

Why the Chinese market matters to the Thames Valley



It's well known that China is the largest economy in the world, and the most populous country in the world. But what does this mean for Thames Valley businesses? Lily Yuan Li of Prospect Chinese Services gives some answers

There are many stories of companies doing business with China and experiencing growth like they have never experienced before. The Thames Valley region has a reputation for branded high technology and British craftsmanship which are very sellable in China and sought after by Chinese consumers and companies.

However, you don't have to go very far to tap into the Chinese market. For companies based in and selling in the UK, there is a growing Chinese market right here on our doorstep.

Thames Valley is home to prestigious universities such as Oxford and Reading, with thriving Chinese student populations. They are adventurous and enthusiastic for British experiences. Chinese companies that have invested in the Thames Valley include Huawei (the Chinese telecoms giant headquartered in Reading), Hytera, ZTZ and TP Link, with more manufacturing companies looking here as first choice for their UK operations; all attracting Chinese staff and their families.

The brands that appeal to the Chinese during their stay in the UK will be recommended to their friends, relatives or online social media contacts, all of whom are future potential tourists. It is estimated that by 2017, Chinese tourists will spend £1 billion a year in the UK, with many also visiting attractions such as Oxford University and Windsor Castle. Definitely not a segment to be ignored.

The Chinese market is big and strategies accessing it can vary requiring anything from small to large-scale investments. How are UK companies supposed to arrive at a clear strategy for the Chinese market and get the support they need?

How Prospect has helped

Our clients fall broadly into two categories: companies in the UK wanting to attract more Chinese business by adapting to Chinese consumers; and companies in the UK aiming to generate sales in China.

Prospect Chinese Services has helped companies across the UK in first identifying what their aims are and then constructing the strategy to achieve this. Offering a personal and highly-tailored service, our focus has been in the following areas:

- Generating leads in China (being sales, partners or suppliers) enabling businesses to sell or buy from China directly
- Promoting businesses in China through online and offline marketing, localising websites or event management to generate sales from China
- Training UK businesses on Chinese culture to enable them to attract more Chinese consumers or do business with the Chinese more effectively.

Examples of our success stories include:

- Generated a UK-based wine merchant's first wine sales in China and introduced the company to Chinese distributors and sales channels in China, as well organising and hosting exhibitions in Beijing and Shanghai

- Setting up the first restaurant in China for a global Italian restaurant chain including selection of location, staffing, and supply chain
- Finding a Chinese manufacturer able to make a product to specifications for a baby-product company
- Finding a Chinese investor for a UK-based animation company
- Training UK-based managers and staff of a global hotel chain on Chinese culture and etiquette, and ratifying their strategy to target the Chinese segment
- Advising the UK's leading port operator on how to do business with a new Chinese partner
- Localising the website of French estate agency listing high-end properties aimed at Chinese investors complete with content management system.

Clients chose us as we give them our undivided attention, and are dedicated to providing excellent service and delivering results. Doing business in China, and sometimes in the UK, is often a case of knowing the right people. Our network of contacts and connections are our biggest asset whenever we make something happen for our clients.

Current projects

Chinese firms have recognised that the UK is a great place to source products and invest in. Chinese companies are increasingly heading to us to find opportunities for investment and in search of new high-quality brands and products for their domestic market.

We are currently working with Chinese companies looking for the following:

- Investment opportunities in UK companies in the high-technology sector
- Exclusive rights to sell high-quality branded goods in China such as cosmetics, clothing, baby products etc
- Owners of UK companies in the heavy machinery or medical equipment sector in financial distress looking to exit the market.

We are also working on an exciting exchange programme linking UK secondary schools with their counterparts in China. Education has always been a keen interest for us through our Chinese culture training, seminars and involvement in local primary schools.

If you are interested in exploring the above or any other opportunities the Chinese market has to offer, contact us. We offer a free no-obligation 30-minute consultation.

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