to supply products from behind the scenes, Chinese companies are now creating brands with global recognition and influence. Firms like Huawei, BYD, and Shein aren't just exporting goods. They're exporting culture, innovation, and identity. This marks a significant turning point: Chinese brands are now global players, competing head-to-head with Western incumbents across industries like technology, fashion, automotive, entertainment, and consumer electronics.



HUAWEI, SHEIN AND BYD SHOW STRONG PERFORMANCE ACROSS THE WORLD

BAV PowerGrid: HUAWEI



Source: WPP BAV, Multiple Markets, 2024/2025, All Adults

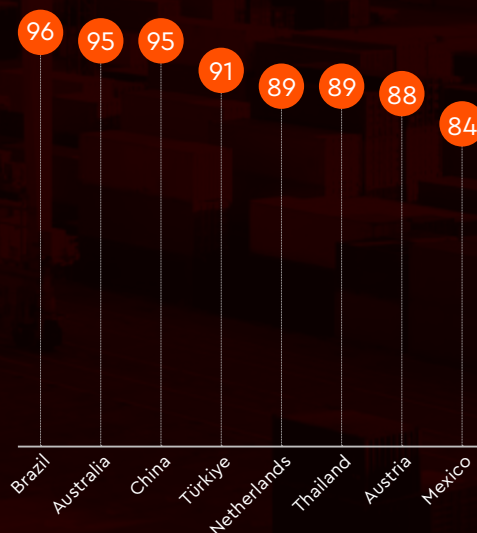
WHAT IS WPP BAV®?

BAV® – an exclusive WPP product – is the world's largest and longest running study of brands. Over the last 30+ years, WPP BAV has been surveying consumers in more than 50 countries across 75+ standardized brand metrics. Data on approximately 60,000 brands is collected regularly, generating over 16 billion data points. This model allows WPP to evaluate brands through a consistent lens over time, tracking the evolution of brand equity through dimensions such as equity, advocacy, and personality.

Developed in collaboration with institutions like Columbia Business School, MIT, Dartmouth, and the University of Washington, the WPP BAV® study has strong academic foundations. Today, WPP BAV® partners with leading institutions including NYU Stern, London Business School, Wharton, CKGSB, and the University of California.

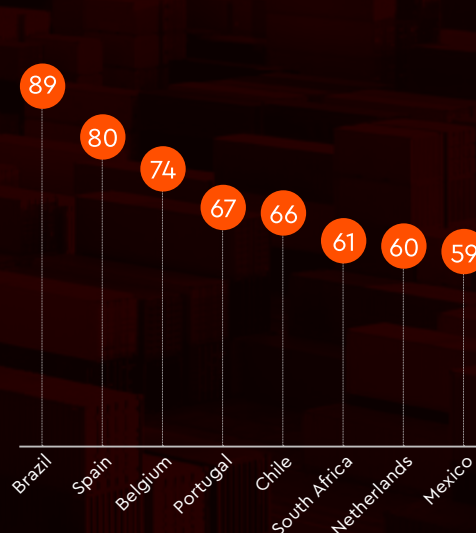
The study is intentionally 'category agnostic'; consumers aren't prompted to think in terms of industries but rather evaluate brands in the broader context of culture. This approach enables comparisons across sectors, such as tech versus automotive, based solely on cultural perception.

Brand Strength: BYD [Percentile Rank]



Source: WPP BAV, Multiple Markets, 2024/2025, All Adults

Top Preference: SHEIN [Percentile Rank]

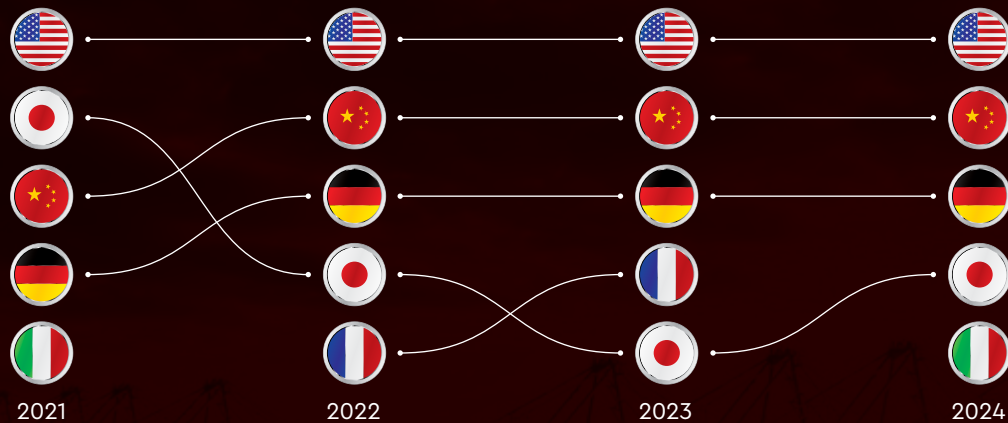


Source: WPP BAV, Multiple Markets, 2024/2025, All Adults



CHINA SUPPLIES STRONG CONSUMER BRANDS

Consumers for decades thought of China as one of the world's leading exporters, often of cheap products. That perception has changed over the past few years. Consumers worldwide now rate China as the No. 2 as a global brand builder just under the US and above other contenders, including Germany, Japan, and Italy.

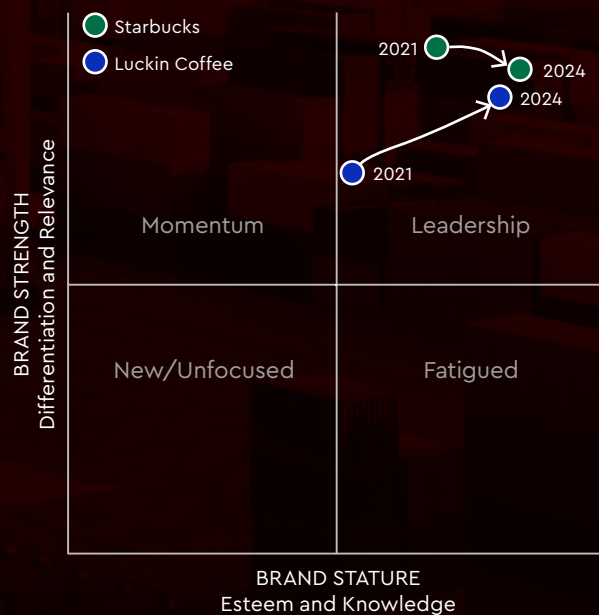


Source: WPP BAV Best Countries

Meanwhile, inside China, the sheer scale and sophistication of the domestic market, now one of the world's largest and most influential, has made it both a critical opportunity and a battleground. Foreign brands entering China must now compete not only with each other, but with ambitious and culturally attuned local players who increasingly set the pace.

LOCAL COMPETITION FOR GLOBAL BRANDS

WPP BAV PowerGrid: Starbucks vs. Luckin Coffee



Source: WPP BAV, China, 2021, 2024, All Adults





What is WPP BAV Best Countries?

The WPP BAV Best Countries ranking measures global perceptions of 89 nations across 73 attributes, including quality of life, entrepreneurship, and cultural influence. These perceptions play a key role in shaping outcomes in trade, tourism, and foreign investment.

There is a strong link between how a country is viewed and the brands associated with it. Strong countries often nurture strong brands, and those brands, in turn, help shape the country's global image.

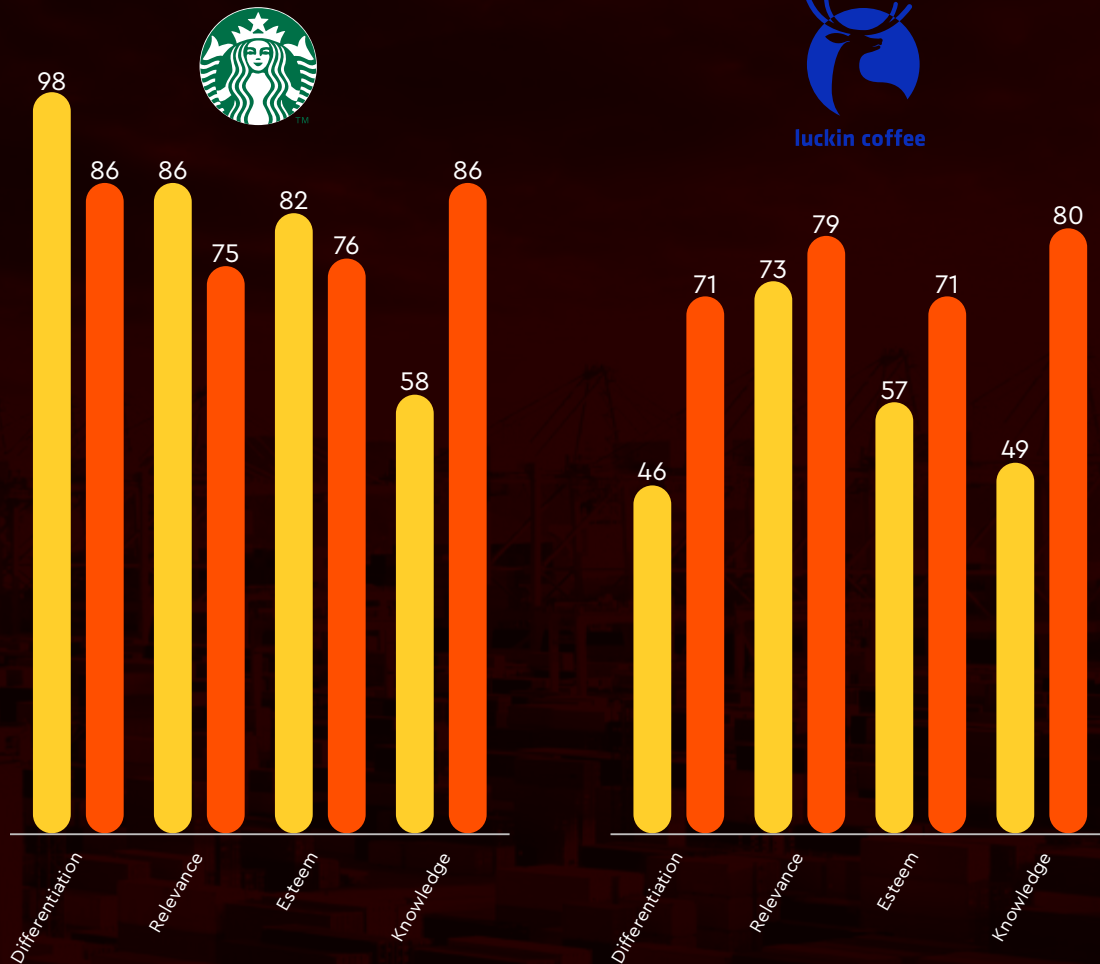
Developed by WPP BAV in partnership with U.S. News & World Report and The Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, the Best Countries ranking was first launched in 2016 at the World Economic Forum in Davos. Now in its ninth wave, it continues to serve as a valuable benchmark for understanding how nations are viewed around the world -- informing policy, investment, and brand strategy alike.

<https://wppbav.com/best-countries/>

PILLARS RISING FOR THE LOCALS...

Since 2021, Starbucks, although still a key player in the market, has seen a decline in Differentiation, Relevance, and Esteem among Chinese consumers. In contrast, local competitor, Luckin Coffee, has experienced growth across all these areas.

● 2021 ● 2024



Source: WPP BAV China, 2021, 2024, All Adults

This shifting landscape is critical to understanding business opportunities in a world shaped by geopolitics. Under the Trump administrations, Washington is seeking to boost exports and curb imports, often through unilateral pressure. In contrast, China is aiming to remain globally engaged by stimulating domestic demand and diversifying its trade relationships. Over time, this divergence is likely to increase both China's appetite for foreign products and the global presence of Chinese goods.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CHINA IS EVEN MORE PRONOUNCED IN TODAY'S DIGITAL WORLD.

Online sales now account for nearly 30% of China's total retail—almost double the 16% seen in the US and most other markets.

This high level of digital adoption has not only transformed branding strategies but also reshaped consumer behavior. Still, recent signs of market saturation suggest that digital growth is not limitless. Chinese consumers are increasingly seeking differentiated products and experiences that reflect their evolving values. China's consumer landscape is also among the most digitized in the world, shaped by super-apps like WeChat, Douyin, and Xiaohongshu, which integrate communication, e-commerce, content, and payment into a seamless digital ecosystem. Brand engagement happens in real time through fast-evolving, influencer-driven ecosystems. Trends rise and fall in a matter of days. Navigating this hyper-competitive environment requires foreign brands to move with agility, cultural fluency, and localized insight just to remain visible.

NEARLY 30% OF ALL RETAIL SALES IN CHINA HAPPENED ONLINE

Share of Retail Sales Online [Percent]



Growth of Year to Date Retail Sales [Percent]



Source: Macrobond, Hutong Research



CHINA'S RISING CONSUMPTION POWER HAS ALSO MADE IT ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST INNOVATIVE ECONOMIES.

In 2024, China ranked 11th in the World Intellectual Property Organization's Global Innovation Index. It led the world in areas such as market scale, creative goods exports, trademarks, and industrial design.

In short, China has become a testbed for new technologies and a launchpad for commercial innovation. Recognizing this, Beijing has identified consumption not just as a growth engine, but also as a catalyst for innovation.

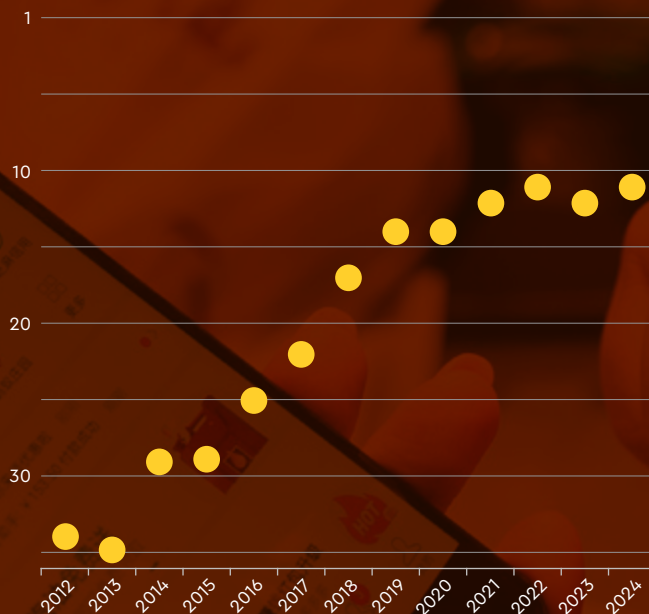
Beyond digital infrastructure, Chinese consumer behavior is increasingly influenced by Guochao, a surge of national pride and appreciation for homegrown aesthetics and storytelling.

This cultural shift has raised the bar for foreign brands, who must now earn relevance by aligning with local values, not just selling global prestige. At the same time, the business environment is shaped by evolving government policy and platform regulation, which influence everything from data governance to cross-border operations.

So how can foreign brands win in China and how can Chinese brands extend their influence globally?

CHINA HAS BECOME ONE OF THE MOST INNOVATIVE COUNTRIES

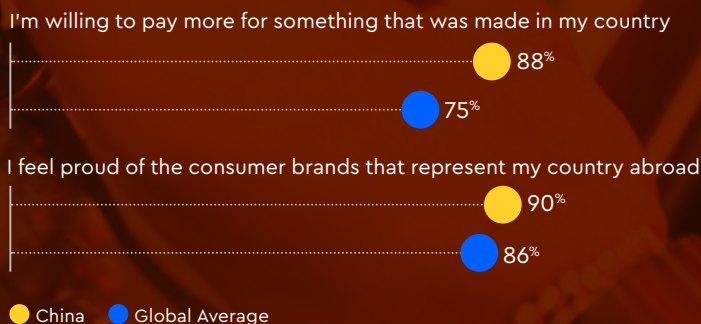
China's Rank in Global Innovation Index



Source: WIPO, Hutong Research

PRIDE IN NATIONAL BRANDS

Chinese consumers are more willing than global consumers to pay a premium for domestically made products and take greater pride in seeing their national brands succeed internationally.



Source: WPP BAV Best Countries 2024/2025

How Foreign Brands Can Win in China

SUCCESSING IN CHINA REQUIRES MORE THAN SIMPLY ENTERING THE MARKET.

It demands a strategic shift in how brands operate, communicate, and adapt. Winning brands are those that deeply understand China's digital-first environment, embrace cultural nuance, and stay agile in the face of fast-moving trends and regulations. The playbook is no longer global-first, but China-specific and locally embedded.

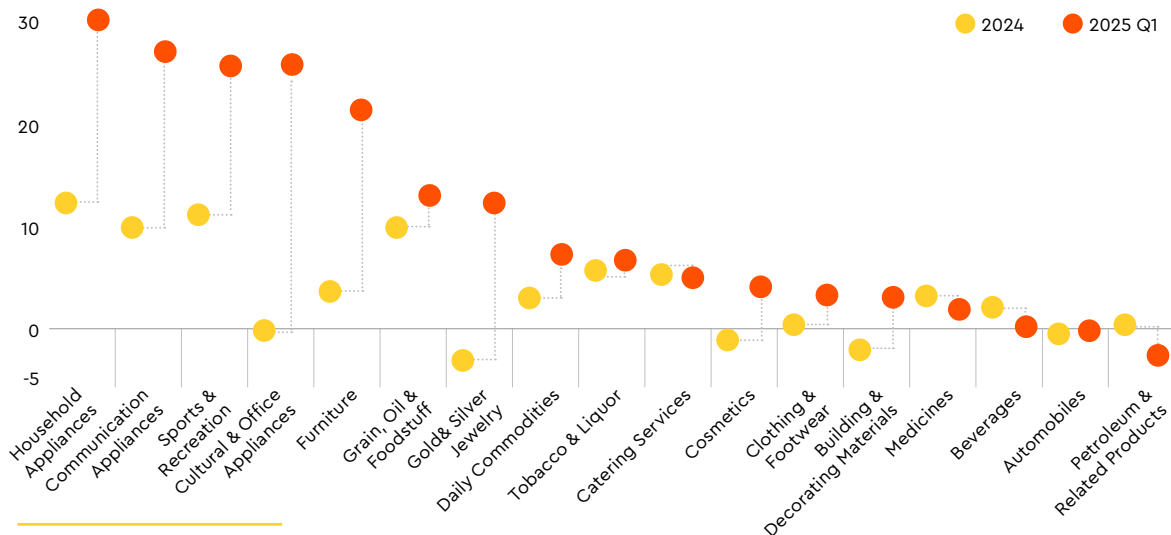
Policy is also key. In September 2024, Beijing rolled out a nationwide trade-in campaign, offering generous subsidies to consumers upgrading appliances, cars, and electronics. As a result, despite weak headlines, these categories saw a strong uptick in sales, including for foreign brands that actively

participated. Additionally, some segments without subsidies—such as sports equipment—also experienced robust growth, reflecting shifts in consumer preferences. Succeeding in this environment requires empowering local teams to detect and respond to such changes early.

Politics matters, too. Winning in China isn't just about capturing growth—it's also about managing risk. First, success depends on a branding strategy that meaningfully includes Chinese consumer insights. Second, it requires a differentiated value proposition to stand out in a highly competitive market. Third, companies should reconsider China not just as a consumer market but also as a hub for innovation and manufacturing, helping insulate operations from geopolitical turbulence.

MOST PRODUCTS PERFORMED BETTER THAN LAST YEAR

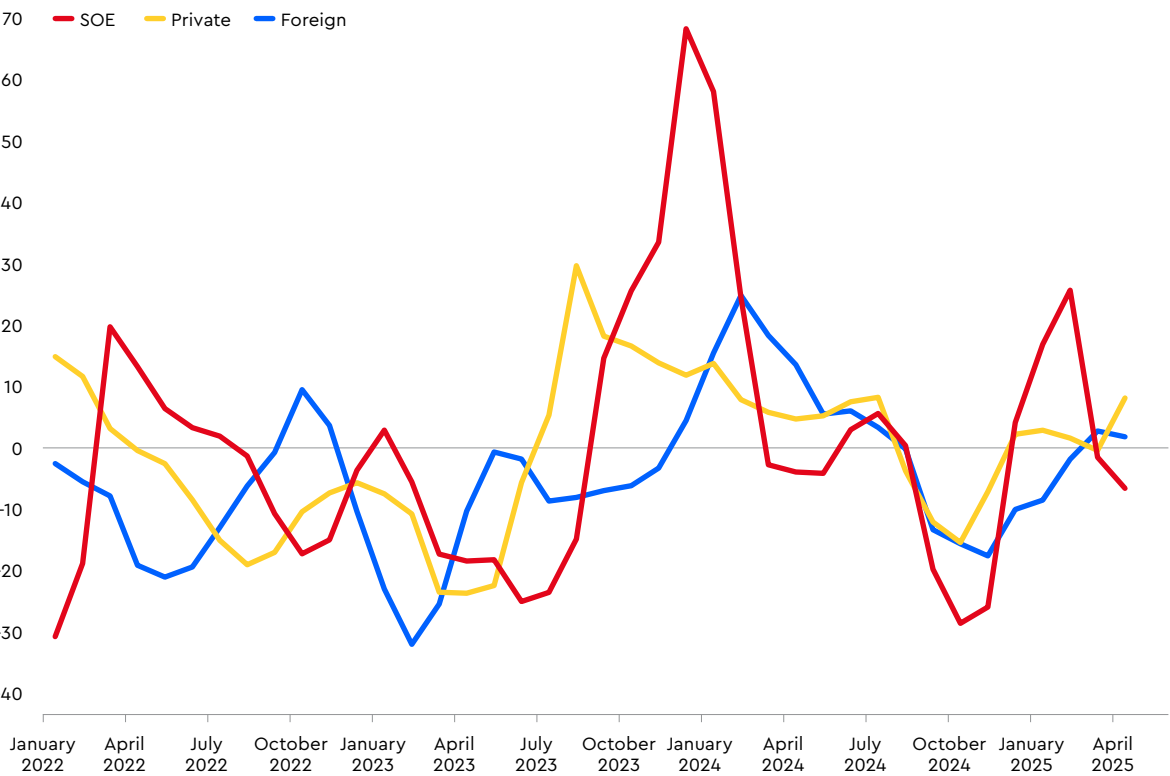
Growth of Year-To-Date Retail Sales by Item



Source: Macrobond, Hutong Research

FOREIGN AND PRIVATE PROFITS IMPROVE

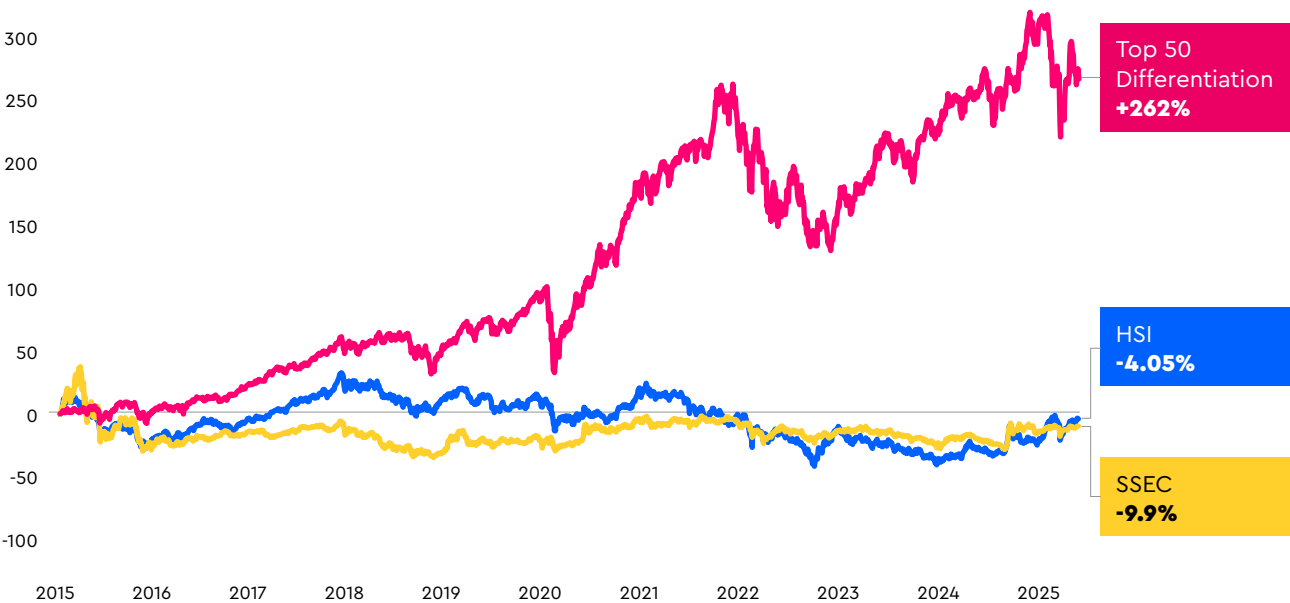
Industrial Profit by Ownership



Source: Macrobond, Hutong Research

DIFFERENTIATION DELIVERS SUPERIOR SHAREHOLDER VALUE

Top 50 Differentiated brands outperform major market indices



Source: WPP BAV Futures, 2015-2025

STRATEGIC MOVES

1

Go beyond translation:

Authentic localization matters
more than surface-level edits.

EXAMPLE:

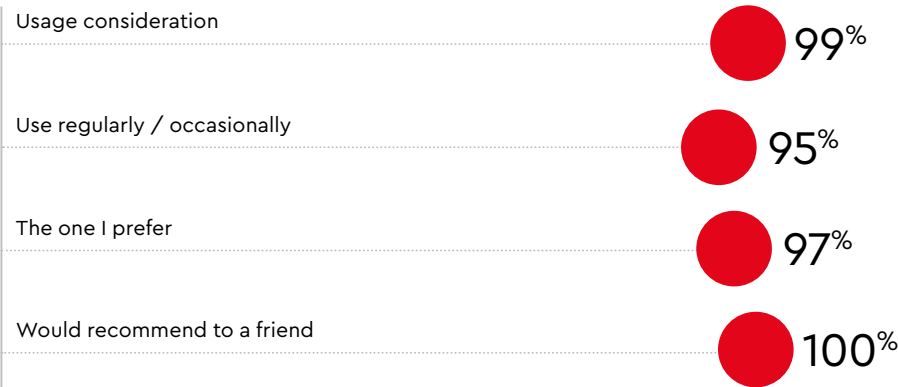




DISNEY'S SUCCESS IN CHINA SHOWS THAT TRULY RESONANT LOCALIZATION REQUIRES MORE THAN TRANSLATION.

The design of Shanghai Disneyland itself reflects Chinese architectural principles, feng shui considerations, and food and festival experiences tailored to local tastes. And rather than simply adapting existing characters or storylines, Disney invested in original storytelling specifically for Chinese consumers. A standout example is LinaBell (玲娜贝儿), a pink fox character created exclusively for the Chinese market, who embodies qualities that align closely with Chinese cultural preferences, such as curiosity, kindness, and emotional intelligence. Disney amplified LinaBell's appeal through native platforms like Xiaohongshu and Douyin and, following her debut at Shanghai Disneyland in September 2021, she quickly became a cultural sensation in China. Her hashtag on Weibo garnered over 300 million views within weeks, rising to 610 million by December 2021. Limited-edition merchandise sold out rapidly and fans lined up – even camped overnight – for a chance to buy LinaBell plush toys. From character creation to physical space, Disney demonstrates that localization isn't just about language. It's about designing stories, symbols, and spaces that feel emotionally native.

DISNEY PERFORMS EXCEPTIONALLY WELL ON CONSUMER ADVOCACY MEASURES



Source: WPP BAV China, 2024, All Adults

STRATEGIC MOVES

2

Empower local teams:

Decentralized decision-making
is key to speed and relevance.

EXAMPLE:

L'ORÉAL
PARIS

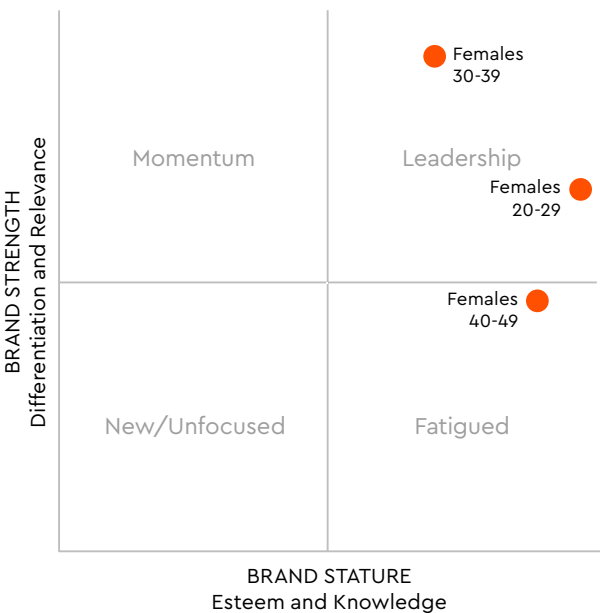


L'ORÉAL EMPOWERS ITS CHINA TEAM WITH SIGNIFICANT AUTONOMY TO DEVELOP PRODUCTS AND CAMPAIGNS TAILORED TO LOCAL TASTES, BEHAVIORS, AND FAST-MOVING CULTURAL TRENDS.

This decentralized approach allows the brand to stay relevant in China's hyper-dynamic beauty market, where social sentiment and digital trends can shift overnight. L'Oréal's collaboration with Xiao Zhan, one of China's most influential idols, is a prime example. While a global team might see Xiao Zhan as simply another celebrity endorsement opportunity, a local team understands the full cultural context: Xiao Zhan's fans, especially "30-something ladies with disposable income" (三十而已姐姐们), aren't just passive followers. They use purchases and online engagement as a form of emotional support and community building. L'Oréal's China team knows when, how, and why to activate around a figure like Xiao Zhan, something that may not come as easily to a global team. Empowering local teams allows brands to pair cultural insight with operational speed, key to staying ahead in a market where relevance is earned in real time and where success depends on the ability to detect and respond to shifts faster than the competition.

L'ORÉAL'S BRAND STRENGTH STRONGEST AMONG CHINESE WOMEN IN THEIR 30s...

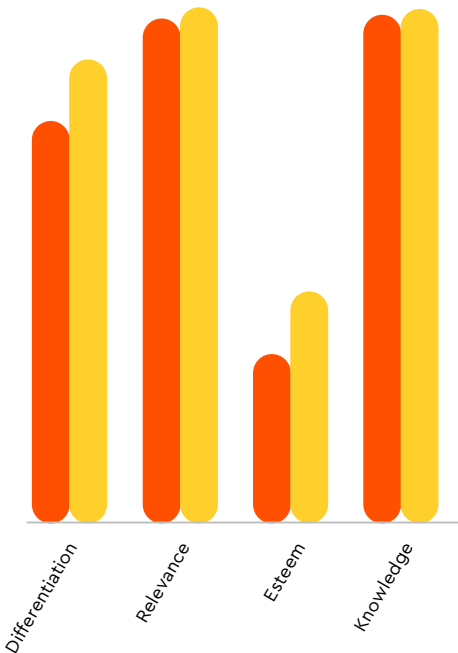
WPP BAV PowerGrid: L'OREAL



Source: WPP BAV China, 2024, Females 20-29, 30-39, 40-49

...AND EVEN STRONGER WITH HIGH INCOME

Females 30-39 Females 30-39 - High Income



Source: WPP BAV China, 2024, Females 30-39, Females 30-39 - High Income

STRATEGIC MOVES

3

Put creators first

Influencer and community-
driven marketing beats
traditional media buys.

EXAMPLE:

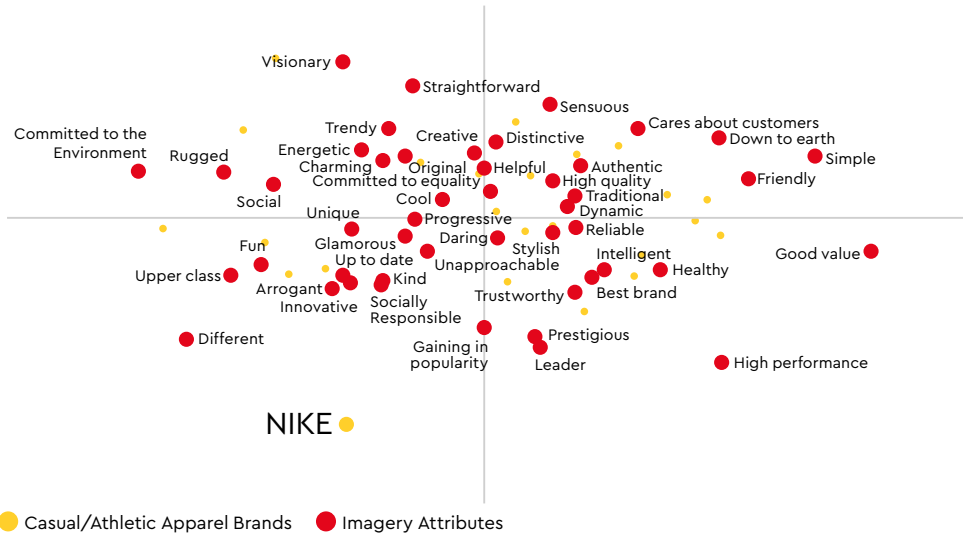




NIKE HAS ADEPTLY LEVERAGED CHINA'S INFLUENCER ECOSYSTEM TO ENHANCE BRAND VISIBILITY AND CULTURAL RESONANCE.

Its 2025 "Year of the Snake" campaign featured collaborations with Chinese athletes like Zheng Qinwen and Wang Guanxiong, helping the brand align with Gen Z sports culture. Nike's themed sneaker releases, including the Kobe 5 Protro "Year of the Mamba," were promoted through Xiaohongshu and Weibo, where the hashtag #灵蛇迎新 trended and reached massive engagement. Analysts noted the campaign's strong cultural alignment and emotional resonance, reinforcing Nike's leadership among China's younger consumers.

AMONG GEN Z, NIKE IS IN A LEAGUE OF ITS OWN: DIFFERENT, INNOVATIVE, GAINING IN POPULARITY



Source: WPP BAV China, 2024, Gen Z

STRATEGIC MOVES

4

Tell purpose-driven stories

Authentic purpose is a
powerful cross-cultural asset.

EXAMPLE:



lululemon



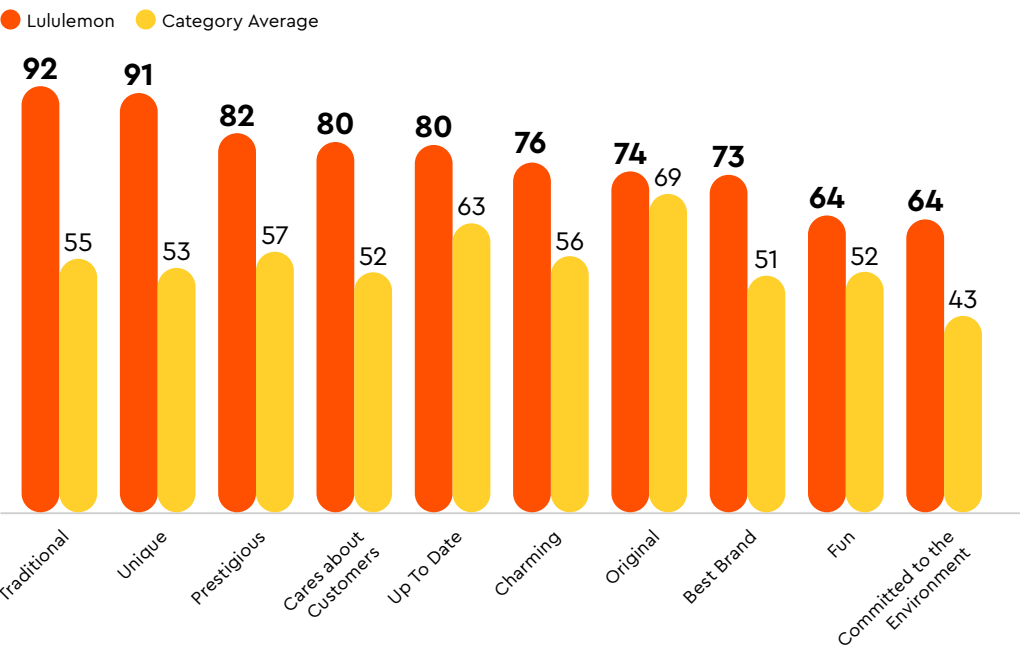
LULULEMON HAS SUCCESSFULLY ALIGNED ITSELF STRATEGICALLY WITH CHINESE WELLNESS VALUES, PARTICULARLY THE TRADITIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF YANGSHENG (养生), WHICH EMPHASIZES HOLISTIC HEALTH AND SELF-CARE.

The brand isn't merely selling leggings; it's selling an identity built on self-betterment, balance, and meaning. In October 2024, Lululemon launched "The Wellbeing Garden" at the Shanghai Star Museum, transforming the space into an immersive wellness experience. The event featured four themed sections: yoga, running, training, and recovery, each represented by specific flowers symbolizing the emotions and characteristics of these activities. The brand has also consistently engaged with Chinese communities through its "Wellbeing for All" campaigns. These initiatives include immersive experiences and conversations on wellbeing, such as the Wellbeing Roll-out Gallery at the West Bund in Shanghai, which featured a 3-kilometer-long outdoor art walk and over 30 community activities, attracting nearly 5,000 participants. By showing respect for local philosophies and hosting events that prioritize connection over commerce, Lululemon becomes not just a foreign brand in China, but a culturally integrated one.

LULULEMON OUTPERFORMS CATEGORY AVERAGES ACROSS MULTIPLE BRAND ATTRIBUTES

Lululemon Excels in Being Traditional, Unique, Prestigious, and Customer-Centric.

Lululemon vs. Category Average



Source: WPP BAV China, 2024, 18-44 Middle to High Income Earners in Tier 1 Cities

STRATEGIC MOVES

5

Adapt brand architecture

Maintain a strong master brand while tailoring sub-brands to fit local contexts.

EXAMPLE:

Coca-Cola



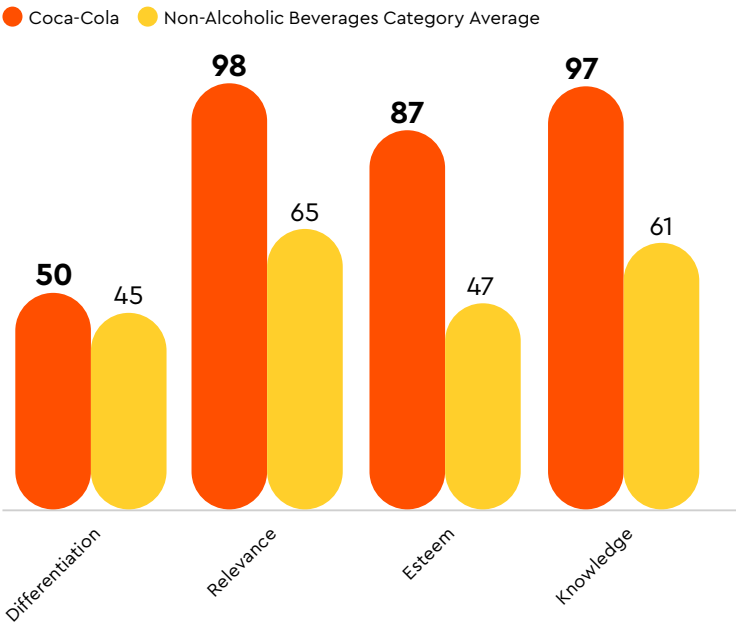
COCA-COLA MAINTAINS ITS CORE IDENTITY WHILE CREATING SUB-BRANDS AND LOCAL FLAVORS TAILORED TO REGIONAL MARKETS.

In China, it launched healthier beverages like Coca-Cola Plus, which contains dietary fiber, and expanded its "Authentic Tea House" line, offering cold-brewed teas such as Dahongpao and Jasmine. These teas are crafted using a cold brewing technique that minimizes bitterness and enhances natural sweetness, catering to the preferences of Chinese consumers who value traditional tea culture. By introducing these locally tailored products under its trusted master brand, Coca-Cola effectively integrates into the Chinese market, resonating with consumers' health and cultural values.

COCA-COLA LEADS THE WAY IN EVERY PILLAR

Coca-Cola ranks in the top 2% of all brands in China for Relevance, earning nearly twice the category average in Esteem.

WPP BAV Pillars: Coca-Cola vs. Category Average



Source: WPP BAV China, 2024, All Adults

RISKS TO MANAGE:

Don't rely on global prestige

Being international helps but it's not a long-term differentiator.

Don't misread cultural signals

Avoid tone-deaf messaging or assumptions about what Chinese consumers want.

Don't be slow

Relevance is perishable. Sluggish decision-making costs market share.

Don't centralize control

Local teams need autonomy to adapt and act in real time.

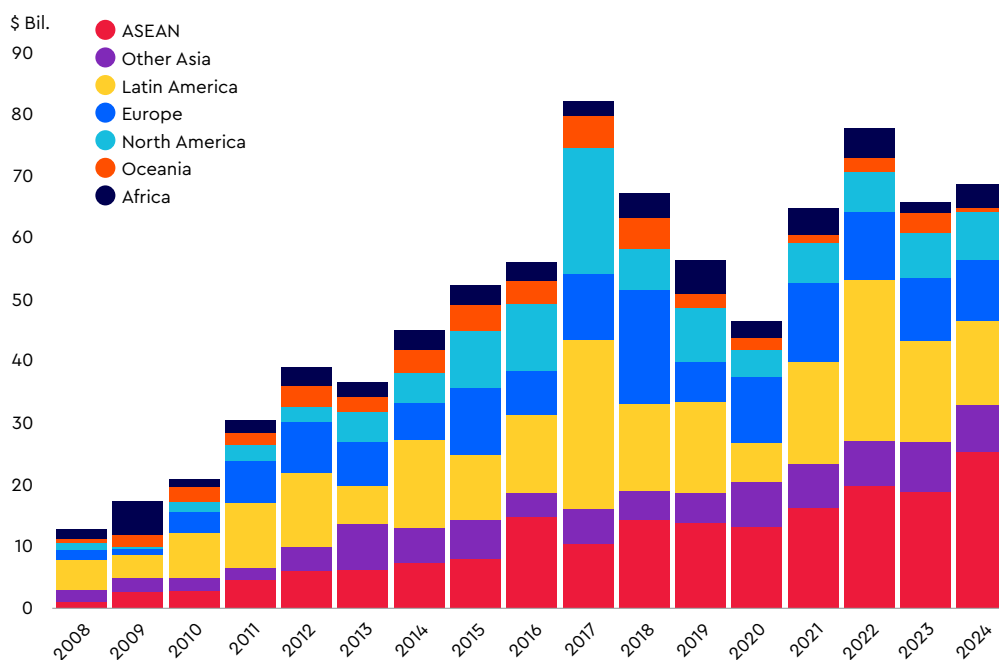
How Chinese Brands Can Win Globally

CHINESE BRANDS ARE GOING GLOBAL AT AN UNPRECEDENTED PACE WITH GROWTH SLOWING AND COMPETITION INTENSIFYING AT HOME.

Asia is the primary destination, attracting over 30% of China's outbound investment (excluding Hong Kong, which often serves as a financial intermediary). Latin America accounts for another 20%. Despite rising geopolitical friction, North America and Europe still attract 11% and 15% of outbound investment, respectively.

ASIA IS CHINA'S TOP OUTBOUND INVESTMENT DESTINATION

China's Outbound Investment by Destination (excludes Hong Kong)



Source: Macrobond, Hutong Research

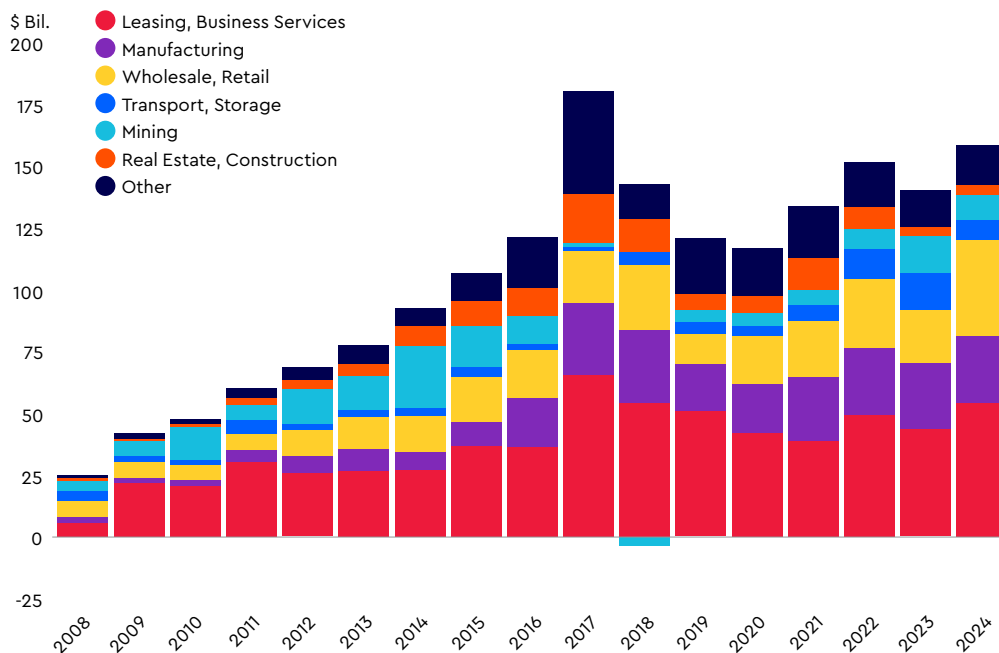


Part 2

China's overseas investments are also diversifying. Manufacturing—often the media focus—represents just 20% of outbound capital. Increasingly, Chinese firms are investing in retail, logistics, and business services, reflecting the broader international presence of Chinese companies and people. This expansion requires more than speed and scale; it demands cultural sensitivity and local adaptation. In many ways, Chinese brands now face the same challenges that foreign companies once encountered when entering China. The playbook is being rewritten—this time in reverse.

CHINESE INVESTMENTS ARE DIVERSIFYING

China's Non-Financial Outbound Investment by Industry



Source: Macrobond, Hutton Research

The perception of "Made in China" is evolving, from cost-efficiency to innovation, speed, and design sophistication. But going global takes more than operational excellence. It requires trust, cultural fluency, and strong storytelling.

STRATEGIC MOVES

1

Leverage
digital
expertise

EXAMPLE:



HEYTEA

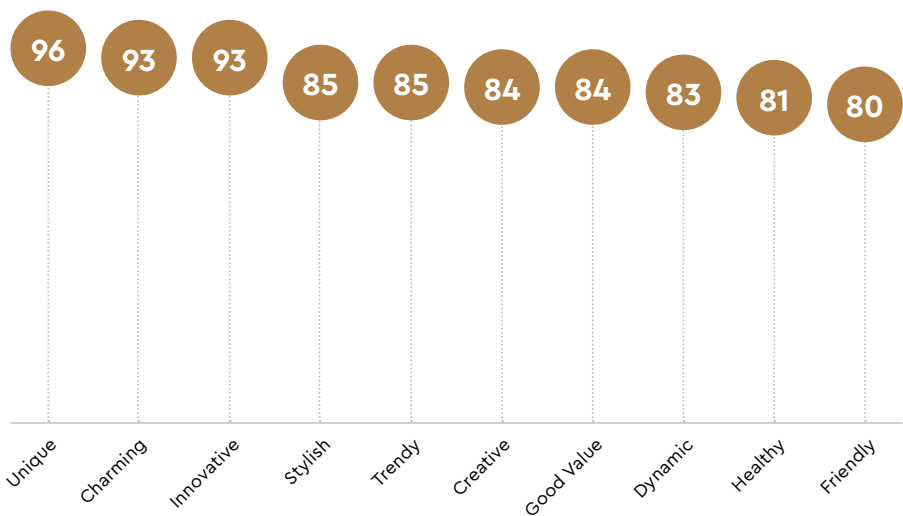


HEYTEA, CHINA'S PIONEERING NEW-STYLE TEA BRAND, HAS EXPANDED GLOBALLY BY LEVERAGING ADVANCED DIGITAL INTEGRATION TO STREAMLINE OPERATIONS AND ENHANCE CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT IN OVERSEAS MARKETS.

In 2023, the brand introduced an “electronic ingredient list” at its international locations, accessible via QR codes. This initiative provides transparency on nutritional content and caters to health-conscious consumers worldwide. HEYTEA also offers mobile ordering and contactless payments through its app and third-party platforms, ensuring a smooth and convenient customer experience. These digital features have been essential for scaling in markets such as the U.S., UK, Singapore, and Australia. To further support global digital payments, HEYTEA partnered with Adyen, enabling localized payment methods and seamless checkout experiences tailored to regional preferences. The brand actively engages younger audiences on platforms like Instagram and TikTok, delivering localized, engaging content that strengthens its international presence. Through a focus on convenience, transparency, and community engagement, HEYTEA's global digital tools position it as a digitally native brand with strong appeal to international consumers.

HEYTEA STANDS OUT AS A UNIQUELY CHARMING AND INNOVATIVE BRAND THAT DELIVERS STYLE, TRENDINESS, AND VALUE IN A CREATIVE WAY

HEYTEA Top Imagery Perceptions [Percentile rank]



Source: WPP BAV China, 2024, All Adults

STRATEGIC MOVES

2

**Deliver
premium value
at great prices**

EXAMPLE:

Haier

Haier

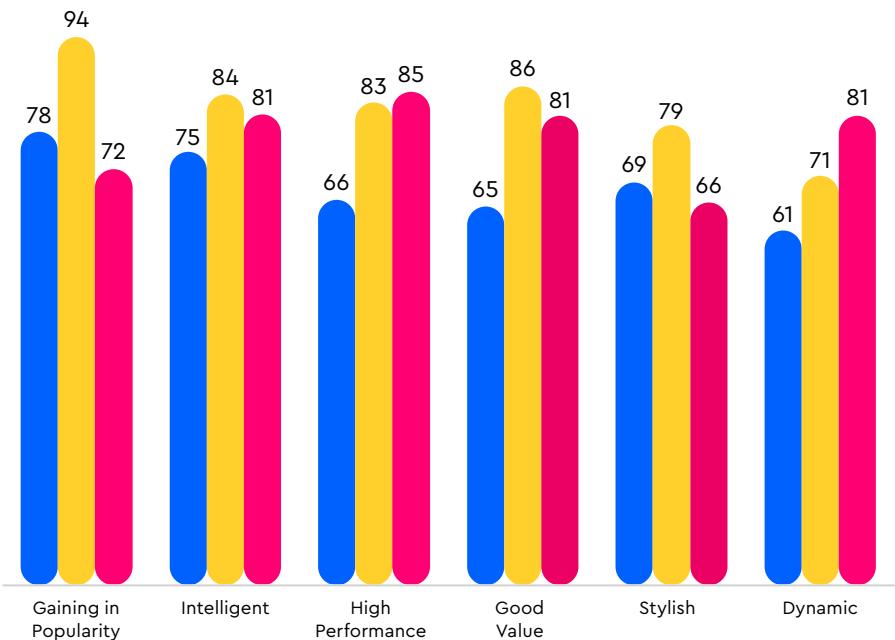
HAIER DELIVERS PREMIUM VALUE AT GREAT PRICES BY COMBINING INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY, STYLISH DESIGN, AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY IN ITS HOME APPLIANCES, ALL WHILE MAINTAINING ACCESSIBLE PRICING.

As one of the world's leading appliance manufacturers, Haier has built a reputation for reliable, feature-rich products, including smart refrigerators, washer-dryer combos, and air conditioners, that rival top Western brands in performance and aesthetics, yet often cost significantly less. The company effectively blends Western design sensibilities with efficient Chinese manufacturing, enabling it to deliver exceptional value to consumers worldwide without compromising on quality or innovation.

HAIER'S BRAND IMAGE OUTSIDE OF CHINA: INTELLIGENT, STYLISH, HIGH-PERFORMANCE APPLIANCES WITH EXCEPTIONAL VALUE

Haier Image Profile [Percentile rank]

USA 2024/2-25 Australia 2024 Thailand 2024



Source: WPP BAV Multiple Markets, 2024/2025, All Adults

STRATEGIC MOVES

3

Stay agile

EXAMPLE:

BYD

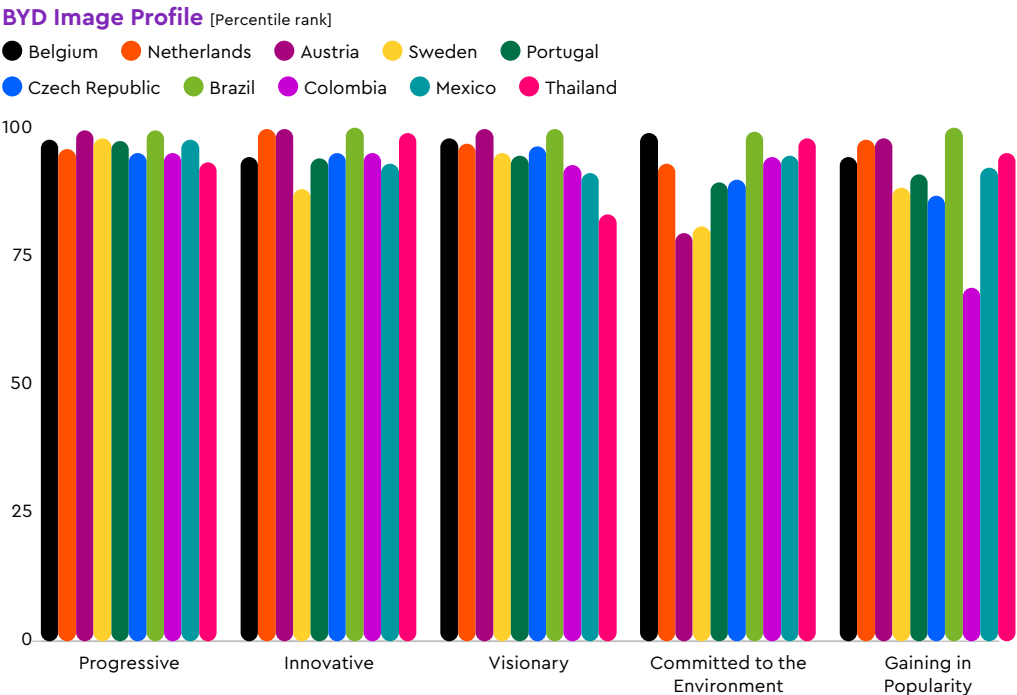


BYD HAS SHOWN EXCEPTIONAL AGILITY IN ITS GLOBAL EXPANSION BY CUSTOMIZING ELECTRIC VEHICLES (EVS) TO MEET SPECIFIC MARKET NEEDS AND QUICKLY RESPONDING TO CHANGING CONSUMER PREFERENCES AND REGULATIONS OUTSIDE CHINA.

For instance, in Norway, BYD introduced region-specific features like heated seats and enhanced battery thermal management systems, designed to perform well in cold climates. This local adaptation has helped BYD attract Norwegian consumers who value both comfort and reliability in harsh winter conditions. BYD also continually adjusts its brand messaging to match local market expectations. In Europe, the brand emphasizes sustainability and environmental responsibility, while in Latin America, it highlights affordability and ruggedness suitable for diverse terrains. Thanks to its vertical integration and control over battery production, BYD can swiftly address supply chain disruptions and fluctuations in market demand internationally, enabling flexible delivery schedules and competitive pricing. By rapidly customizing products, refining branding based on local sentiment, and maintaining operational flexibility, BYD demonstrates agility that helps it outperform competitors and build a strong global presence.

BYD'S GLOBAL RISE...

An increasingly popular, agile brand recognized for innovation, vision, progressiveness, and environmental commitment



Source: WPP BAV, Multiple Markets, 2024/2025, All Adults

STRATEGIC MOVES

4

Build
communities

EXAMPLE:



xiaomi

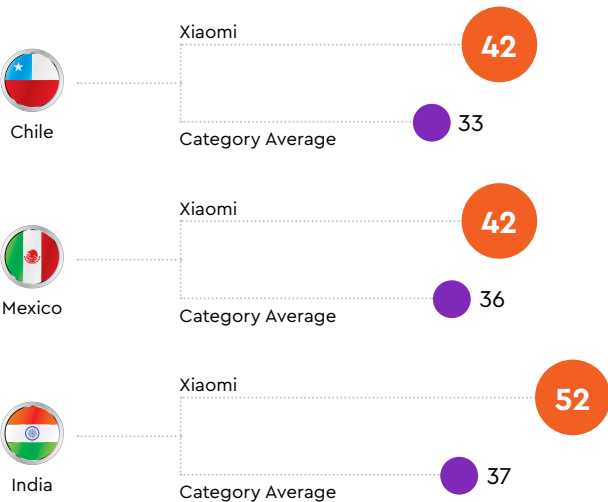


XIAOMI HAS TRANSFORMED ITS GLOBAL EXPANSION STRATEGY BY ACTIVELY BUILDING AND NURTURING DEDICATED USER COMMUNITIES, KNOWN AS MI FAN CLUBS, ACROSS KEY INTERNATIONAL MARKETS SUCH AS INDIA, SOUTHEAST ASIA, AND EASTERN EUROPE.

These communities serve as vital channels for direct communication between the brand and its users, enabling Xiaomi to quickly identify and respond to local consumer preferences and pain points. By empowering Mi Fans to participate in product development and marketing, Xiaomi turns customers into brand advocates who help amplify its presence organically. The Mi Fan ecosystem not only accelerates product adoption but also provides Xiaomi with a grassroots marketing force that continually drives engagement and sales growth.

XIAOMI EARNS STRONGER CONSUMER ADVOCACY THAN THE CATEGORY AVERAGE

WOULD RECOMMEND TO A FRIEND
Xiaomi Vs. Category Average [Percentile rank]



Source: WPP BAV Chile, Mexico, India, 2024

STRATEGIC MOVES

5

Tell a global story

EXAMPLE:

POP MART

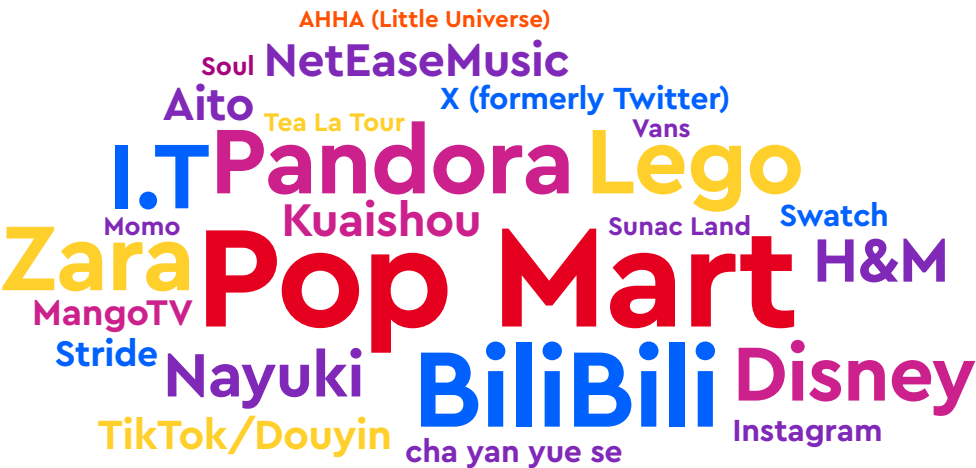
POP MART

POP MART HAS EFFECTIVELY BUILT A GLOBAL BRAND NARRATIVE BY LEVERAGING ITS UNIQUE ART-DRIVEN COLLECTIBLE TOYS AND CULTIVATING AN INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY OF ENTHUSIASTS.

Outside China, the brand emphasizes storytelling through collaborations with global artists and designers, tailoring its product lines to appeal to diverse markets including the U.S., Japan, and Europe. Pop Mart actively uses digital platforms such as Instagram and TikTok to share content, announce limited-edition releases, and connect directly with collectors worldwide. The brand also deploys strategic pop-up stores and participates in major international toy conventions and art fairs, such as those in New York, Tokyo, and Paris, creating immersive experiences that strengthen emotional bonds with local fans. By blending art, culture, and community-driven storytelling across both digital and physical channels, Pop Mart crafts a compelling global story that transcends its Chinese origins, enabling authentic resonance with international audiences.

BRANDS WITH A PERSONALITY PROFILE SIMILAR TO POP MART

Pop Mart Imagery Overlap



Source: WPP BAV China, 2024, All Adults

RISKS TO MANAGE:

Don't depend solely on price

Cost leadership without brand equity is a race to the bottom.

Don't ignore cultural nuance

Localize deeply, from product features to marketing tone.

Don't overlook trust

Earn it through transparency, product quality, and service.


Don't rely just on performance marketing

Balance conversion tactics with long-term brand building.

Don't ignore regulations

Address privacy, compliance, and political sensitivities proactively.

FROM EXPANSION TO INTEGRATION



We're moving from an era of international expansion to the age of global-native branding. Success demands more than market presence; it requires cultural fluency, creative agility, and deep empathy. Cultural fluency will be as critical as product innovation. Cross-border ecosystems, including brands, creators, and communities, will shape global influence. Speed and adaptability will define winners, not size alone.

Winning in global markets today isn't about exporting what works at home. It's about evolving strategically, creatively, and culturally for every market. The most successful brands won't just move faster. They'll listen better, adapt smarter, and lead with empathy. Whether you're a global brand entering China or a Chinese brand going global, the future belongs to those who can bridge worlds, not just cross borders.



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