

Chinese Brands facing the World - "60 nian 60 pinpai"

Zhōngguó pǐnpái - Chinese brands
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Ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon!

The event of today comes at an important time for China.

We are approaching the 60th anniversary of the PRC. But the world is facing difficult economic times. Global demand for Chinese exports will be smaller in the coming years.

To face this challenge, Chinese exporters need to improve their international image. This is to be done through well-known brands and a better reputation for their products.

I am very happy to be here today I wish the event good success. I hope it will contribute to better commercial opportunities for the Chinese industry.

First of all, a brand starts with a GOOD NAME.

I remember I was often in Chinese planes looking at the back seat advertisement for a company. I always found the name weird and had no idea what they were doing. I knew later the company was actually a famous large textile group. Yesterday I tried to remember the name, I could not and we had to call a friend to find out. The brand is BOSIDENG.

So maybe for our Chinese friends this is great but surely not adapted to international taste.

This is why global brands spend a lot of money and efforts to chose their brand name. Look at the example of Microsoft, trying to launch a competing service to Google. Their previous brand name was never popular - now they came up with "BING". Still some people have some reservations.

Some Chinese companies have been quite successful in penetrating international markets and making their brand well known.

Some to mention are ZTE (zhongqing) - Huawei - LENOVO (lianxiang) - Haier. But the question is, how can smaller companies succeed?

The Olympics were a good test for Chinese companies and brands to jump into the international market.

Let me give some comments.

Some companies did a pretty good job but others missed the opportunity to be known better on the international market.

Actually the first and easy step was ignored by the majority of Chinese companies: building a good website. Maybe their website is well suited for the domestic market but sorry - many websites are just lousy if they want to target the world market.

Many do not have English sections, or any other international languages. Even if they have some parts, the English text is often very poor, full of mistakes and offers little valuable information.

The mistake is that many sites put a lot of general information, lots of “BLA BLA BLA” and the visitor still has no idea what the company is doing, what product they have and what their strong points are.

Information provided should be simple, efficient and clear.
Chinese websites love to use moving cartoons, fireworks, pop-up screens and other.
Most foreigners find this silly, childish and annoying.

Companies should hire staff or outside services who understand foreign markets and have real good English knowledge.
One good approach is to pay close attention to user manuals for their products in several international languages and post them in pdf for visitors to download. Manuals should carry all relevant information, be updated, easily to identify with the product type.

Even if the products are made for the domestic market, foreigners will learn about their products through this way and this could lead to orders.

The same comment applies to labeling of many consumer goods in China.
Many products do not even mention in English what they are. Is it shampoo? or conditioner? or soap? Some very short explanation with the indication to the website would be a great step. The same for consumer electronics. Most of the goods in the shops only have explanations and manuals in Chinese. Look at foreign brands, they often have manuals in 6 languages.
Simply sending the customer to the website for the manual is already a great step forward.

Brands are not just “words”. It is not a matter of just spending millions on advertisement. Important is also the quality of service for the customer.

Look at the Japanese cars. Some decades ago Europe and the USA would look down on Japanese brands like HONDA (bentian), TOYOTA (fengtian) and MITSUBISHI (sanling). But those companies carefully studied what consumers in others countries want. Americans like big cars, Europeans like small cars. So, they adapted the size to the market. They also installed many features in the cars that Americans brands did not have. And they offered long-term guaranties, excellent after-sales service. See what happens today. GM, Chrysler and others are going through bankruptcy.

As a conclusion:

The smart companies will carefully define their market strategy, avoid blind spending of advertising money. Instead they will take care of their image through an efficient website, serious quality improvements and efficient after-sales service.
Only then will the international customer respect and know the Chinese brand, not just look at Chinese products being equal to one dollar T-shirts or cheap electronics that soon break down.

I wish more Chinese companies will follow the success of other famous Chinese brands all over the world!

“XIE XIE DAJIA”