

XPLORECHINA

THE POWER OF INFLUENCER MARKETING IN CHINA

*And How to Leverage It for
Maximum Success*

www.nativex.com

Nativex

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INTRODUCTION

Influencer marketing, more familiarly known as KOL (Key Opinion Leader) marketing in China, has become a crucial element to successful marketing strategies in China's digital media landscape. The rising popularity of apps like Douyin, RED, Weibo, Bilibili, and Kuaishou has helped boost the power of user-generated content, which, in turn, promoted these content creators to superstar levels of fame with huge followings.

Over time, China's content creators built what is essentially a new economy, with their opinions being consumed by millions of users and changing their consumption habits as a result. Whether we're talking about downloading a photo editing app, adding a skincare product to their virtual shopping cart, or even booking a trip to an exotic island, China's online population started looking to their favorite influencers for tips on what to get next.

KOL marketing has proven to be an effective way for brands and performance advertisers to reach their audiences quicker and easier than ever. A large number of advertisers still look at this approach as something that only works to boost brand awareness and product purchases. In fact, our experience in this area has shown that running KOL campaigns in parallel with performance marketing campaigns will greatly increase performance ROI.

We created this ebook to help you get a good understanding of how important KOL marketing is in China and why this strategy needs to be part of your marketing mix if you want to achieve success in the world's largest mobile market.



01

THE RISE OF INFLUENCER MARKETING **IN CHINA**



52%

of mobile users refer to KOL recommendations prior to purchasing



120%

Increase of in-store sales with a KOL's recommendation



51.7%

of Chinese advertisers believe that KOL marketing is the most effective form of advertising



33%

of KOL recommendations result in sales

THE BOOMING INFLUENCER LANDSCAPE

[2018 compared to 2017]



KOLS WITH 100,000+ FOLLOWERS

The number of influencers with over 100,000 followers increased by 51%.



KOLS WITH 1 MILLION+ FOLLOWERS

The number of influencers with over 1 Million followers increased by 23%.



China's influencer economy is expected to continue expanding at a **CAGR of 41.8%** from 2017 to 2022.

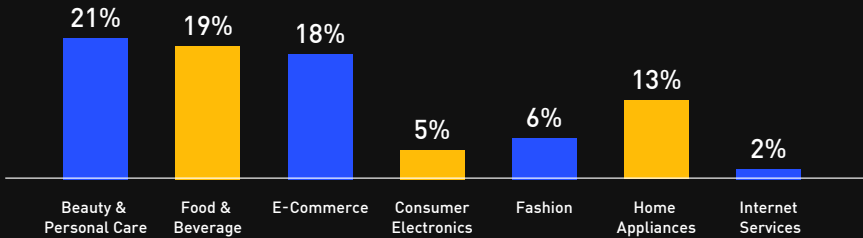
KOL AD SPEND YOY INCREASED BY 63% IN 2019

2018–2019 KOL ad spend (unit: USD)

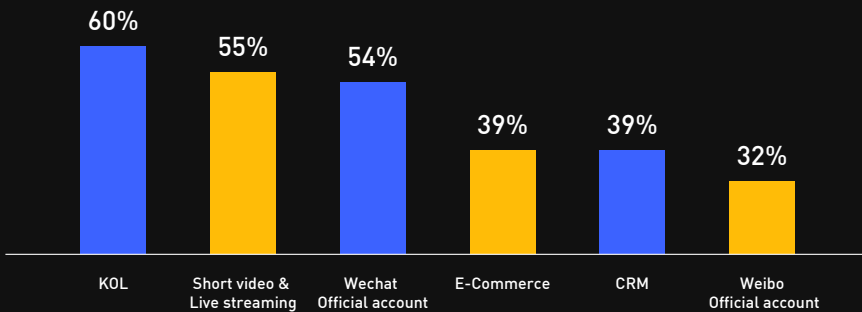


TOP 10 INDUSTRIES BY KOL AD SPENDING, 2019

- Accounts for **88%** of overall KOL ad spend
- FMCG leads KOL marketing



2019 SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING



60% of brands focus on influencer marketing, making it the most popular digital marketing method in China.

KOL, LIVE STREAMING, AND SHORT VIDEO GO HAND-IN-HAND

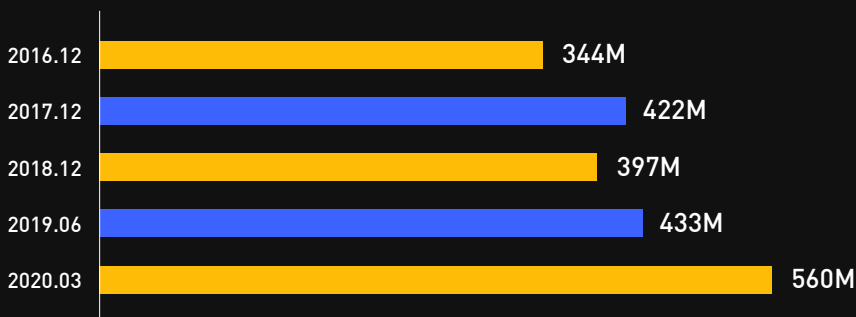
On media like Red, Douyin, and Bilibili, live streaming and short-form videos are the most important content formats KOLs use to present advertisers' products or services. Weibo and WeChat each come with their own built-in video and live streaming products.

TYPES OF LIVE STREAMERS



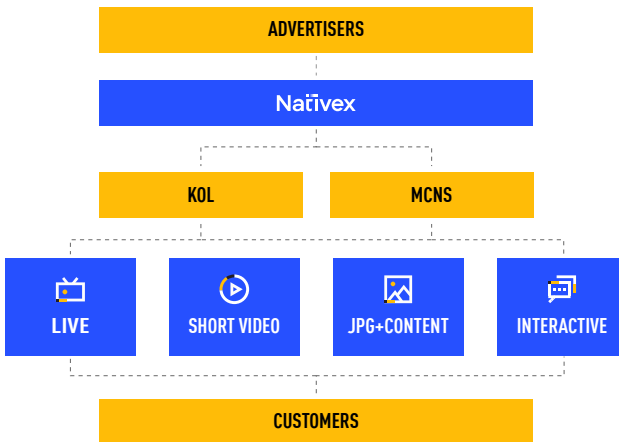
LIVE STREAMING USER BASE

62% of the total internet users watch live streaming content

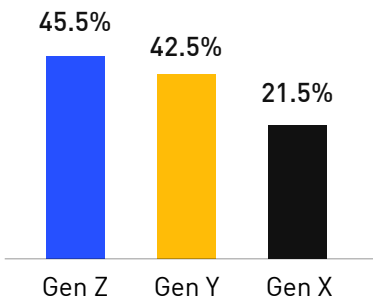


02

HOW KOLS ARE IMPACTING GEN Z IN CHINA



GEN Z EMBRACE KOL CONTENT THE MOST

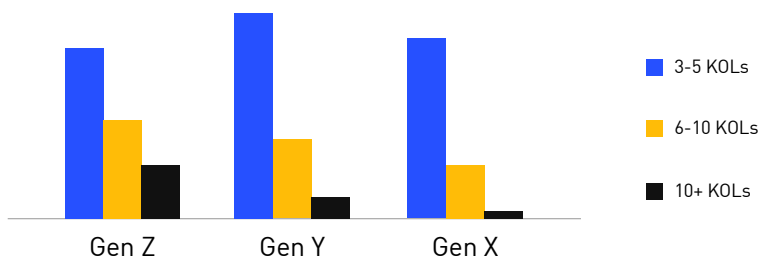


Percentage of respondents who had made spontaneous purchases after a KOL recommendation.



NUMBERS OF KOLS FOLLOWED BY DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS

Source: Mango TV, Data were drawn from a survey with a total number of 2500 respondents.



THE KEY DEMOGRAPHICS BEHIND KOLS' HUGE FOLLOWINGS

18.8%

Gen Z represents 18.8% of China's entire population

8.33 hours

Average Time Spent Online Every Day

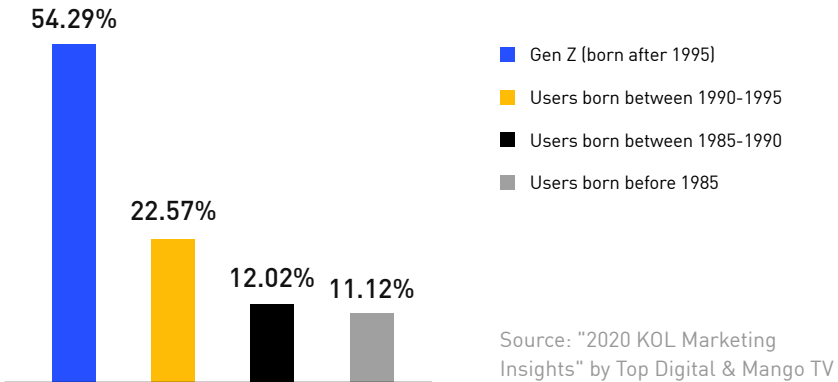
1/4

of Gen Z's monthly spend is influenced by KOLs

48%

of Gen Z would check KOL suggestions before making a purchasing decision

KOL FANBASE AGE DISTRIBUTION



BEFORE INVESTING IN KOL MARKETING IN CHINA

→ **63%** of non-Chinese companies change their attributes for China. This signals the importance of adopting Chinese digital platforms to succeed.

Marketers need to consider the uniqueness of China's social platforms when planning an influencer marketing campaign.

Those entering this market should know the top digital platforms for influencer marketing (known as KOL marketing in China), how they operate, how different generations use social media and how they engage with influencers.

03

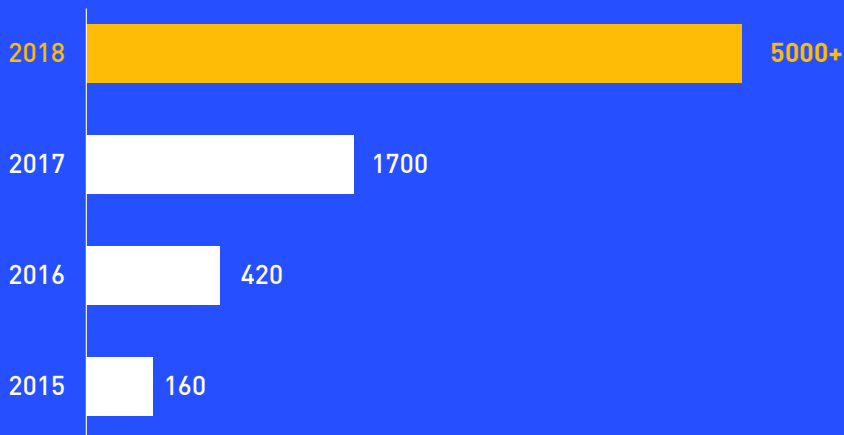
MULTI-CHANNEL NETWORKS (MCN)S

The vast majority of top-tier and mid-tier KOLs in China are currently working with an MCN.

Gaining access to Chinese influencers through MCNs may be cheaper to advertisers as the MCN will generally get traffic package deals with top domestic social media platforms.






NUMBER OF MCNS IN CHINA

[2015–2018]



04

DEFINING AN INFLUENCER'S FOLLOWING ON **TOP PLATFORMS**

		TOP-TIER	UPPER TIER	MID TIER	LOWER TIER	KOC
	Douyin	10 Million+	5–10 Million	1–5 Million	100K–1 Million	10k–100k
	Bilibili	1 Million+	500k–1 Million	100k–500k	50k–100k	10k–50k
	Weibo	10 Million+	5–10 Million	1–5 Million	100k–1 Million	10k–100k
	Red	500k+	100k–500k	50k–100k	30k–50k	10k–30k
	WeChat	1.5 Million+	500k–1.5 Million	100k–500k	50k–100k	10k–50k

Source: Nativex KOL Strategy Team



Weibo

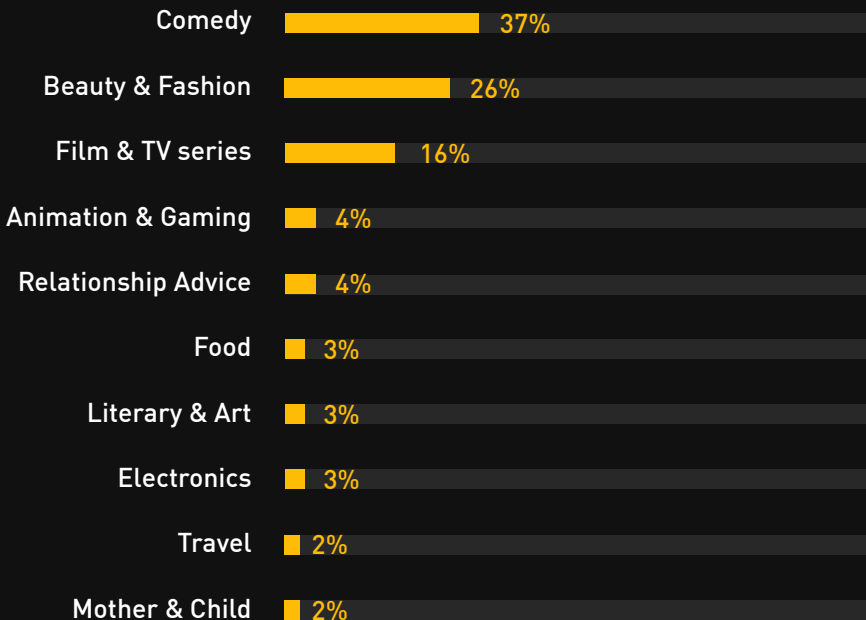
Sina Weibo, a **Chinese microblogging website**, is a platform based on fostering user relationships to share, disseminate and receive information.



DAU: **220** Million

Ad revenue (2018–2019) increased by **14%**

TOP 10 VERTICALS BY WEIBO KOL SPENDING, 2019





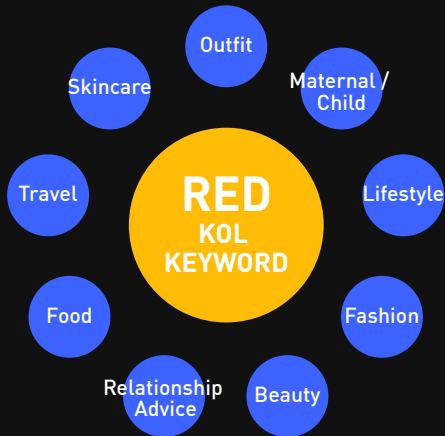
Red

A **social media and e-commerce** platform designed to give users the ability to review products and share shopping experiences.



MAU: **25** Million

Ad revenue increased by **50%** from 2018 to 2019



USER PROFILE

Female

95%

24-35 years old

60%

Live in Tier 1 & 2 city

50%

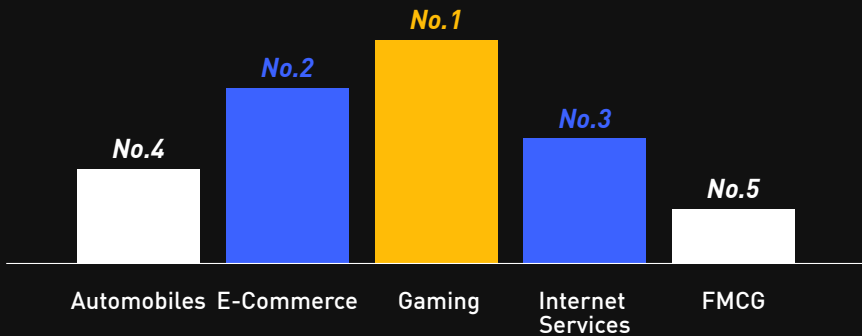


Kuaishou

A Chinese video-sharing app mainly targeting Tier 3 & 4 cities.

➔ DAU: 300 Million

TOP 5 ADVERTISING VERTICALS





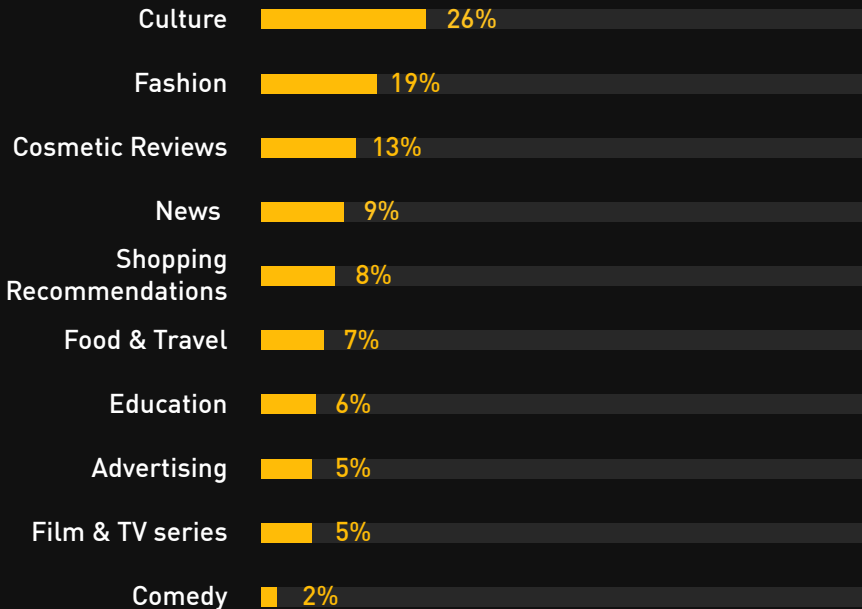
Wechat

A Chinese messaging, social media and mobile payment app.



MAU: **950** Million

TOP 10 VERTICALS BY WECHAT KOL SPENDING, 2019





05

USING KOL MARKETING TO TRIPLE FACETUNE2'S CONVERSIONS



CASE STUDY: FACETUNE2 BY Lightricks

Lightricks has made a name for itself thanks to its video and image editing apps including Videoleap and Facetune. With Facetune2, the Lightricks team wanted to expand its presence in China by positioning itself as one of the key players in the photo&video editing market. We were excited to work with Lightricks on this campaign and together we managed to achieve some amazing results!

OBJECTIVES

After speaking with the Lightricks team to get a good understanding of their goals, we set out to achieve these two main objectives:

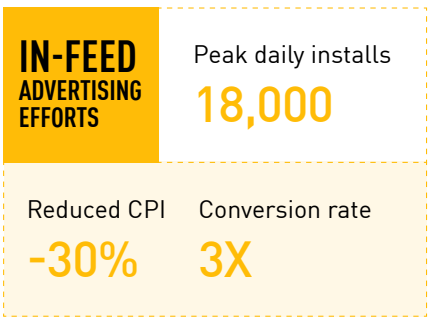
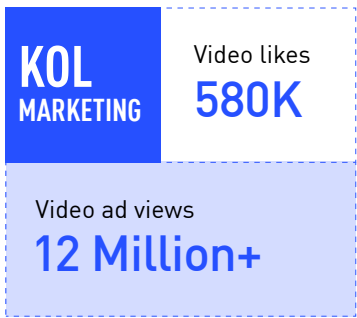
- Increase brand awareness among Chinese users
- Acquire high-quality users at scale



KEY RESULTS & ACHIEVEMENTS

Thanks to our mix of KOL marketing and in-feed advertising efforts, we were able to bring strong, sustainable exposure to Facetune2, generating over **12 million video ad views** during the campaign. The sponsored videos got over **580,000 likes, 22,000 comments, and 5,000 shares**, increasing the app’s exposure among target users in China. As a result, Facetune2 was one of the **top 10 most downloaded photo & video editing apps on IOS in China** and one of the **top 50 most downloaded apps overall**.

Besides generating brand awareness, we also made sure that we achieved our second goal, to acquire high-quality users at scale. The in-feed advertising campaigns also saw massive success with the well-executed KOL campaigns, bringing in organic followers of the product. We were able to **reduce CPIs by 30% & achieve 3x better conversion rates**.



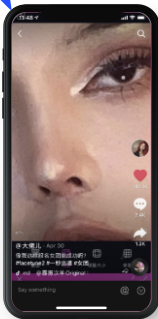
STRATEGY

We decided that a mix of Key Opinion Leader (KOL) marketing and in-feed advertising would do the trick. Here's what we did to make this complex campaign happen:

1. KOL RECRUITMENT & PROMOTION:

We started looking for the best KOLs on Douyin that would be a match for the product and its target audience. After several rounds of research and recruitment, we handpicked 6 top KOLs to promote Facetune2 on Douyin, making sure we can leverage each influencer's personality for maximum effectiveness.

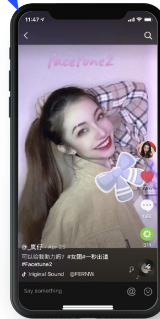
@大佬儿



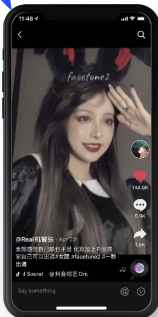
@Alex



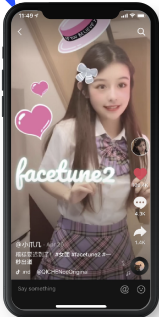
@_岚仔



@Real 机智张



@小爪儿



@是你的又初呀



STRATEGY

2. IN-FEED AD PRODUCTION & LAUNCH

While running KOL campaigns, we also created high-quality ad creatives for in-feed ads on Douyin to promote Facetune2 to ensure the best possible impact and results.

3. VIDEO CONTENT PRODUCTION



We worked with our 6 KOLs to help them create video content advertising the app and its core features; we ran standard videos as well as live streams where KOLs tested and advertised the app, to give their massive number of follower direct exposure to Facetune2 and all its major selling points.



SO HOW DID WE HELP LIGHTRICKS ACHIEVE
SUCCESS WITH FACETUNE2?

3 KEY ELEMENTS:

1

LEVERAGE DOUYIN'S FEATURE AND COMMUNITY

We implemented a mix of in-feed ads + KOL marketing + KOL live streaming to raise organic brand awareness and maximize engagement on Douyin.

2

CREATE A BUZZ

Use the hot topics in China to generate engagement and start conversations.

3

MATCHING THE RIGHT KOL

Our intimate understanding of the Chinese mobile market together with our KOL resource help maximize reach & effectiveness.

ABOUT LIGHTRICKS

Lightricks is an Israeli video & photo image editing developer. Founded in 2013, the company found success with Videoleap and Facetune, becoming one of the top photo & video app developers in the world. Lightricks followed up its successful run with Facetune2, which has been downloaded over 150 million times globally. Find out more about Lightricks at www.lightricks.com.



06

HOW WE HELPED A RENOWNED JAPANESE BRAND GET 20M+ VIEWS THANKS TO LI JIAQI, “THE LIPSTICK KING”

BACKGROUND

A renowned Japanese multinational personal care company wanted to promote one of their lower-end product lines in China. The products are a special edition skincare set only available at convenience stores like 7-Eleven, so the advertiser wanted to gain more exposure for this line.

CHALLENGES

The product line was not widely known in China and their parent company is seen as only selling expensive, high-end skincare products - quite the opposite of this product line that is made to be accessible to the general public. Therefore, the advertiser wanted to build awareness among Chinese consumers, promoting the product as one that's of high-quality (brand association with their parent company) but at the same time is reasonably priced.

MAIN GOALS

- Increased product exposure
- Higher sales numbers
- Better reputation



RESULTS

OVER 20M VIEWS & 120K ENGAGEMENTS
ON 7 MAINSTREAM PLATFORMS

live stream views

16.8 Million+

Weibo views

3.76 Million+

Douyin views

2 Million+

STRATEGY

1. KOL RECRUITMENT:

Collaborated with [Li Jiaqi](#), the number 1 beauty & body care streamer in China, crowned “the Lipstick King” who is also a [Guinness world record holder](#).

2. UNBOXING:

Used the 618 Shopping Festival as time slot for unboxing live streaming session on Taobao - 5 hours of soft exposure.

3. PRODUCT SHOWCASE

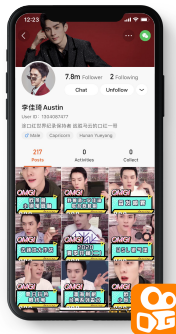
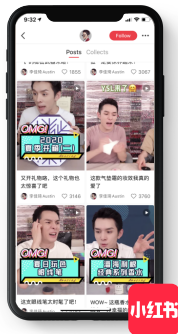
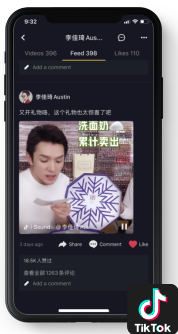
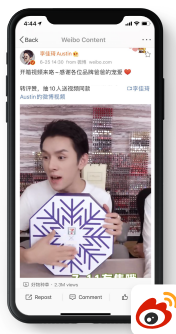
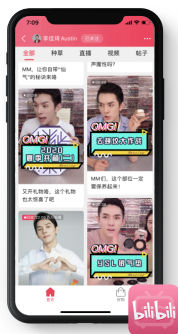
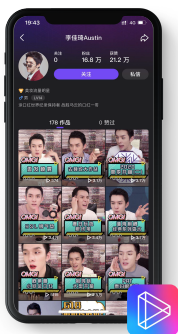
product was highlighted live on stream; Li Jiaqi highlighted the product, gave a PR speech, and spoke about its key features - [total duration was 3m30s](#), significantly above the average duration for a product showcase.

4. SHORT VIDEO MARKETING

used short videos to promote the product during the Dragon Boat Festival; videos included key product features and a prize draw competition that led fans to the brand’s official Weibo page for increased engagement rates.

5. MULTI-PLATFORM COVERAGE

reached an agreement with Austin's PR team to feature the product on his account across several key platforms including **Douyin**, **RED**, **Kuaishou**, **Weitao**, and **Weishi**.





07

KOL PROMOTIONS: STRATEGY & TIPS

1

PLAN AHEAD

Working with top influencers requires significant preparation from both parties, so make sure you have at least 1 month available to plan your campaign.

2

IDENTIFY YOUR CORE MARKETING NEEDS ASAP

Make sure your goals are clear and communicated in advance; once set, your key goals cannot be changed.

3

CLARIFY THE STYLE & TONE OF VOICE

Keep in mind that influencers require greater creative freedom and autonomy, as they know their fanbase best; ensure your brand/product's tone of voice matches the influencer's style.

4

STAY IN CONSTANT CONTACT

It's important to remain in contact after establishing all campaign goals and requirements; establishing a good working relationship with the KOL and their team is crucial for best results and potential future campaigns.



RUN SUCCESSFUL KOL CAMPAIGNS IN CHINA WITH NATIVEX

ONE-STOP KOL MARKETING SOLUTIONS



Strategic
Planning



Media Mix &
KOL Resource
Matching



Creative Content
Production



Data Analysis &
Ongoing
Optimization

OUR STRENGTHS



GLOBAL RESOURCES

We work with 20+ top Chinese MCNs and 40,000+ KOL resources that cover 10+ verticals.



STRONG EXPERTISE

Trusted by 2,000+ global advertisers from gaming to e-commerce, FMCG, utilities, photo & video, and more.



COMPETITIVE PRICING

Lower pricing packages available compared to others thanks to our status as a core ad agency and our MCN partnerships.



STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Nativex is the core ad agency for Douyin & Bilibili and a strategic partner for Weibo, Kuaishou, RED, and Taobao.



Work with Nativex and you can reach massive audiences with the help of these top KOLs:



43.7M



8.8M



17.2M

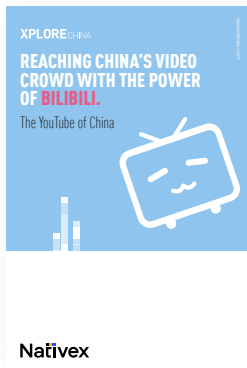


27.9M



Weiya	Wang Han	Luo Yonghao
<p>No. 1 Taobao live streamer, extremely popular among female viewers.</p> <p>Managed to sell rockets worth a total of \$570 million on her Taobao live stream.</p>	<p>One of the most famous talk show hosts in China.</p> <p>Had a record 4-hour live stream of 20 million viewers and sold products worth over \$22 million.</p>	<p>Famous tech CEO, founder of smartphone brand Smartisan.</p> <p>Managed to sell \$15 million worth of tech products on his live stream, with an audience of over 48 million viewers.</p>

GET MORE OUT OF OUR XPLORECHINA EBOOKS:



Coming Soon



Coming Soon

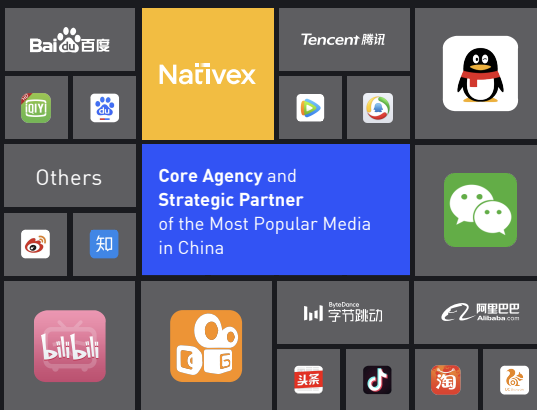


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TAKE YOUR CAMPAIGNS TO THE NEXT LEVEL WITH **XPLORE**CHINA

Our [XploreChina solution](#) is designed to help advertisers achieve sustainable growth in the world's largest mobile ecosystem.

At Nativex, our mission is to enable visible returns and our XploreChina initiative, combined with our unmatched understanding of the mobile landscape in China, means your advertising efforts are in good hands.



Nativex is the certified partner with key media giants in China and core agency with Bytedance and Kuaishou. [Get in touch with the Nativex team today.](#) Let's get your campaigns the ROI boost they deserve!

XPLORE_{CHINA}

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<https://www.nativex.com/en/marketing-to-china/>

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