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HOW TO ENHANCE BRAND AWARENESS IN CHINA BY WEIBO MARKETING
Case: Iittala

Bachelor's Thesis 2013

ABSTRACT

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Bachelor's Thesis

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Iittala, as a new brand in China, was not noted by Chinese. Shanghai representative office of Iittala has been operating with Weibo marketing since May of 2012 because it needs an effective approach to enhance its brand awareness.

The main objective of this thesis was to draft an effective approach to enhance brand awareness of Iittala in China using Weibo marketing. Besides, factors which affect improving Iittala brand awareness in Weibo platform were analysed. The effectiveness of current Iittala Weibo marketing strategy was evaluated. And possible Weibo marketing approach for Iittala to increase brand awareness was identified.

The research combined quantitative methods, qualitative methods and benchmarking. Iittala Weibo profile data was analysed on a quantitative basis; the content of Iittala posts was analysed in a qualified process. In addition, research look at IKEA and Yours Singapore Weibo performance as a benchmarking investigation.

On the basis of research results, Iittala Weibo marketing approach could carry out in two different directions; one is paying more attention on Weibo operation, the other is seeking and creating cooperation with other identified Weibo profiles.

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1 INTRODUCTION

China, as an emerging market, attracts numerous international corporations running business there. Due to security of domestic products, Chinese customers desire to purchase goods which are manufactured abroad. Nonetheless, different culture and political backgrounds increase difficulties for overseas corporations to survive in this competitive market. Insufficient knowledge of Chinese culture and customer behaviour will seriously affect business expanding in China. There has never been a lack of unsuccessful business cases which run well in homeland but confront difficult situation in Chinese market (Ding, 2012).

littala is a well-known Finnish design company which mainly produce glass products. The brand of littala is known by every Finn. littala products also sold in the USA, Canada, and other European countries. In the year of 2010, littala expand its market into Asia countries, includes Korea, Japan, and China. (Fiskars Annual Report 2011.) Based on my observation, littala is not well-known by the Chinese. Few Chinese individuals know this Finnish brand which makes wonderful glass. Across China, there are only 17 littala authority shops located in 14 Cities (littala Official Weibo, 2012). It is definitely a poor figure in a country with 657 cities (XINHUA, 2011).

When a foreign company, like littala, explores the Chinese market, increasing brand awareness is the priority issues need to be considered. In ordinary way, using traditional media adverting, like newspaper, magazine, television or billboard, may acquire brand awareness in a short time, but it will cost enormous money compared to using social media. Social media marketing, as a new mode for marketing, has been flourishing in recent years; whilst the mode of marketing is not mature yet (Dann & Dann 2011, 344-248). Chinese market, different culture and customer behaviours will increase difficulty for littala. Besides, Chinese people are using different social media from western countries, which means that current social media strategies in Facebook or Twitter cannot simply be copy for the Chinese market.

1.1 Research objectives and questions

The main objective of this thesis is to draft effective approaches to help littala enhance its brand awareness via Chinese Twitter, Weibo. Furthermore, to make objectives more specific. It is divided into the following three aspects.

- Analysis of factors that affect improving littala brand awareness in Weibo platform
- Evaluation of the effectiveness of current littala Weibo marketing strategy
- Identification of possible Weibo marketing approach for littala to increase brand awareness

The research question is 'How to use Chinese social media, Weibo, to enhance littala's brand awareness in China'

1.2 Research methods

The research is based on a case study. As its name, case study uses examples to demonstrate problems and infer good practices (Blaxter 2010, 72-75). Generally, the result of a successful case study will reflect reality by collecting and analysing obtained data (Woodside 2010, 2-3). In this research, case study is investigating how to use Weibo to enhance brand awareness of littala in China. As a fresh company in the Chinese market without much attention, littala needs to expand its popularity in this new market pressing. Traditional media marketing is old-fashioned and costly. More and more marketers take part in social media marketing. Therefore, the present case study focuses on using social media to improve littala brand awareness in China.

Methodology of the research includes quantitative research, qualitative research and benchmarking.

In quantitative research, information is gained from statistical methods or other quantification processes. Although the research data is quantified, the analysis data process is qualified. (Ghauri & Grønhaug 2010, 104-105.) Because quantitative methods emphasize on verification of the fact, littala Weibo profile and review approximately 430 Weibo posts by littala are

investigated for the present study. In addition, thanks to tfengyun.com website which offer analysed Weibo profiles information for quantitative research. Tfengyun.com is a website which collects and analyse open data on social media platforms. It publish analyse results regularly. Also tfengyun.com offer profiles analyse software to business users.

The purpose of qualitative research is to obtain insight information. Normally, data collection and analysis are completed at the same time by accomplished an interview. Scrutinise and understand research data are essential in qualitative research. (Ghuri & Grønhaug 2010, 196-198.)

Except for the analysis of littala Weibo posts using a qualitative method an online interview with Fiskars Brand Inc. Shanghai representative office as well is included. One employee who is responsible for littala Weibo profile operation accepted interview. The interview was beginning by a phone call to Fiskars Brands Inc. Shanghai representative office in the beginning of December 2012. With the help of telephone exchange center, I got the telephone number of marketing department. It is never easy to reach littala Weibo operator. In the following one week, researcher made four phone calls to marketing department, finally, research talked with interviewee. He was a little suspicious at the beginning of interview; and asked the details of interview purpose. Then, he suggested using online chatting instead of telephone interview. One day later, 14 of December 2012, the following online chatting interview was taken in a friendly atmosphere. The interviewee was delighted to get some information about littala from a Chinese person who has living in Finland for four years; besides, researcher promised to give research result to Shanghai representative office in order to help them on Weibo marketing. As return, researcher gain insight information about littala in China as well.

Another qualitative research was supposed to get a questionnaire feedback from PR Manager of littala; but researcher has not get response.

Benchmarking is a process about comparing, identifying, understanding, and adapting the best practices, so that to improve yourselves by studying from them (Anand & Kodali 2008, 257-291). According to theory from Patterson

(1995, 3-6) benchmarking is about sharing and learning, organisations sharing their facts with others and learning from others' sharing practices as well. Moreover, benchmarking is not limited in one industry; it can be about everything (Patterson, Keppler and Mapson 1995, 3-6). Therefore in this thesis, two organisations which are outstanding in Weibo marketing are used as benchmark to compare with Iittala. They are IKEA and Yours Singapore (Singapore Tourism Board). IKEA and Yours Singapore were benchmarked so that it could be found out if Iittala could learn from them and so even improve in Weibo marketing.

1.3 Research structure

With the three parts, mixing with theoretical and methodological contents. First part is based on explaining research related theories, including concept of brand awareness, features of Weibo and methodology of Weibo marketing. For political reasons, worldwide social media, like Facebook and Twitter are blocked in China, which is why China has its own version of social media. Weibo is one of Chinese version social media. It is similar with Twitter but also has many different aspects. People out of China may know little about Weibo and how to use it as a promotion tool, so that both Weibo and Weibo marketing are introduced in the theoretical part. Second part is more concentrated on the case study. There is a brief description about the situation of Iittala in China. In the following of this practical part, research will analyse Iittala Weibo performance and benchmark it with other two organisations, IKEA and Yours Singapore. In the third part, researcher will summarise results of the research and propose some Weibo marketing suggestions for Iittala in China, in order to expand its brand awareness.

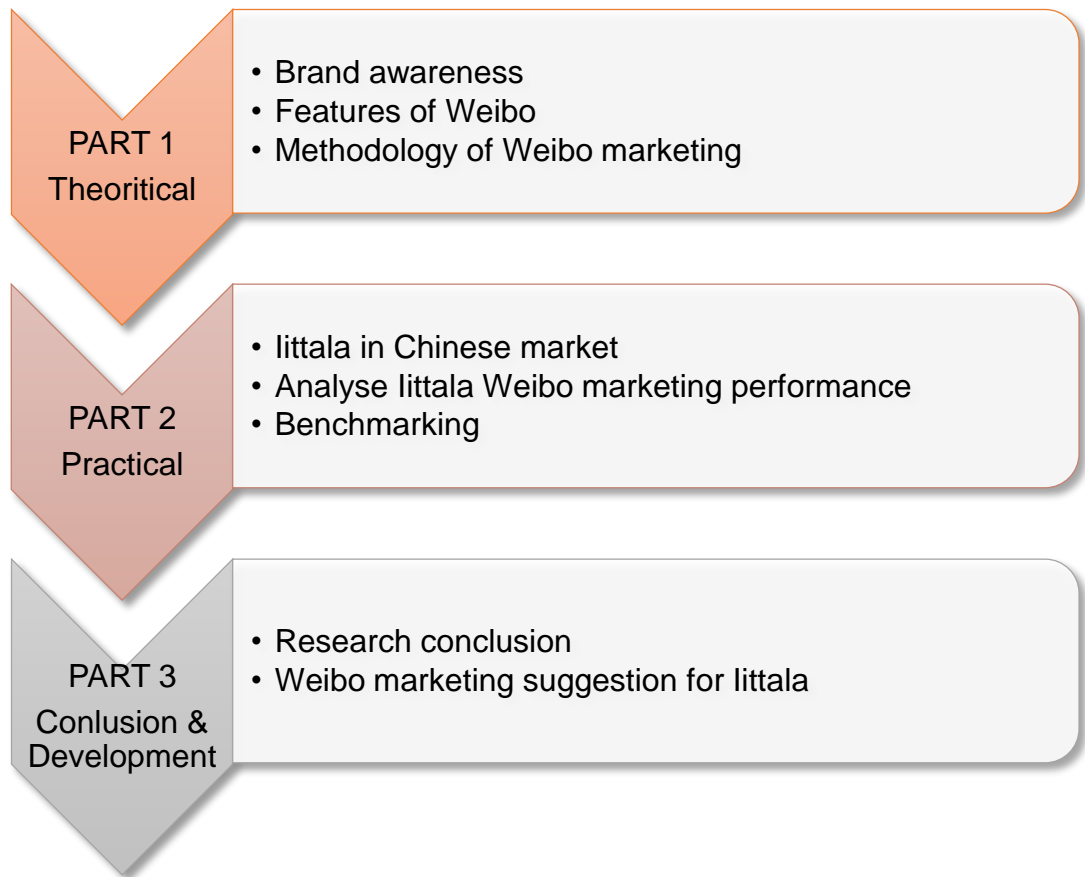


Figure 1 Research Structure

2 BRANDING TO BRAND AWARENESS

This chapter aims to explain the theory of brand management which related to the research questions of this thesis. Under first subtitle, concepts of brand, branding, and brand equity are discussed. The second part focuses on explaining the key word in this thesis, brand awareness; besides, the components of brand awareness, brand recognition and brand recall, are clarified. The concept of brand elements is introduced in last part of this chapter. Brand elements are the key factors for enhance brand awareness; hence criteria for choosing brand elements are explained following concept of brand elements.

2.1 Branding and Brand Equity

Branding is not an emerging phenomenon. The history of branding can be traced to centuries ago. As early as 2700 BC Egyptians mark farm animals in order to recognise stolen animals. In 1266, English law regulate bakers must attach distinct symbol on products. However, until industrial revolution, branding was widely spread with the development of marketing, management, manufacturing, communication etc. (Shamoon & Tehseen 2011, 435-441.) Nowadays, brand is the most significant intangible asset of company (Keller & Lehmann 2006, 740-759). American Marketing Association (2012) define brand is a "Name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller's good or service as distinct from those of other sellers" Fundamentally, brand is used to identify products or services from competitors. Some brand managers point out that, in reality, brand create particular volume of awareness and reputation to company. (Keller 2008, 2) Branding is the act of giving company a specific symbol or design to marketing its products or services. The concept of branding is to create differences from others. A distinctive brand have added value which brought by successful branding activities. Keller (2008, 37-38) defines branding as a company's promise of continuous improvement, fulfilment of consumer expectations and providing satisfaction and bringing consistency in it.

Brand equity is the assets of brand. McLoughlin & Aaker (2010, 176) defined the brand assets to brand awareness, brand loyalty and brand associations.

The concept of brand equity was put forward in 1980s, which is an important concept in the field of marketing, either for research or practice. (McLoughlin & Aaker 2010, 176.) Brand equity verifies the significant role of brand in marketing strategy, and brings on research movement and interest of management. Yet, various definition of brand equity from different perspectives increase confusion on conceptualises and measure brand equity. Despite the lack of uniform definition, most authors agreed that brand equity help marketers explain importance of branding strategy, and illustrate different effectiveness of products or services with branding strategy and without branding strategy. (Keller 2008, 37-38.) In a typical example, a well-known actress's dress can be sold ten times higher than its cost. Buyer is aware of the cost of dress, but well-known actress gives added value to this dress. In this case actress is the equivalent of brand, and added value is equal to brand equity. So, the brand equity will affect customers' behaviour, not products nor services.

2.2 Brand Awareness

One important branding objective is to maximise publicity of a brand (Williams 2011). Quite simply, if potential customers never heard of littala, they would not know how wonderful the glass is; hence they would not purchases the products. In contrast, they may be threatened away by the high price. As people prefer to purchase goods with recognised brand, predominate objective of business is to build brand awareness. In general, brand manager always want to know how the brand is in customers' mind; and what connected with brand in customers' memory. In order to solve those questions, theories of brand knowledge had been put forward. Keller (2008, 51) suggests that brand knowledge is divided into two components, namely, brand awareness and brand image. More specifically, brand awareness consists of brand recognition and brand recall; brand image consist of favourability of brand associations, strength of brand associations, and uniqueness of brand associations.

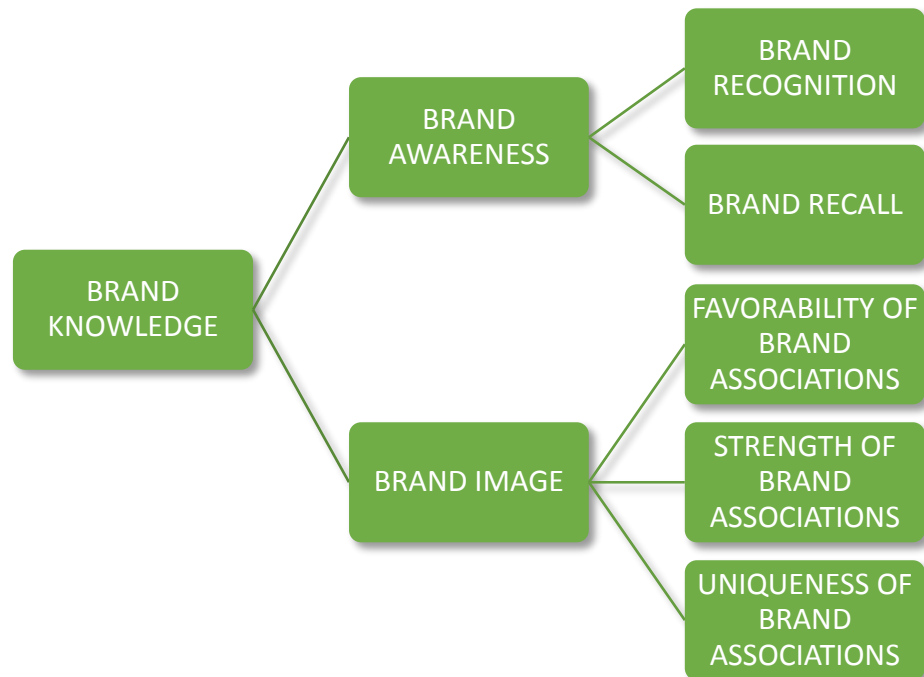


Figure 2 Dimensions of Brand Knowledge (Keller 2008, 51-56)

As the name implies, brand awareness is the extent of acknowledge that potential customer having about the certain brand. It measures ability of customers to recognise and recall of a certain brand from their memory. Customers' ability to identify diverse brand elements, like logo, name, packaging, slogan etc., reflects the strength of brand in customers' memory. Finding out which brand element(s) mostly customers remember about the brand is the key to enhance brand awareness. (Keller 2008, 54, 374.)

2.2.1 Brand Recognition & Brand Recall

Brand recognition is the elementary process of enhancing brand awareness (Novosedlik 2000). It is customers' ability to identify the brand when giving a prior exposure brand (Keller 2008, 374-375). It means that when people see the brand, they can recognise it, but may not remember product of the brand. (Novosedlik 2000). Also, Brand recognition disclosure extent of customers correctly distinguishes a brand from others under a variety of circumstances. To measure brand recognition, questions for test could be a 'yes' or 'no' question. For instance, the question could be: "Have you seen or heard of

Coca Cola?” In addition, questions can be more sensitive, by giving a range to rate, in order to test customers’ confidence of a certain brand recognition. (Keller 2008, 374-375.)

Comparing with brand recognition, brand recall is a higher level of brand awareness (Novosedlik 2000). It describes customers’ ability to retrieve brand in their memory when giving brand category, purchase situation, or use method (Keller 2008, 54, 375). In other words, brand recall of Iittala depends on the customers’ ability to recall the brand when they are planning purchase kitchenware, or think of using Iittala to have a drink or dinner. Comparing with brand recognition, brand recall is more dependent on customers’ knowledge of a certain brand element. As a customer will not give brand as a cue, they must recall brand elements from their memory. (Keller 2008, 54, 375.)

Keller points out an unequal significance theory that reveals purchase decision made at a different point of purchase. Keller said; when decision made at the purchase point, brand recognition seems more important than brand recall, since at the point of purchase, brand elements, packaging, logo and brand name will physically appear in front of customers. When the purchase decision is made far away from purchase point, brand recall is more important, as brand recall is more dependent on customers’ memory. Consequently, brand recall is meaningful for online business or far distance business.

2.3 Choosing Brand Elements to Strengthen Brand Awareness

2.3.1 Concept of Brand Elements

Brand elements also called brand identities. They are trademark factors present for identify and distinguish the brand. Mainly, brand elements are brand names, logos, symbols, slogans, packages, URLs, characters, spokespeople, colours, graphics etc. (Keller 2008, 140.) In Iittala case, brand elements could be an Iittala designer, an Alvar Aalto vase, the logo of Iittala or blowing glass. Generally speaking, brand elements are devices that assist individuals recall a brand.

2.3.2 Brand Elements Choosing Criteria

Ordinarily, there are six criteria for brand elements. Each criterion had more specific sub-criteria, as Figure 3 below shows



Figure 3 Criteria for Choosing Brand Elements (Keller 2008, 140-141)

Memorability, meaningfulness, and liability, namely the first three criteria, are thought to be marketers' offensive strategy to build brand equity. The other three criteria are thought to be marketers' defensive strategy. Memorability is an essential condition for building brand equity to achieve brand awareness. The characteristic of memorability is summarised as easily recognised and recalled. Basically, brand elements have different kinds of meaning, either with descriptive or persuasive content. For instance, brand name of littala, generally described original location of this company. Likability is more

concentrated on customers' personal feeling about brand elements. For example, if customers think brand logo is an aesthetic logo, they will have positive attitude towards this brand. (Keller 2008, 140-144.)

The last three criteria could contribute numerous advantages to brand, since customer would not consider much about defective criteria. Offensive criteria are the information that customer examined and concerned. Transferability is used to describe extend of brand elements ability to cross the product categories and geographic boundaries and cultures. The higher transferability of brand, the easier brand can across product categories and cultures. Customers' opinion of aesthetics and values are changing over time; therefore brand elements should change follow the opinions of customers, which are adaptability criteria. Protectability criteria consider extent to protectable of brand elements both from legal perspective and competitive aspect. (Keller 2008, 140-144.)

3 SOCIAL MEDIA IN CHINA AND SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

The first part of this chapter is concentrate on discuss and explain social media in China. In China, there are Chinese equivalents of globally social media. The equivalents are partly based on the form of globally social media, but also involved own characteristics and culture issues.

In the following, it is main focus on illustration of one popular Chinese social media, Sina Weibo, and discussion about the advantage of using Weibo to conduct marketing. Moreover, the theory using Weibo to achieve success in business is a point made at the end of this chapter.

3.1 From Social Media to Chinese Social Media

Hearing about social media, most of people would not feel unfamiliarity, since they both clear what is 'social', and what is 'media'. *Social* is related to activities that people spend time with others, meanwhile, interact and influence with each other. *Media* always connected with news. Ordinarily, people think BBC is media. Wall Street Journal and New York Times also media. The common point is those media giants have a certain influence in society. Media is a methods or way of expressing something that have certain influence. (Safko & Brake 2009, 3-6.) As for social media, it combined meanings of social and media. (Lon) Safko and (David K.) Brake (2009, 3-6.) define 'social media refers to activities, practices, and behaviours among communities of people who gather online to share information, knowledge, and opinions using conversational media.' (Stephen) Dann and (Susan) Dann (2011, 345) comment that the characteristics of social media are the interconnected elements of communication media, social interaction and content. This is shown in Figure 4.

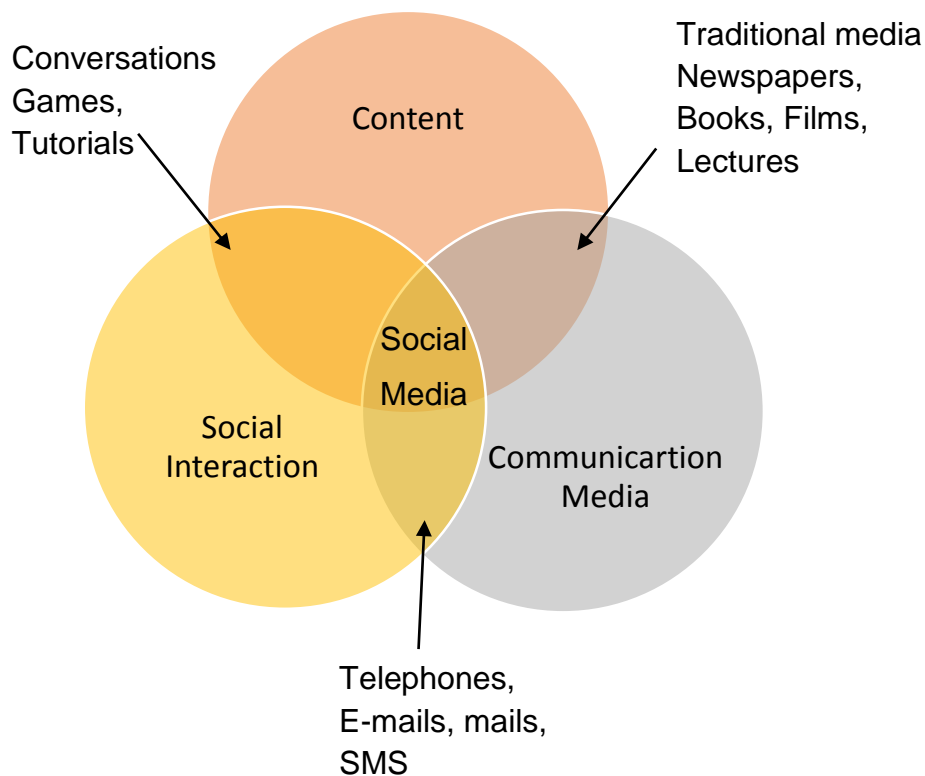


Figure 4 Social Media Components (Dann & Dann 2011, 345)

Generally, some online communication platforms like Facebook, YouTube, Twitter etc., are thought as social media (Bough 2010, 1-4). Facebook, Twitter or YouTube are popular social media in a multitude of countries, especially in western countries. Nevertheless, Chinese Internet users are unable to login those usual social media due to internet censorship control by PRC government. In consequent, Chinese equivalents communication platforms are thriving. Sina Weibo (www.weibo.com) replaces Twitter in China. Renren (www.renren.com) is Chinese version of Facebook. Youku is the equivalents of YouTube in China.

Many corporations conducting social media marketing communication on different kinds of social media platforms, like Lufthansa have register at the entire main social media platform, Renren, Weibo and Youku. Albeit, in this thesis, the focus is using Sina Weibo to enhance brand awareness with littala case.

3.2 What is Weibo

Sina Weibo, is the Chinese version of Twitter. 'Weibo' means microblog in Chinese language, and usually, people say Weibo instead of Sina Weibo. Sina Corporation launched Weibo on 14 August 2009 (Michelle & Uking, 2011). In the following years, the number of registered number increased rapidly. Just around half year later, more than 5 million users were in Sina Weibo (Rapoza 2011). By the mid of year 2012, there are 368 million users in Weibo with approximately 10% active users (Steven, 2012).

Some people said that Weibo is the clone of Twitter, but better than original one. Firstly, Weibo is more user-friendly to add comments when reposting friend's posts. Then, unlike Twitter, Weibo allowed users to share pictures, music and videos with friends (Crampton 2011, 28-31). In addition, Weibo users can get identity verified from Sina Weibo. Generally, Weibo users covered individuals from ordinary people to celebrities, like sport stars, artists, governmental officers, CEOs and Journalists (Nooruddin & Zhang 2012, 42-45). In the last, both Twitter and Weibo allow users to post 140 characters. However, due to the characteristic of Chinese language, 140 characters are enough to briefly describe a story in Chinese, whereas in English, 140 characters only allowed users to type one sentence plus a URL link. (Crampton 2011, 28-31.) The following examples may demonstrate this feature of Weibo.

littala's American Twitter feed, @littalaUSA, posted one promotional tweet that " '7th Annual Bird Lovers' Weekend Oct 8-10, 2010 at the Museum of Glass Tacoma, WA - watch the hot shop live at <http://www.museumofglass.org>." This post almost reaches the 140 character limit, and does not have any pictures included in the post. As seen in Figure 5.



Figure 5 @littalaUSA's post on Twitter

Figure 6 shows another post by littala on Weibo platform. This post also approach 140 characters, but contain abundant of information in it. It says "Finland littala will cooperate with 2012 FINNISH DESIGN REVOLUTION WEEK to reveal delicate Finnish daily life design products. The theme of event is 'Design colourful Life - Contemporary Finnish Design Exhibition'. The exhibition is located on Shanghai Museum of Contemporary Art, near Shanghai People's Square, and open for public from now on till 7 December. You will have opportunity to meet and enjoy littala, Arabia and Fiskars classical home design products closely in the exhibition." In the end of post it still has space to connect with @This is Finland user, and a relevant picture attached with post.

In summary, Weibo is called Chinese version of Twitter; whereas it is a more animate and diverse platform which offer better conditions for marketing. Because of Weibo is not just copy pattern of Twitter, the strategies use on Twitter may not match Weibo marketing in some extents.

芬兰iittala联手@2012芬兰革新设计周 为您呈现融于日常生活的芬兰设计精品！主题活动“炫彩设计生活-芬兰当代设计展”即日起至12月7日，在位于上海人民公园的上海当代设计艺术馆中向公众开放。您将在展览中近距离感受芬兰iittala及其旗下品牌Arabia和Fiskars的经典家居产品设计。@这就是芬兰

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10月29日09:17 来自专业版微博

转发(19) | 收藏 | 评论(1)

Figure 6 Iittala post on Weibo

3.3 Weibo marketing

With the development of IT technology, Chinese are deeply in love to use digital communication. The user number of Sina Weibo, the most popular social media platform, reaching 368 million in the half way of year 2012

(Steven, 2012). It is intimated a new era of marketing communication method begin in China. I personally believe that social media marketing is the future marketing. This opinion is proved by more and more companies and organisations launch official account in Sina Weibo, and also other social media platform.

Weibo marketing is emerging network marketing. The main method is using Weibo platform diffusion messages to potential customers by posting pictures, words and videos. A campaign approach to launch Weibo marketing is not complicated. After companies or organisations open a profile on Weibo, they only need Weibo managers keep posting micro-blog to audients, so that to contact and communicate with target audients.

Weibo marketing is adored by marketers due to its dimensional, instant, and uncomplicated features. Refer to dimensional features, Weibo marketing could use advanced media technology, like pictures, videos, and words to describe products or services, which offer customers visual information. Once the post is on Weibo profile, it can immediately spread across the world. The content of micro-blog will instantly reach potential customers. Moreover, Weibo is a platform established for the masses; hence the operation is not complicated. Marketers do not need take long time to get familiar with operation.

3.3.1 Methodology of Weibo marketing

Weibo marketing is a 24 hours and 7 days per week promotion. It is real time based marketing; hence promotion message will send to customer immediately. Many businessmen and researchers are seeking an effective approach to use Weibo as a marketing tool. Nooruddin and Zhang (2012) have put their efforts on solve out this issues. They point out seven steps on Weibo marketing, as presented in Figure 7

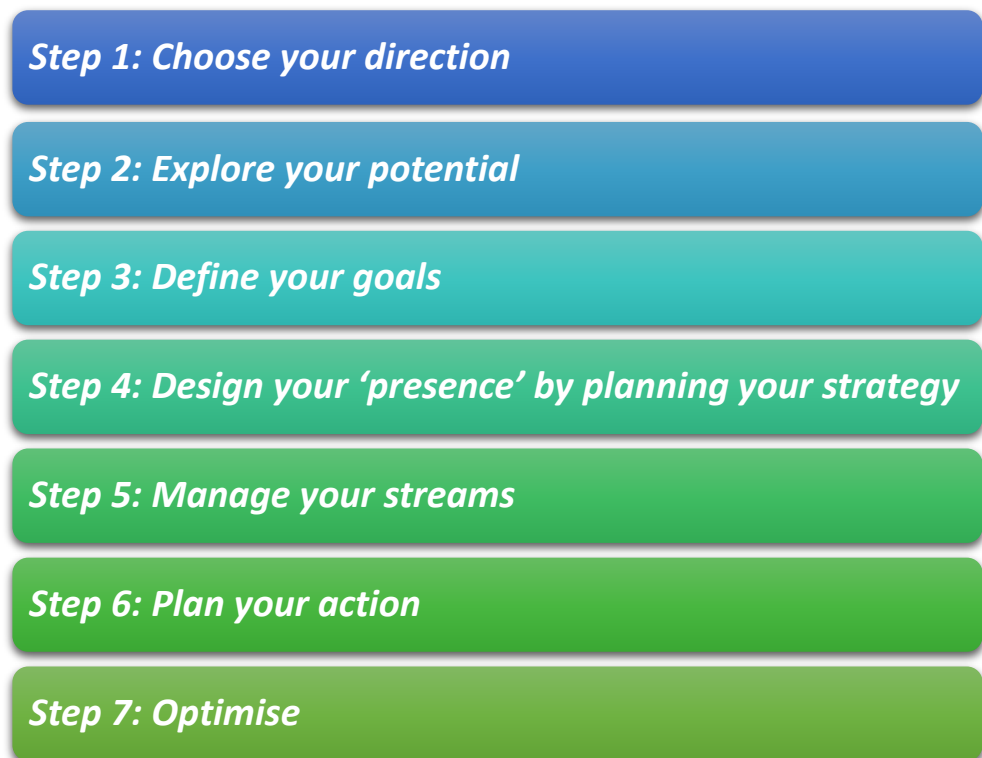


Figure 7 Seven Steps to Weibo Success (Nooruddin & Zhang 2012, 42-45)

Step 1: Choose your direction

Different objectives will lead to different strategies for company, so that company has to clarify the communication objectives of Weibo promotion before company planning Weibo marketing strategy. The objectives should not be just specific on business objectives like sales figure; Social media objectives are essentials as well. (Nooruddin & Zhang 2012, 43.) In Iittala case, the communication objective could be raising 30% followers on Weibo in one year, or increasing 20% reposts and reply by audiences. Furthermore, campaign target audiences need to be specific before set a strategy. In normal, posts will affect more than customers. Potential customers are only one group of audiences. Audience also includes employees, decision makers, competitors and so on. (Czinkota, Ronkainen & Zvobgo 2011, 528-535.) In another perspective, target audiences can also be divided by tier of cities, ages, and social standards etc.

Step 2: Explore your potential

Once the strategy had been set, a skilled marketer will review audiences in both internal and external environments. It includes analyse employees, competitors and other related audiences. Besides, marketer should comprehend latest functions and features of Weibo, such as Weibo Voting and Weibo Online Live Interview. Weibo Voting allowed users initiate a vote using a build-in polling system. (Nooruddin & Zhang 2012, 43.) With this polling system, marketer can easily carry out a survey to engage and get information directly from target audiences. The real time feature of Weibo generates Online Live Interview. This Interview inducts users posting questions to interviewees by @ user name of interviewees, so that interviewees can get messages and reply it.

It is essentially to understand target audiences' preferences and their activity time in Weibo (Nooruddin & Zhang 2012, 43). Choosing the best time to release post is important, because Weibo released time will determine the number of audiences engaged with post. Also, Marketers need to analysis both own post and competitors' post on Weibo in order to catch audiences' eyes.

Step 3: Define your goals

Post is determinant factor in Weibo campaign (Cote 2009). Therefore, it is important to set performance metrics for Weibo marketing and communication activities. Quantitative performance metrics is easy to be understood, like the number of followers, number of posts per day etc. However, qualitative performance metrics is much more meaningful in measure performance. For example, the marketers release 20 posts a day, but only two of them get reposts and comments. It cannot say that Weibo marketing is effective under this situation. Also, Metrics should not change frequently, otherwise it will be difficult to compare and evaluate performance in different time period. It is worth to note that Weibo marketing and communication is a long-term investment. It needs efforts in long run, and marketer cannot anticipate overnight success. (Nooruddin & Zhang 2012, 43-44.)

Step 4: Design your 'presence' by planning your strategy

After setting marketing objectives and performance metrics, company needs carry out strategy concentrate on Weibo operation. Generally, there are 7 steps helping company accomplish Weibo operation strategy.

1) Follow Strategy

Company Weibo account can follow by others. In opposite, it can also follow other Weibo users. The problem is who should follow. A smart method may follow other influential Weibo user, so that it increases followers. Also Weibo stream should follow brand advocators, or activity followers, as following back it a kind of reward in Weibo platform. (Nooruddin & Zhang 2012, 44.)

2) Let the world know

Products need marketing, so does a Weibo stream. Company should use every possible way to promote Weibo presence. It does not matter from internal or external media, free or paid approach. The point is let the world know the Weibo stream. (Nooruddin & Zhang 2012, 44.)

3) Content

Content in Weibo is one of the key elements to attract audients. Others' posts may offer initial ideas. Generally, contents integrated business objective with social news, demotic topics are more attractive than just advertising contents. (Safko & Brake 2009, 683.) Posts contain useful information and tips for audients also welcomed by the majority audients. Anyway, the basic rule is generous and funny contents.

4) The 1/3 principle

Content of Weibo post need promote brands or products. However, if messages are only related to business target on Weibo, it cannot get audients' attention. Audients engagement is crucial issues. (Safko & Brake 2009, 728-731.) It has a 1/3 principle to divided Weibo content into 3 aspects. They are Value-added content, engaged content, and promoted content. Value-added contents are those content not seriously related with promotion brand and products advertising, but can attract followers. Posts with engagement contents usually put out

questions to audiences, or develop a vote. The target of engagement post is encouraging interaction with followers. Promoted content aspect is describing contents related to communication objectives, like brand positioning, promotional events and product marketing. (Nooruddin & Zhang 2012, 44.)

5) Posting

Ensure post in under controlling, company should draw up a timetable of posting (Nooruddin & Zhang 2012, 44). The timetable can be set annually, quarterly or monthly so that to consistent with business needs. In order to make sure the quality of post, content of posts can be conducted in advance and assessed by management team.

6) Define a process to respond and engage

Just as Twitter, users on Weibo can repost and comment for Weibo stream, the respond of followers' comment determined interaction quality (Cote 2009). Therefore, the company needs set up regulations to guide Weibo operating team on handle responds and engagement in different conditions. (Nooruddin & Zhang 2012, 44.)

7) Reporting

Reporting is used to record and evaluate the performance. Keeping monitor and collect data from Weibo stream can help company establish a measurement and reporting system. (Dann & Dann 2011, 115-116.)

Step 5: Manage your streams

Weibo performance provides another way to identified brand for potential customers. In another words, Weibo presence is the label of brand. Hence, it is worth devoting efforts and money on Weibo performance. Need to be mentioned, Weibo performance is not one time investment. It needs continuous operation and maintenance. There are several principles helping manage Weibo presences. Firstly, audiences from different groups should be

formed. According to the analysis of Ogilvy One Research in 2010, Weibo audiences can be segmented into, initiators, commentators, sharers and spectators. Each segment has its own characteristics and interests, which should be acknowledged by Weibo operating team to build relationship with audiences. Secondly, some audiences have considerable influences, like celebrities. They are opinion leaders and influencers in Weibo platform. Therefore, Weibo management team needs to analyse those influencers and clarify the relevance with communication objective so as to create cooperation opportunity. Thirdly, Weibo is one kind of communication tool. Integrate Weibo with other communication tool can achieve better effectiveness than using one single communication tool. Furthermore, company needs to be well prepared before jumping to Weibo. The preparation including, financial preparation, human resources allocation, material resources preparation, strategy setting etc. Lastly, Weibo management team should track performance of Weibo stream and prepare dealing negative comments. In addition, finding a suitable digital monitoring program is vital for Weibo management. (Nooruddin & Zhang 2012, 44-45.)

Step 6: Plan your action

Planning process is a documentary step. This step mainly contains clarification of details and task allocations. For example, who will create post? Who are responses to release post at what time? (Dann, Stephene & Dann, Susan 2011, 362-363.) Weibo marketing team is composite of different roles. Team members require different personal skills to compete jobs, like literacy skills, video and photo editing skills, and copywriting skills. Hence, responsibility segmentation is necessary before action. Some organisations prefer to outsource Weibo marketing to professional agencies or PR companies. Other organisations decide using in-house personal to conduct Weibo marketing. In-house or outsourcing is totally depends on organisations requirement and plan. (Nooruddin & Zhang 2012, 42-45.)

Step 7: Optimise

Evaluation of the effectiveness of campaign is always necessary for improvement (Czinkota, Ronkainen & Zvobgo 2011, 528-535). As Weibo

marketing need long-term operation and maintenance, organisation should optimise its Weibo performance in the long run (Nooruddin & Zhang 2012, 45). Analyse and evaluation past performance it is a significant step to improve Weibo presence and optimise its performance.

Due to the booming Weibo marketing activities, there are more and more programs designed for assess Weibo streams performance. Using those statistics analysis program can extremely improve efficiency of Weibo performance analysis and optimisation. (Nooruddin & Zhang 2012, 45.)

4 IITTALA IN CHINA

Iittala is well known by its wide range of Scandinavian design products for kitchen, table and home. It is the leader of this business field in Nordic region. Fiskars Corporation owns 97% shares of Iittala since year 2007, the rest 3 % is owned by operating management of Iittala (Kilponen, Nylander, Omelina, Teir, & Teräväinen 2008). Nowadays, Iittala group is still one part of the Fiskars Group (Iittala 2012). In the year of 2010 Fiskars Corporation expanding its business to Asia, opening new market in Japan, China and South-Korea, which is the milestone in the history of Iittala (Fiskars Annual Report 2011). There are a number of valuable brands under Iittala Group, such as Iittala, Arabia, Hackman, Fiskars, Rörstrand, and Höganäs Keramik (Iittala 2012). However, only products with brand Iittala can be seen in the Chinese market presently.

Honestly speaking, as a new coming corporation in the Chinese market, Iittala is not known by Chinese. According to the information from Fiskars Brands Inc. Shanghai Representative Office, currently, Iittala is promoted on magazines with home decoration or food introduction contents. It is a smart way to promote Iittala directly to potential customers. However, Shanghai Representative Office cannot afford TV advertisement or traditional marketing approach due to limited promotion budget. Hence, Iittala does not have sufficient exposure of brand in front of potential customers. Because Weibo marketing trends and limited budget, Shanghai representative office launch Iittala Weibo marketing in May 2012. Considering the perspective of a Weibo user and an Iittala potential customer, Iittala's Weibo marketing strategy is not strong enough to penetrate the market. There are just more than 430 posts (figures till 1st December 2012) by Iittala official account on Sina Weibo with less than 1500 followers. In consequence, Iittala need improve its Weibo marketing strategy as soon as possible.

4.1 Analysis and evaluate Iittala Weibo marketing

By the 22 November 2012, there are 1430 followers under Iittala's official Weibo account (@Finlandiittala), which means whenever @Finlandiittala releases a post, at least 1430 audiences will receive updated posts. Therefore, the figure of followers reflects the extent of influence. The more followers, the higher influence Iittala will have. Except followers, another key element is posts. The quality and quantity elements of posts determine how many audiences would like to follow @Finlandiittala. There are 429 Weibo posts up to the 22nd of November 2012, and the last post was released on the 16th of November.

4.1.1 Analysis of followers

The bar chart below illustrates the influence range of @Finlandiittala's followers. The vertical axis represents different groups of Iittala followers. Iittala's followers were segmented by the number of their followers. As Figure (number) shows, 80.7% of @Finlandiittala's followers are in the group with less than 500 followers. 12.5% of Iittala followers have more than 500 but less than 1000 followers. Basically, the number of @Finlandiittala's followers is decreased with increasing figures of the influenced range. However, people in the group 10001-50000 are 0.7% more than followers in the group 5001-10000. Overall,

littala's followers have normal structure of influence range. The majority followers do not have powerful influence.

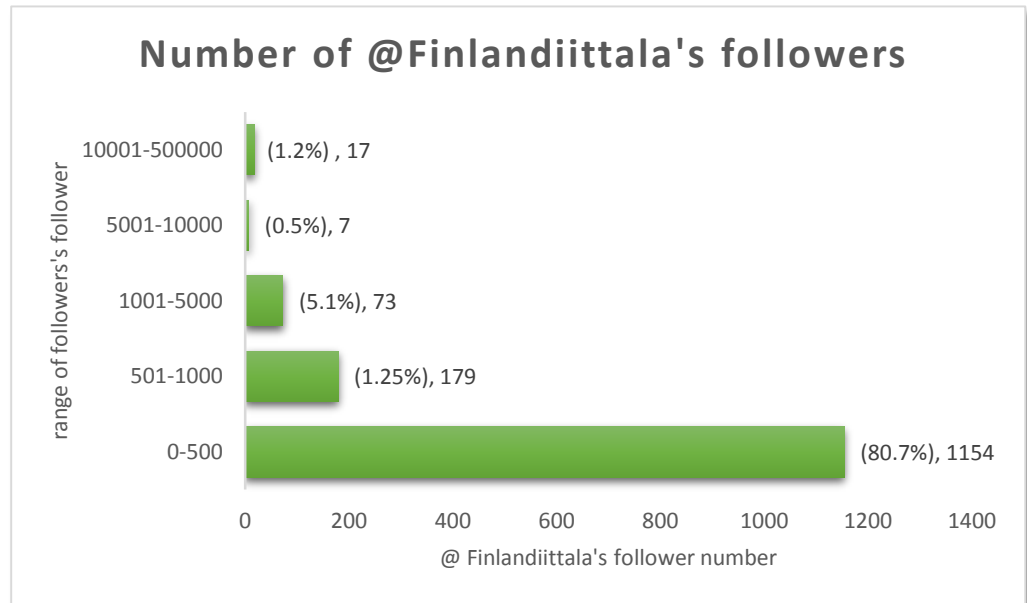


Figure 8 Number of @Finlandiittala's Followers (tfengyun 2012)

Currently, 17 littala stores scattered in 14 cities of China, in which 3 stores located in Shenyang (Liaoning Province) and 2 shops in Shanghai. The rest, 12 shops are located in Suzhou(Jiangsu Province), Hefei(Anhui Province), Wuhan(Hubei Province), Taiyuan(Shanxi Province), Zhengzhou (Henan Province), Qingdao(Shandong Province), Tianjin, Kunming(Yunnan Province), Chongqing, Shenzhen(Guangdong Province), Hong Kong and Urumqi (Xinjiang Province) (littala Official Weibo, 2012). It is worth noting that the capital city Beijing is not on the list of littala authority stores, whereas there is no doubt that Beijing is a city with abundantly accumulating potential customers of littala.

The histogram (Figure 9) shows the location distribution of littala Weibo audients. Shanghai gathered upon half of followers, ranking No 1 among all the areas. Beijing is ranked just behind Shanghai. Beijing has more than one fifth littala Weibo followers. The third biggest group of followers (16.6%) is overseas. It is easy to suspect that overseas' follower know littala brand is not because of littala did good marketing job in China. Guangdong provinces have 109 people track @Finlandiittala Weibo, occupied 7.6% of 1430 followers. Although no authority littala stores in Zhenjiang, Heilungkiang provinces, still there are 4% and 1.3% followers from these two provinces

respectively. Iittala authority stores in opening in Shandong and Tianjin, but followers in these two areas are both under 1%. Followers in Weibo account are the audiences of marketing campaign. They are the potential customers as well. However, comparing locations of Iittala authority store with distributions of @Finlandiittala's followers, they are not matching each other very much. There are three stores in Shenyang, but few Weibo audiences from Shenyang.

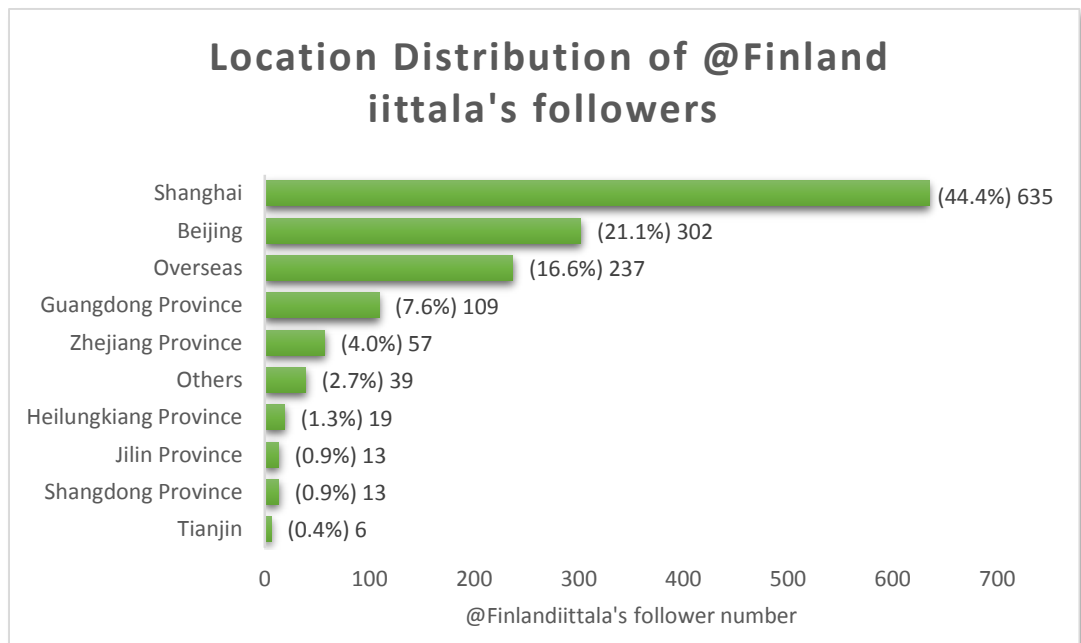


Figure 9 Location Distribution of @Finlandiittala's followers (tfengyun 2012)

A Weibo user can apply for identity verified if they are working in media organisation, or famous individuals like sports stars, actors, authors, CEOs etc. Once the identity is verified, it will have an orange 'V' symbol after its user name. Weibo users with tagged orange 'V' are sort of celebrities in Weibo platform. Organisations or companies can also apply a blue 'V' to verify its identity. Generally, verified users having more followers than users without 'V', so that they have enormous impact on other users. For normal Weibo user accounts, Weibo also offered opportunities to mark themselves out of others. For instance, one Weibo user have 101 followers. At same time, he/she is tracking 101 other Weibo users. So he/she could get a mark of activity Weibo user once he/she connect his/her Weibo account with mobile phone. (Sina

2012.) Activity Weibo Users do not have tremendous impact as celebrities, but they still have great influence in their social networks. Obviously, the higher percentages of Celebrities, Organisations, and Activity Weibo Users followers, the bigger impact of littala Weibo stream has. Figure 10 outlines the percentages of @Finlandiittala verified followers. 89% followers are normal Weibo users, 8% belong to celebrities. Activity Weibo User and Organisations followers are 1% and 2% in respectively.

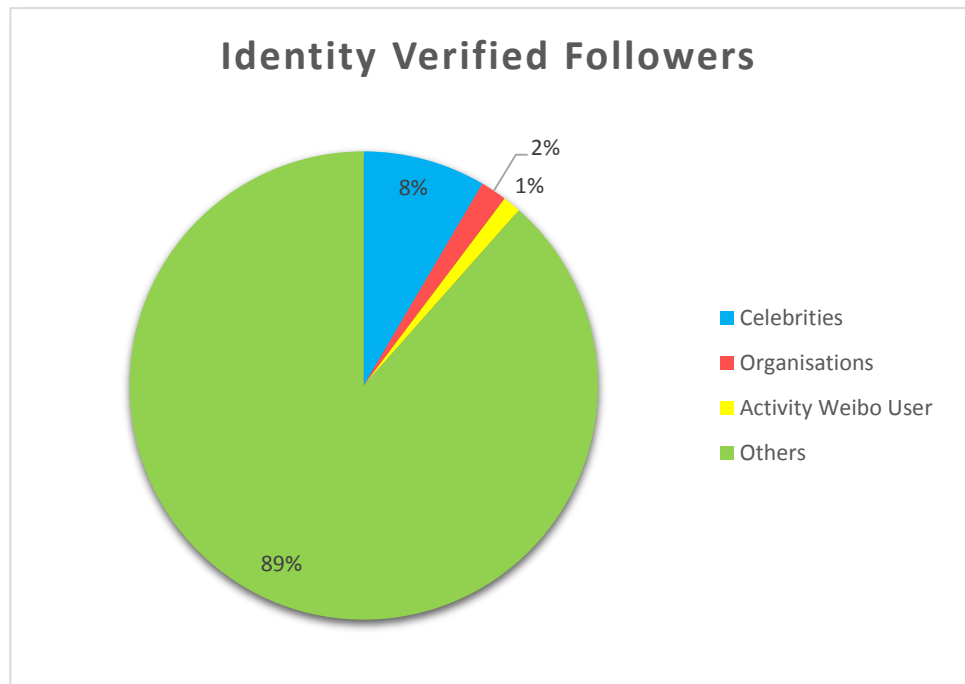


Figure 10 Identity Verified Followers (tfengyun 2012)

Figure 11 describes the proportion of @Finlandiittala's followers. It is notable that there are 69% female and 31% male followers. Although the figure of female are males' figure doubled, male still contain a big amount followers.

Therefore, Weibo operating team needs balance content of posts to attract both female and male audients.

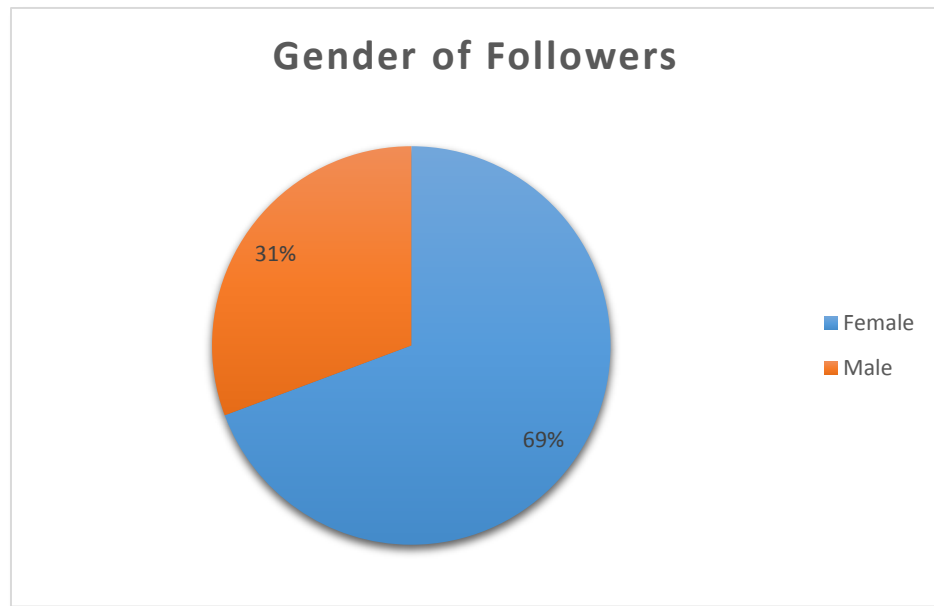


Figure 11 Gender of Followers (tfengyun 2012)

4.1.2 Analyse @Finlandiittala Weibo post in General

Going through @Finlandiittala's Weibo post, it can find that this Weibo account was established at 7 May 2012, which is really recently established. Until the beginning of December 2012, there are around 430 Weibo posts on littala Weibo profile. Nevertheless, more than half of posts (268) was released on May of 2012, 92 posts on June; rest 64 Weibo posts were released from July to the end of November. Researcher also found littala had carried out Weibo online campaigns in May and June 2012, but since that no more campaigns. Relatively large amount of Weibo posts on May and June was due to reposts of campaign related posts as well. One of littala Weibo operators explained this situation in the interview. He said July and August are off-season for retail selling in China, so they were not focus on Weibo marketing. Moreover, Shanghai representative are emphasis on establish sales network at this moment. Weibo marketing was not being put in a significant position.

Nevertheless, Weibo marketing was seriously considered at the beginning of creation of the Weibo profile. The first campaigns were carried out in one

week of @Finlandiittala profile creations, the main ideas of the campaign was request followers to repost @Finlandiittala's post and @ 5 friends at the same time, so that they will have chance to get a littala Kivi candleholder or a Ultima Thule bowl. The campaign was continued for four days (15.5-18.5); there are more than 600 reposts. It means that approximately 600 followers promoted littala to at least 5 of their friends. As for the effectiveness of this campaign, marketing department of Shanghai representative office had given a positive answer.

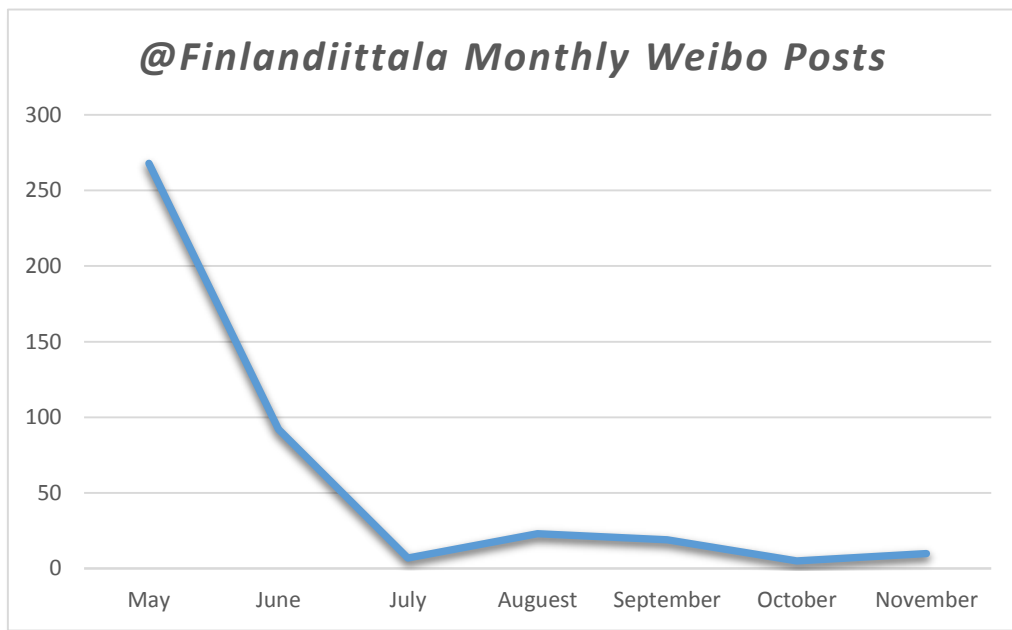


Figure 12 @Finlandiittala monthly Weibo posts

Figure 13 is one Weibo stream reposts by @Finlandiittala in 29th of October. A Weibo user thought those colourful tumblers are from littala, so he or she post photo with comment 'love littala'. However, those tumblers are Marimekko (another Finnish design company) products. They are both Finnish Design. However, littala Weibo operator reposts a 'fake' littala product with 'super nice' comments which make others doubt their professional skills. Furthermore, littala Weibo operators obviously did not recognise that is not littala product, which proved they have limited knowledge on their own products. It was not believable that they could conduct a successful marketing strategy without fully understand products.



Figure 13 Iittala Weibo Posts Mix up Marimekko with Iittala

4.1.3 Analysis of Weibo posts in November 2012

Skimming over Iittala's Weibo posts on November of 2012, a histogram was drawn to illustrate data distribution of Iittala Weibo post (Figure 14). Honest speaking, @Finlandiittala was not productive on November. It only has 10 posts among these 30 days. The silent gap of Weibo post can be 2 weeks. This cannot be considered good posts release schedule.

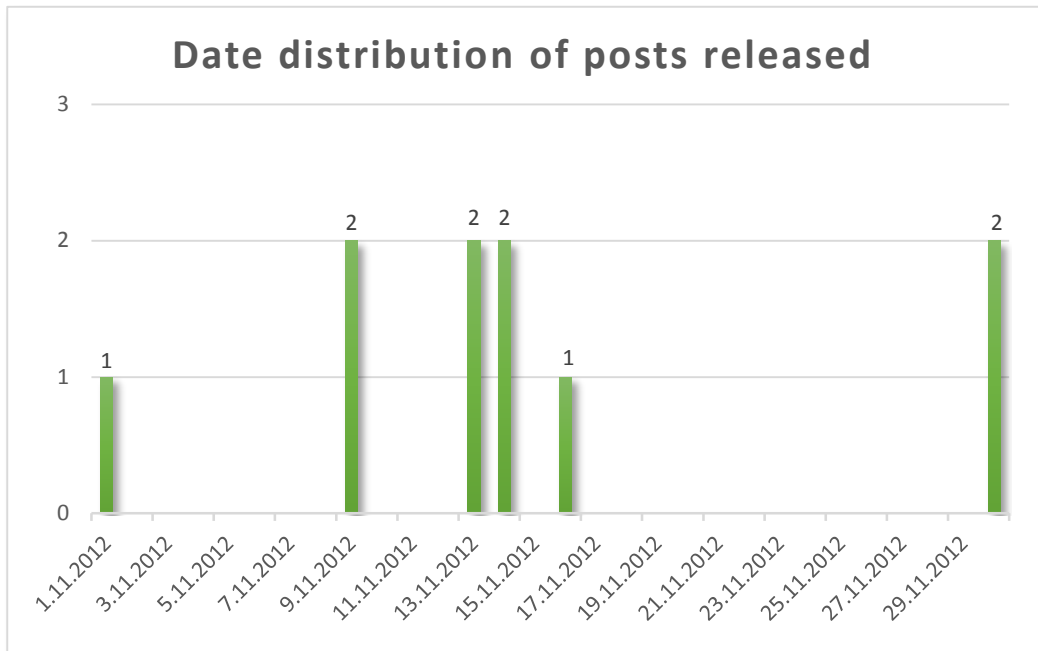


Figure 14 Date distribution of posts released on Nov 2012

According to Weibo marketing tactic by Nooruddin and Zhang (2012, 42-45), it is important to analyse release time of post in a day. In general, most of audients may not check their Weibo profile at midnight. Some audients have to work from 8am to 5pm. So the operation team needs to sort out when is the best time to released post. It seems that @Finlandiittala thought from 13:00 to 19:00 is the best time to release a post, since all of the 10 posts were distribute during that time (see as Figure 15).

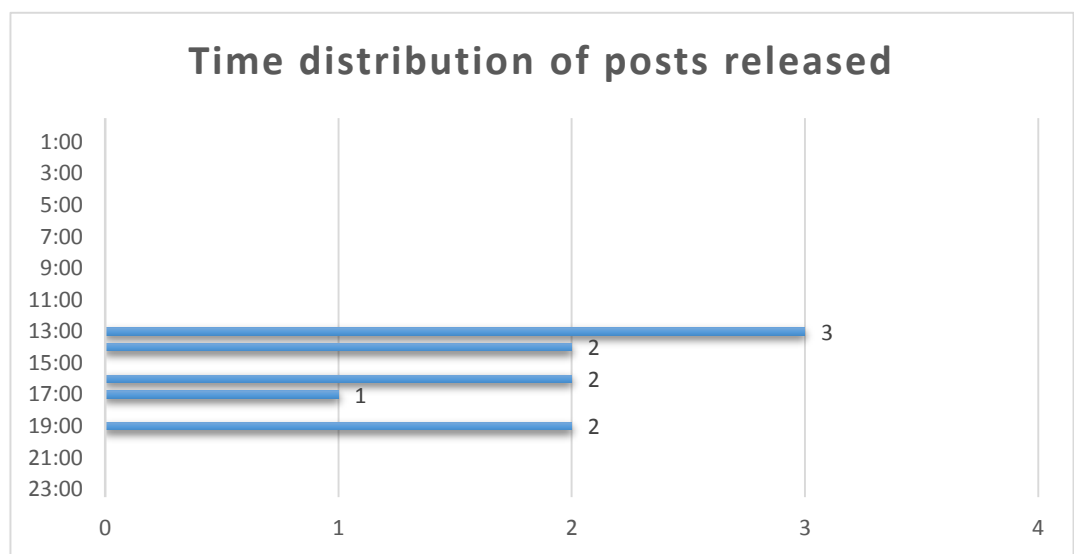









Figure 15 Time distribution of posts released

Content of posts are the key factor to attract audiences. Based on the 1/3 principle of Weibo post put forward by Nooruddin and Zhang (2012, 42-45), post contents can be analysis from three categories, namely, value-added contents, engaged contents and promoted contents. Value-added contents describe posts not related to business objective, just for delight of audiences. Engaged contents are used to increase communication with audiences, like proposing a question to audiences. Posts with promoted contents are the most valuable posts for business objective, which contains messages to promote brands and products. Have a look at @Finlandiittala's post on November, 8 out of 10 posts are related to promoted content posts, the other two can be sort into value-added content and engaged content categories. Undoubtedly, promoted content posts are the posts that Iittala want to release, but if Iittala release too much promoted content posts, it will lose its audiences on Weibo platform. In addition, there are 9 out of 10 posts were repost others' micro-blogs. Three of them were repost @Finlandiittala its own posts; four were repost verified stores' micro-blogs; another two reposts were from two audiences' micro-blogs with Iittala product photos. Micro-blogs from verified stores were various with each other. For example one repost from Finnair Weibo (Figure 16) is an excellent post for Finnair which combine engagement contents and promotional contents. It says, 'have you been to VIP room in Helsinki international airport? If you had, how do you think of it? *Australian Business Traveller* magazine assessed Finnair's VIP room to five-star VIP room! Hope everyone will have an opportunity to visit it.' Iittala had reposted and commented on this micro-blog, which is the only one post with engaged contents. It comments on 'Come and look for Iittala vase!' That is a positive example. However, some other repost by @Finlandiittala are pure advertising with discount information, which may cause audiences antipathy.

眼尖的找找IITTALA花瓶！//@KELLY林大小姐: 最喜欢左下的位置。M小姐最爱坐那个摇椅，摇啊摇，一边看飞机一边用餐。Lounge的餐具也全部是iittala和marimekko，非常有芬兰格调。

@芬兰航空Finnair : 各位童鞋们有去过位于芬兰赫尔辛基国际机场的芬航贵宾室吗？如您去过的话，对贵宾室有什么评价呢？上月出版的Australian Business Traveller便将芬航贵宾室评为五星级的贵宾室！ 希望大家以后有机会也去参观一下吧！

 收起 |  查看大图 |  向左转 |  向右转



11月27日 19:12 来自专业版微博

转发(16) | 评论(15)

11月30日 13:06 来自微博搜索

转发(1) | 收藏 | 评论(2)

Figure 16 Repost micro-blog of Finnair

5 BENCHMARKING

This chapter aims at using benchmarking methods to define a practicable approach for littala Weibo marketing. IKEA Weibo profile and Yours Singapore (YS) Weibo profile performance is award as top ten successful Weibo marketing cases in the year 2011. Both of them are foreign companies or organisations in China, which are different from the other top ten cases. IKEA come from the neighbour country of Finland, running business in same field with littala. Yours Singapore is Singapore Tourism Board which is a governmental organisation different from littala but, as Patterson, Keppler & Mapson (1995, 3-6) point out, benchmarking is not limited in the same industry. The emphasis of benchmarking is learning from outstanding experiences either form others or own (Rusalova 2009).

5.1 IKEA, Yours Singapore and littala

Table 1 compares the basic information between IKEA, YS and littala; the figures collected and analysis based on Weibo profiles data on 10th of December 2012. As the table shows, both IKEA and YS were launched Weibo marketing in the year of 2010, around two years earlier than littala. IKEA operating Weibo since 21 September 2010; YS launched on 14 January 2010. With Long-term operating Weibo marketing, both IKEA and YS have much more followers than littala, so do Weibo posts. Is that longer Weibo marketing will gain the more followers? The answer seems to be 'yes'. However, in average, IKEA have approximately 523 new followers per day; YS increase 300 new followers per day; whilst littala only have about 7 new coming followers per day. Hence, attracting new followers cannot just rely on long-term operation. It has other factors affect extents of increasing followers. Refer to how many post per day in average, there is not big difference among this three Weibo profiles.

Table 1 Comparing littala with IKEA & Yours Singapore (Weibo data on 10.12.12)

	IKEA	Yours Singapore	littala
First Post Date	21.Sep.2010	14.Jan.2010	07.May.2012
Weibo Operating days	812	1061	217
Followers	424,882	317,835	1,477
Posts	2,737	3,370	433
Followers increased per day in average	523	300	7
Average post per day	3.37	3.18	2

Previously, Weibo performance analysis of IKEA, YS and littala is conducted based on entire history of these three Weibo profiles. As IKEA and YS launched Weibo marketing around two years ago, their Weibo marketing strategies must modified during two years. Hence, their recently Weibo marketing performance are more valuable and relevant for benchmarking. Table 2 summarised the Weibo performance of IKEA, YS and littala in November 2012 on basis of quantitative research.

IKEA had nearly 20 times posts and more than 300 times followers increased than littala in November 2012. Yours Singapore have enormous different with littala as well. Obviously, both IKEA and Yours Singapore were more actively on Weibo than littala, since in average IKEA and YS released 6.5 and 4.6 posts per day in respectively. littala only released 0.33 posts per day averagely.

Table 2 Weibo Performance of IKEA, YS & Iittala on November 2012

	IKEA	Yours Singapore	Iittala
Posts in November 2012	195	138	10
Average post per day in November 2012	6.5	4.6	0.33
Increased followers in November 2012	21,292	5,959	65

5.2 IKEA

IKEA Weibo marketing was outstanding among countless Organisation Weibo users. In order to define factors which affect IKEA enhance its brand awareness in Weibo, researcher looked through IKEA's Weibo posts released in latest two months; and analysed around 20 posts that IKEA released in November 2012. In consequent, the following criteria are concluded.

- Using professional photograph
- Combine promotional contents with Value-added or Engagement contents
- Release Weibo posts everyday
- Rely on original posts instead of repost others' words

Basically, all of IKEA posts are attached with a photo or video. Different from others, IKEA's photographs are well designed. The majority of them are also shown on IKEA brochures; hence audients adore those high quality photographs and would like repost it. Skimming the posts in November 2012, all IKEA posts were reposts by audients at least 20 times, some posts even be reposts by 230 times. The other reason induces followers repost IKEA posts may due to its friendly and heart-warmed contents of posts. Some comments on post are just speaking out audients' mood, like Figure 17 shows. 'After a busy daytime, cannot wait to go home and have a dinner with her/him! Because she/he said it will have a surprise for me! Expecting!' The content of

post is not different from the one that sharing with friends, attached photos described the scene but items shown in the photo are IKEA products.

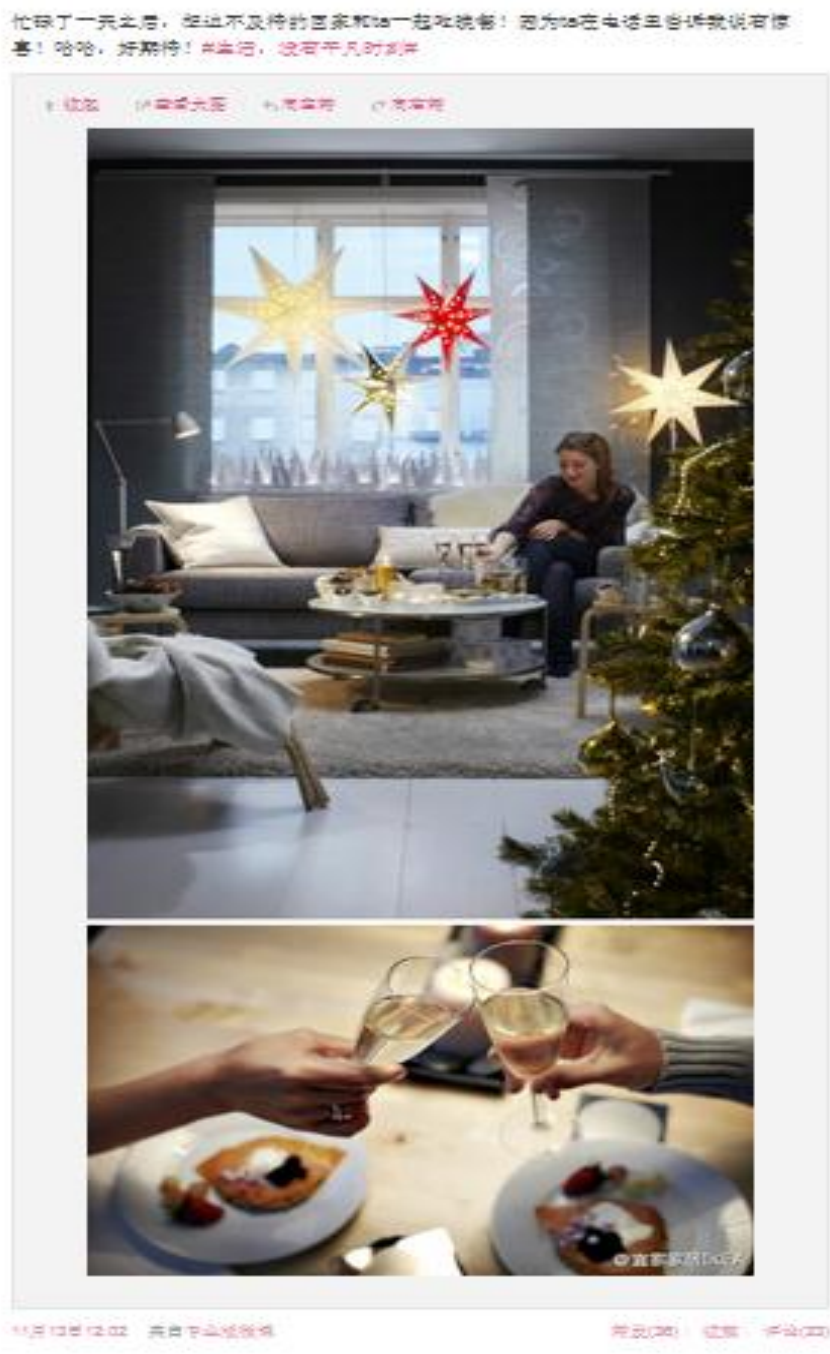


Figure 17 IKEA Post combine Engaged & Promoted contents

Most of IKEA original post keeps the same style with example above (Figure 17), which is combined promoted content with engagement contents. Some other posts also combined promoted content with value-added contents, like Figure 18. The post promoted IKEA products when it gives audiences suggestions about tidy up accessories. IKEA comment on post 'If put

accessories in open place they will cover by dust. If put them in boxes, it is not convenient. What to do? Try a drawer with glass!



宜家家居IKEA: 饰品放在外面怕积灰, 收起来又怕找不到, 进退两难?! 试试带透明玻璃的抽屉柜吧! 【康普蒙 内置式抽屉柜】#灵感样板间#

收起 | 查看大图 | 向左转 | 向右转



11月13日 21:28 来自专业版微博

转发(92) | 评论(30)

Figure 18 IKEA Post combine Value-added & Promoted contents

IKEA Weibo keeps posting even during holidays, so that it has more posts and followers than Yours Singapore although it launched 8 months later. Additionally, IKEA is insist create original posts than repost others' microblog. Among the 20 analysed posts only 5 of them are reposts, while littala has 90% reposts in November 2012 (figure from chapter 4.1.3 Analysis of Weibo posts in November 2012).

5.3 Yours Singapore

Yours Singapore is Singapore tourism board, whose objective is to attract more tourists. Therefore most contents of posts are related to Singapore gastronomic meals and tourist site introduction, undoubtedly, the contents themselves are attractive to Chinese people with tremendous interests in gastronomy and travelling. Additionally, Yours Singapore carried out many

online audiences engaged campaigns. Also, Yours Singapore have a good cooperation with celebrities.

In November of 2012, YS carried out 5 Weibo online campaigns in order to improve its brand awareness on Weibo platform. The content of campaigns is various, but main objective is request audiences be the followers of Yours Singapore Weibo profile. Two out of five Weibo campaigns are request audiences release a micro-blog with photos of Singapore or their experiences about travelling in Singapore. Another two campaigns are request audiences introduce YS Weibo profile to their friends. The other one are request follower answer their question. Definitely, people would not have motivation to participate Weibo campaigns without benefits. YS offers many gifts to audiences. The gifts are from a beach towel to a three-day hotel plus return flight ticket to Singapore. With encouragement by a bonus, each campaign was attracting hundreds of audiences.

In addition, YS has a series of micro-blogs with theme of 'celebrities love Singapore'. Whenever a celebrity visits Singapore, YS will inform followers with photos. This action attracts many fans of celebrities. Moreover, YS cooperate with a Singapore singing star that is famous in China. The gifts of one Weibo campaign hold in November were postcard or album with the singer's signature.

6 CONCLUSION AND DEVELOPMENT

This chapter is going to summarise main conclusions of the research. With the results, researcher would propose suggestions for Iittala to enhance its brand awareness in China.

Research was begun from explaining theory of branding. Brand is a name, image or symbol, which used to distinguish products or services from competitors. Brand awareness reflects people's ability to recognise and recall a brand. Iittala is a brand name and has its own logo, whilst it is not recognised and recalled by many Chinese people. Despite Iittala Shanghai representative office was invest on Magazine advertising, Iittala still need another approach to enhance its brand awareness in China. Weibo as a trendy marketing tool is widely used by organisations in China, so does Iittala. Iittala is attempt using Weibo marketing on Sina Weibo platform. Iittala Weibo operation team also have numerous interactions with its audiences on Weibo in May and June of 2012. However, because of business objective was shift to build more retail channel in China, Weibo marketing activities was curtailed by Iittala Shanghai representative. However, researcher believe Weibo marketing could help Iittala build its brand and improve brand awareness in a short time with cost-effective invest.

Practical part of research compared Iittala Weibo performance with IKEA and Yours Singapore. IKEA as an outstanding Weibo marketing example set up benchmark for Iittala. As concluded in chapter 5, IKEA's Weibo success was from 4 aspects.

- 1) Post with professional photograph
- 2) Combine promotional contents with value-added or Engagement contents
- 3) Keep post everyday
- 4) Create posts instead of repost others' micro-blog

Weibo performance of Yours Singapore was not as good as IKEA, but its Weibo campaign strategy offer a good pattern for Iittala. Continues campaign push followers repost its Weibo post in order to get gift from Yours Singapore. Furthermore, Yours Singapore has close cooperation with famous singing star, which assist Yours Singapore attracts audiences as well.

On the basis of research results, Iittala's future Weibo marketing approach could carry out in two different directions; one is paying more attention on Weibo operation, the other is seeking and creating cooperation with other identified Weibo profiles.

Weibo marketing is not success in an overnight, it needs long-term active operation. Keep posting is the most basic requirement for Weibo success; therefore, Iittala need keep release posts to audiences in every single day. Definitely, Iittala do not need pay high salaries for Weibo operators during holidays. There are some software designed for Weibo marketing management and operation. The software allowed user release micro-blog posts automatically on set time. Additionally, Iittala would better use brochure photos with Weibo post, instead of random photos taken with mobile phones. The higher quality of photos, the better quality of Iittala products will show to audiences. Besides, Iittala Weibo profile operators could borrow ideas from IKEA Weibo posts, which combine promotional contents with value-added or engagement contents. Iittala should mainly rely on original Weibo post other than repost others Weibo post, especially which writers were not identified celebrities.

In order to enhance brand awareness of Iittala, Iittala needs expand its Weibo relation net. Firstly, Iittala could seek to cooperation with Finland related Weibo users, like Finnish Tourism Board, Finnair, Chinese Student Union of Helsinki University etc. These cooperation would not be very difficult to achieve, due to the same background of Finland. The other approach is to seek cooperation with identified celebrities on Weibo platform. Generally, a Weibo post by an identified celebrity will widely spread among Weibo platform. Hence, if an identified celebrity releases a post about Iittala, the brand name of Iittala can be maximally exposed on Weibo. For that purpose, Iittala could give some products as gifts to Weibo identified celebrities, as return celebrities need release a Weibo post about feelings of Iittala products that they have received. It will take time and effort to contact with celebrities, but it will worth to do that.

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APPENDICES

Qualitative research of Iittala

1. To what extent are you satisfied with your sales in China?
 Very dissatisfied Dissatisfied Neutral Satisfied Very satisfied

2. With which brands are you selling in China?
 Iittala Hackman Fiskars
 Rörstrand Höganäs Keramik Arabia

3. What do you think about the effectiveness of social media marketing in general?
 No useful at all Limited effect Neutral Useful Very useful
4. What do you think about the effectiveness of social media marketing in Weibo?
 Don't know
 Know,
 No useful at all Limited effect Neutral Useful Very useful

5. How is Iittala operating social media marketing in China?
 In house Outsourcing Don't know

6. Do you think Iittala needs more advertising in China?
 Yes No

7. If yes, what do you think is/are the best way of advertise Iittala in China?
 Traditional approach: using mass media advertising, TV advertising, billboard etc.
 Social media approach: using Facebook, Twitter, Weibo, Youtube etc.