



5 Steps to Win in The Largest Game Market

A practical playbook for Western publishers to expand, localize, and grow player communities in the world's most valuable gaming ecosystem.

Why “Winning in China” Has Changed Forever

China isn't just the world's largest gaming market — it's *the* growth engine of global gaming.

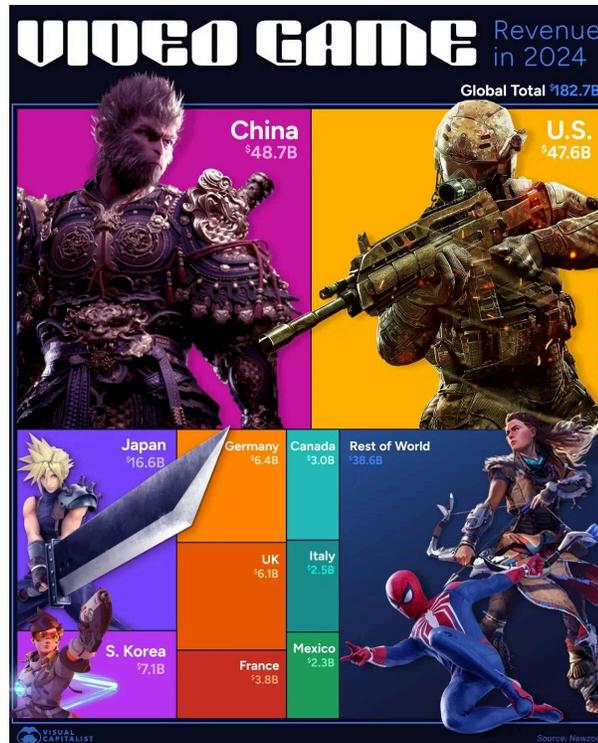
With **675 million players** and a market value exceeding **\$66 billion**, China's games sector is projected to outpace all other entertainment industries with **13.3% CAGR through 2028**. By then, it will generate nearly **47% more revenue than the U.S.**

Yet despite the size and opportunity, most Western games still fail to connect with Chinese players. Why? Because entering China isn't just about translation or compliance — it's about *resonance*.

Platforms like **Bilibili, Douyin, TapTap, and Steam CN** have made it easier than ever for Western titles to reach players directly. But success depends on one crucial shift:

The studios winning today treat Chinese players as *co-developers*, not just customers.

Let's break down the 5 steps proven to help Western publishers enter China safely, profitably, and sustainably.



Step 1: Understand the Market Landscape

China's gaming ecosystem isn't one market — it's *many*.

- **44% of Chinese gamers** discover new titles through short-video platforms like **Douyin**, while **Bilibili and Heybox** drive deeper engagement and purchase intent (Niko Partners, 2024).
- Each platform functions as a conversion funnel:
Awareness (Douyin) → Engagement (Bilibili) → Intent (Heybox) → Purchase (Steam)

This layered ecosystem means your game’s discovery and community-building don’t happen in one place — they evolve across stages and audiences.

Western publishers often underestimate:

- The fragmentation between PC, console, and mobile audiences.
- How genre and tone influence cultural resonance (simulation, strategy, and crafting titles currently lead cross-border adoption).



- That compliance expectations differ dramatically between mobile and PC ecosystems.

Step 2: Build the Right Entry Strategy

There’s no single “correct” way to enter China — but there *is* a right fit for your title, resources, and goals.

3 Common Approaches (Source: Chinese PC Market Entry Guide 2025)

- 1. Full Publishing + ISBN License**
High compliance, longer lead time, and higher investment. Ideal for large-scale, long-term projects.
- 2. Steam Global Entry**
Fastest path to market. Perfect for testing ROI before committing to deeper licensing or regional versions.
- 3. Hybrid Model**
Combine a global Steam launch with localized social presence and influencer partnerships. This model balances control, speed, and cultural adaptation — and it’s where most Huqiao partners start.

Ask yourself:

- ✓ Does your current title have native Simplified Chinese support?
- ✓ Have you defined your local community management strategy?
- ✓ Do you understand Steam CN visibility rules and review moderation guidelines?
- ✓ Is your legal and compliance team aware of import/export rules for game content?

If you answered “no” to more than two of these — start with the *hybrid model*. It gives you proof of traction *before* deeper investment.

Step 3: Localize Beyond Translation

Localization isn't a checkbox. It's your first impression — and your single most measurable ROI lever in China.

A **Google Asia gaming study** showed that **70% of Chinese players** consider localization “very important” for their experience. That preference directly impacts wishlists, CTR, and purchase conversion.

Data shows:

Games localized by native speakers (not machine translation) see **up to 2× higher wishlist-to-purchase conversion** on Steam and Heybox.

Human-First Localization Strategy

1. **Pre-Launch:** A/B test your title names, store tags, and ad copy on Bilibili and Heybox.
2. **Launch Week:** Track Simplified Chinese review tone and adjust descriptions or UI text for immediate clarity.
3. **Post-Launch:** Update thumbnails, subtitles, and creative assets based on review sentiment and CTR.
4. **Festival Season:** During **11.11** or **Chinese New Year**, refresh assets with seasonal cues and culturally relevant phrasing.



通关只需两个肝——肝系游戏《灵魂石幸存者》



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PC游戏 Soulstone Survivors

TRANSLATION: "ALL IT TAKES TO PASS IS TWO LIVERS - SOULSTONE SURVIVORS"

Localization done right doesn't just translate your words — it translates your intent.

Step 4: Build Player Communities Early

Here's the biggest shift in China's gaming landscape: **players don't wait for launch** to form opinions. They start talking long before you go live.

On platforms like **Bilibili**, core players create pre-launch analysis videos — breaking down trailers, UI, and lore as if they were co-developers. Their reactions can shape public sentiment months before release.

Why this matters:

- Early community-building creates advocates who influence algorithmic visibility.
- Authentic discussion drives virality far more than paid influencer blasts.
- A “player-first” feedback loop increases trust and accelerates organic reach.

Case in point: One Huqiao partner, built 2M video views in China in 2 weeks — with *zero paid ads*. The campaign turned discovery into loyalty, and community into conversion.

Pro tip:

Start your community strategy 60–90 days before launch. Identify “micro-experts” on Bilibili who love your genre, share assets early, and give them freedom to critique. Their early content will seed hundreds of organic impressions per day — before your marketing spend even starts.

Step 5: Measure, Adapt, and Scale

China rewards iteration. The most successful publishers treat performance tracking as a *live system*, not a report.

Here's what to measure:

1. **Engagement Metrics:** CTR, likes, shares, and comments across Douyin/Bilibili.
2. **Conversion Metrics:** Wishlist-to-purchase rate (Steam, Heybox).
3. **Sentiment Metrics:** AI-powered tone and keyword analysis of



reviews, influencer content, and forum threads.

Your optimization shouldn't end at launch.

- Adjust creative assets every 30 days based on review sentiment.
- Refresh influencer collaborations quarterly to match community trends.
- Use player feedback to refine localization, not just balance patches.

Pro tip:

Games that iterate localization, community management, and live ops together maintain 2–3× longer player retention than those that treat these as separate silos.

Final Thoughts

Success in China isn't about buying visibility — it's about earning it.

Western publishers who listen, adapt, and build alongside Chinese players see higher ROI, deeper loyalty, and lasting market presence.

You don't need to guess what works.

You just need the right partner to bridge creativity, culture, and community.

Let's Build Your China Strategy

[Book a 15-Minute Market Review with Huqiao](#)

You'll get:

- A free readiness assessment for your next title
- Personalized insights on localization ROI
- Platform-specific community benchmarks