



China's Gaming Market:

The Biggest Opportunity,
and the Hardest to Win



Winning in China's \$94.5B Gaming Market

China is home to 700M+ gamers and represents the world's largest gaming market. Yet many Western studios fail — not due to game quality, but because they underestimate China's unique ecosystem, platforms, and player behaviors.

Case Study 1: The Cost of Inconsistent Marketing

A client ran a short “**burst campaign**” in China:

- 1–2 months of influencer/media push to drive wishlist growth (**tens of thousands**)
- Followed by a pause in all activities, relying solely on launch-day conversion

What Went Wrong:

- **Wishlist Decay:** Pre-launch wishlists lost value without follow-up
- **Attention Competition:** Daily new releases captured player attention, erasing early gains
- **Broken Community Link:** Halting influencer outreach and updates severed emotional connections

Outcome:

- Despite strong pre-launch wishlist numbers, **conversion was dramatically lower than expected.**

Lesson:

- In China, **one-off marketing pushes fail**
- Continuous engagement is essential:
 - Regular influencer activations
 - Consistent content on Bilibili/Douyin
 - Timely translations and player communication
 - Visibility around seasonal sales and festivals

Key Takeaway: In China, continuity is king — marketing silence is as damaging as bad PR.

Case Study 2: Soulstone Survivors – Driving Growth Through Cultural Adaptation

Background:

When UK-based studio Game Smithing first approached us with their roguelite, bullet-heaven game *Soulstone Survivors*, China accounted for **just 6.6% of total unit sales** (early 2023). Despite strong mechanics and global traction, Chinese players were not converting at the same rate as Western audiences. The problem was not the game itself, but **visibility, cultural resonance, and market positioning**.

Challenges:

- **Low share of Chinese sales:** only 6.6% of units from China
- **Limited cultural adaptation:** playable heroes did not reflect characters familiar to Chinese players
- **Minimal presence in Chinese-facing events:** missed visibility during key online and offline festivals

Our Approach:

1. **Cultural integration in-game:** co-designed a new hero inspired by Sun Wukong, tailored to the roguelike format
2. **Festival participation:** appeared at Taipei Game Show, ChinaJoy, Eastern Game Fest, and Steam online festivals, increasing visibility among Chinese players
3. **On-the-ground presence:** offline booths in Shanghai and Taipei to collect direct feedback and build brand recognition

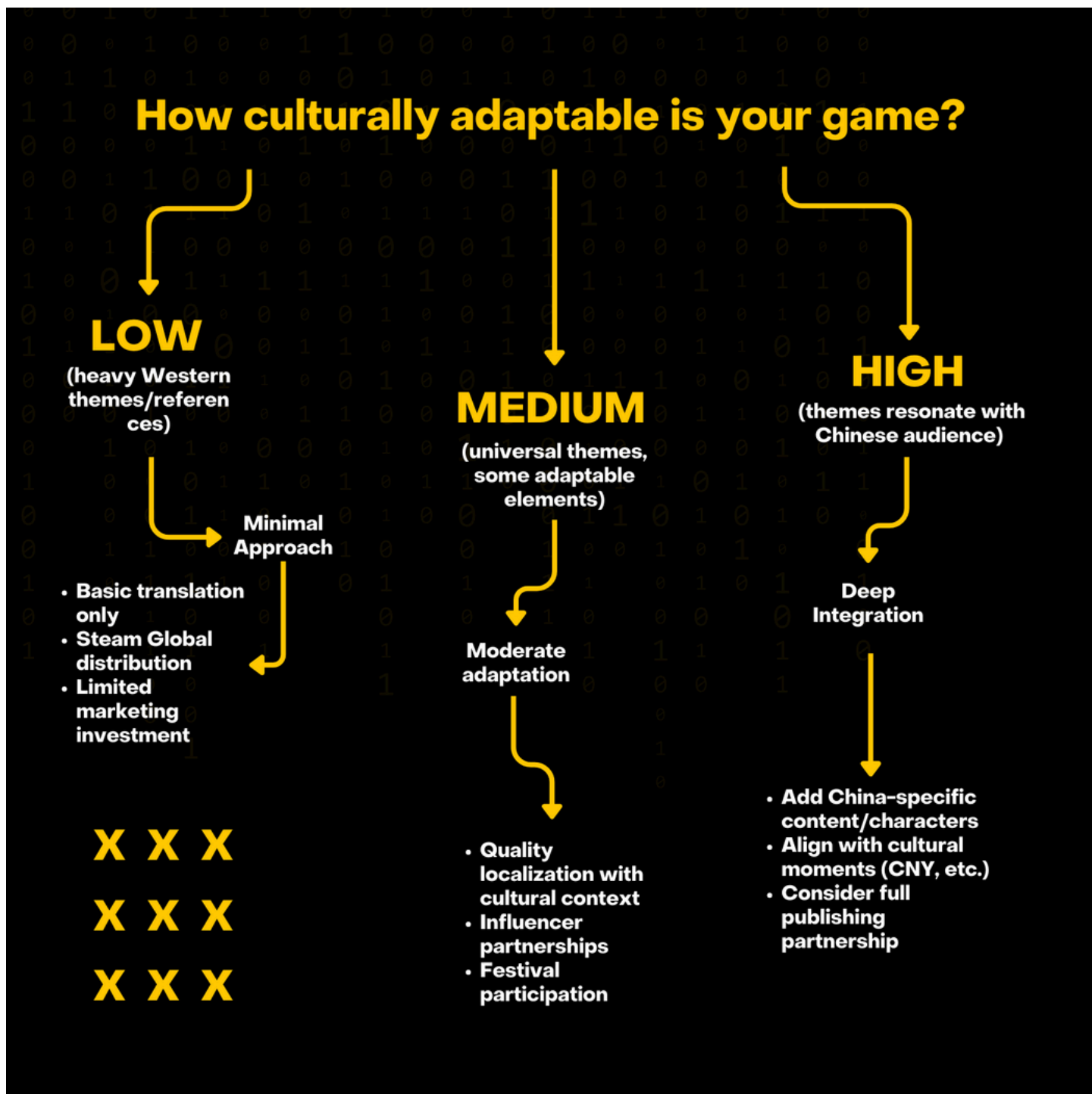
Results:

- **Share of Chinese sales:** rose from 6.6% to **35.7% during Eastern Game Fest**
- **Player feedback:** highly positive, validating cultural adaptation strategy
- **Long-term revenue:** China now consistently competes with the US as the studio's #1 revenue market

Lesson:

- Market-specific adaptation, cultural integration, and local engagement transform China from a “side note” into a **core revenue pillar**
- Key takeaway for PC developers: **embedding cultural touchpoints, showing up where players discover games, and signaling long-term commitment drives exponential results.**

Decision Framework: Board-Ready Guidance



Current community presence in China?

None/Minimal

Build foundation

- Bilibili account creation
- Basic localization
- Monitor Steam reviews

X X X

X X X

X X X

GROWING ENGAGED

Nurture and expand

- WeChat/QQ group creation
- Regular content updates
- Festival participation

STRONG ESTABLISHED

Leverage for growth

- Consider ISBN application
- Explore domestic partnerships
- Develop China-specific content

Price-Optimization Strategy

What's your game category?

Indie/Small

Price band: 20-70 CNY (\$3-10)

- Competitor analysis
- Discount strategy planning
- Festival participation scheduling

Mid-tier/AA

Price band: 70-128 CNY (\$10-18)

- Value perception analysis
- Content roadmap communication
- Influencer value demonstration

AAA

Price band: 128-250 CNY (\$18-38)

- Premium positioning strategy
- Cultural adaptation investment
- Partnership consideration

X X X

X X X

Current/projected China revenue?

**<\$80,000
USD annually**

Basic localization +
Steam Global only

YES

Basic localization +
Steam Global only

X X X

**\$80,000-\$180,000
USD annually**

Partner with PR
agency/specialized
service

NO

Deprioritize
China, focus
elsewhere

X X X

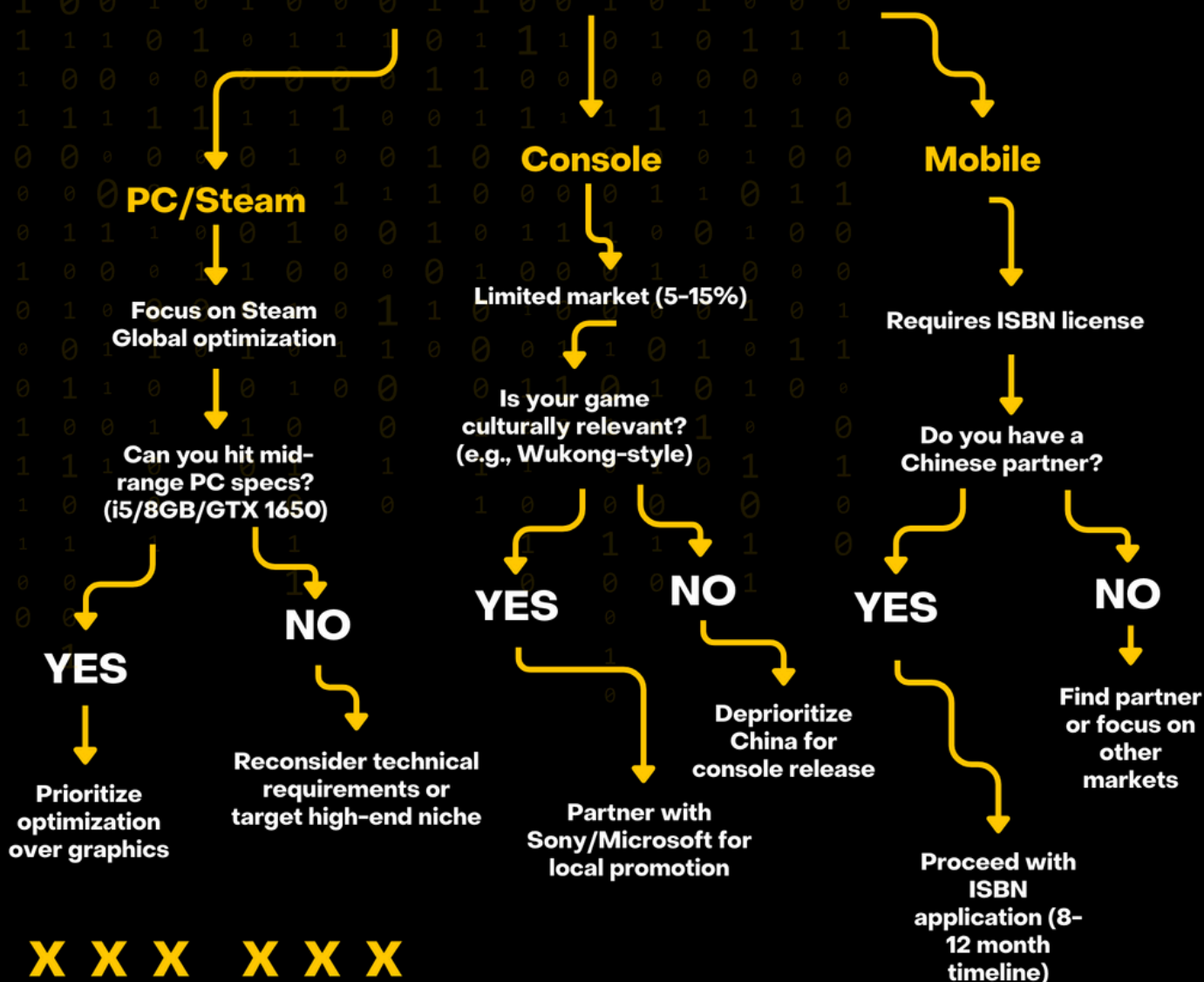
**>\$180,000 USD
annually**

Build dedicated
China team

- Consider ISBN application
- Explore WeGame partnership
- Develop mobile adaptation

- Focus on influencer marketing
- Optimize Steam presence
- Implement community management

What's your primary platform strength?



Why This Works

IP Adaptation Beyond Translation

- Align storylines, characters, and visual symbolism with Chinese culture
- Account for platform differences (Steam ≠ Steam China; TikTok ≠ Douyin)
- Drive retention through pre-launch community engagement

Platform Strategy

Video & Streaming		Social & Messaging	
Bilibili 哔哩哔哩 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Core hub for Gen Z gamers, blending video, streaming, and community.		Douyin 抖音 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Algorithm-driven virality; favors creative, native-style content over polished ads.	
WeChat 微信 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The “super app.” Central for retention, updates, mini-programs, and official accounts.		Weibo 微博 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Trend and event-driven. Best used for campaigns tied to cultural or gaming moments.	

Our Role

- Run partner discussions and secure local alliances
- Map genre fit, risks, and IP adaptation opportunities
- Deliver board-ready recommendations with ROI-backed insights
- Ensure your China launch is calculated, repeatable, and scalable

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