

The background is a collage of images. At the top left, there's a landscape with mountains and a river. Below it, a group of people in business attire are gathered around a table, looking at documents. To the right, a hand is holding a magnifying glass over a document. At the bottom, a group of diverse people are smiling and talking. The overall theme is business and collaboration.

**WE** RED BRIDGE

# B2B Tech MNCs in China: A Guide to Winning Market Entry Communications

# 2023

Compiled by WE Red Bridge

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# INTRO

B2B tech multinational companies (MNCs) have long played a critical role in China's economic development, and in the recovery following the COVID-19 pandemic, the Chinese government is taking clear steps to encourage them to invest and expand in the country.

The latest guideline to further optimize and attract foreign investment and guarantee national treatment to foreign-invested companies is one such example. Issued by the Chinese government in August 2023, the guideline ensures that foreign-invested enterprises fully engage in government procurement activities according to law. The government also pledges to accelerate the Revision of the Government Procurement Law and introduce new policies and measures to further clarify what constitutes "manufactured in China".

While China's economic growth has yet to match its pre-pandemic robustness, many of our clients are finding that it still presents opportunities for MNCs which are prepared to commit – provided, of course, that their communications strategies have what it takes to support their success.

WE Red Bridge specializes in decoding China's complex communications landscape for multinationals. Given the unique circumstances of 2023, in which many companies are reevaluating their China strategies, we have put together our thoughts on the key points they must consider to be successful here, as well as some instructive examples of MNCs whose communications strategies got it right.

We hope you find the guide useful, and please feel free to get in touch to discuss your own communications approach for China.



China presents foreign-funded enterprises with attractive business opportunities that increasingly require flexibility in decision making and knowledge of Chinese consumers' preferences to be seized. For example, the Catalogue of Encouraged Industries for Foreign Investment (2022 Version), effective January 1, 2023, made headway in opening domestic markets to foreign investment, yet also resulted in a more competitive landscape for global companies. MNCs committed to succeeding in the local market must therefore define their China strategy carefully. In this context, guidance from an experienced partner can help MNC marketers remove barriers to expanding in China.

Partnering with MNCs for over a decade, our specialist teams have identified common pitfalls MNCs marketers must avoid when executing their communications strategies.

### **3 Common Mistakes MNC Marketers Make in China**

- 1.** Unclear local brand positioning and non-customized local messaging
- 2.** Insufficient relationship-building activity with influential editors in state-owned, business and vertical industry media
- 3.** Inadequate tactics and channels employed in marketing strategy, which do not support lead generation

## 4 Things to Know Before Activating Marketing Communications in China

To avoid major missteps, MNC marketers should consider these four key elements of planning and execution in their China marketing communications:

### ANALYSIS & INSIGHT

Grasp the local market landscape to assess opportunity

01

### LOCALIZED BRAND IDENTITY

Understand government policies and regulations to develop nimble strategy

02

### MARKETING CHANNELS

Analyze local customer behaviors and get familiar with different marketing channels

03

### EARNED MEDIA

Build media relations, especially with state-owned media that dominate the local conversation

04



## Case Studies

**Here is how European and U.S. B2B Tech companies from four industries successfully accelerated their business goals in China.**

Each was enabled by effective marketing communications strategies.



**HERE TECHNOLOGIES**



**GITLAB**



**PFEIFFER VACUUM**



**CYTEL**

# Starting with **insight and analysis**, **HERE Technologies** initiated brand-building and reputation-enhancing activities through industry analyst programs.

- Interviewed China industry analysts, local brand executives and partners to audit their perceptions of HERE Technologies and key competitors.
- Delivered a market research report outlining the findings of HERE Technologies' brand perceptions in China, market competition landscape and local business needs.
- Designed local messaging strategy to own the conversation around automotive driving, show commitment to Chinese customers and welcome local partnerships.
- Used a three-phase communication strategy to educate and engage with local analysts and media influencers, elevating brand awareness and thought leadership.

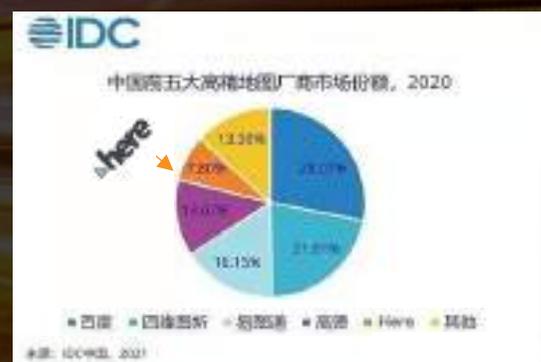
**10+**

Technical briefing roundtables and 1:1 meetings with analysts



**From 0 to 15**

Earned placements in industry analyst reports, blogs, videos, etc.



**280 million**

Online audience reach

From April 2019 to May 2023

# Created **localized brand identity** and set up a new communication system to help world-renowned, open-source platform **GitLab** enter the Chinese market.

- Designed a new Chinese company name (极狐, Jihu) and GitLab brand positioning in China.
- Created a three-year marketing communications strategy in China and developed local messaging in line with Chinese policies on open-source.
- Leveraged hot topics from the "Two Sessions" to launch the brand in China, gaining explosive media exposure and effective business leads within just one month.



**50+** Media attended brand launch press conference

**360+** Business leads generated in one month after launch media event

**600+** In-depth media articles and press release pick-ups



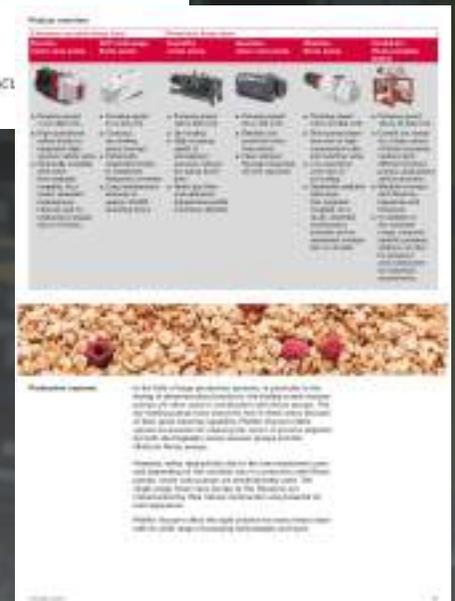
From January 2021 to May 2023

# Elevated Pfeiffer Vacuum's brand awareness and built a complete communication system through diversified marketing communication approaches.

- Launched its China factory in Wuxi, Jiangsu Province, timing the announcement to leverage hot topics from the China International Import Expo (CIIE) and engaging over 30 local mass, business, and trade media outlets to promote the company.
- Conducted media training for its China spokespersons and gained in-depth articles through media interview.
- Showcased its technology knowhow and engaged with potential customers at several trade shows through media engagement programs and social media campaigns.
- Optimized marketing communication strategies during the pandemic and expanded digital channels from WeChat to Zhihu and Toutiao to reach and engage more professional audiences.
- Developed customer stories as sales tools, with wide-application industry coverage, including photovoltaics, medical devices, intelligent manufacturing and scientific research.



**10+**  
Sales tools



**8** Social media platforms



**300 million+**  
Total social media impressions

From January 2019 to May 2023

# Shaped a winning market entry strategy for **Cytel** by fully leveraging authoritative **media endorsement**.

- Developed local messaging and Chinese brand strategies to best resonate with Chinese customers and partners.
- Established brand awareness through a press conference to educate and brief over 30 top-tier media covering business, healthcare, technology and mass sectors.
- Earned a speech opportunity in a top-tier business media webinar on the theme of National Anti-Cancer Week.
- Used WeChat official account as a primary digital marketing channel to support lead generation through technical webinars, offline customer workshops and trade shows.



## From 0 to 23.7% SOV in 5 months

Key message media share of voice vis-à-vis competitors



## 316,000

Online viewership on one earned media webinar

## 600+

Business leads generated in 5 months

From January 2023 to May 2023

# Methodology for a Strong Communications Strategy

WE Red Bridge works with multinational brands to land their message effectively in the Chinese market and gain a robust understanding of local polices.

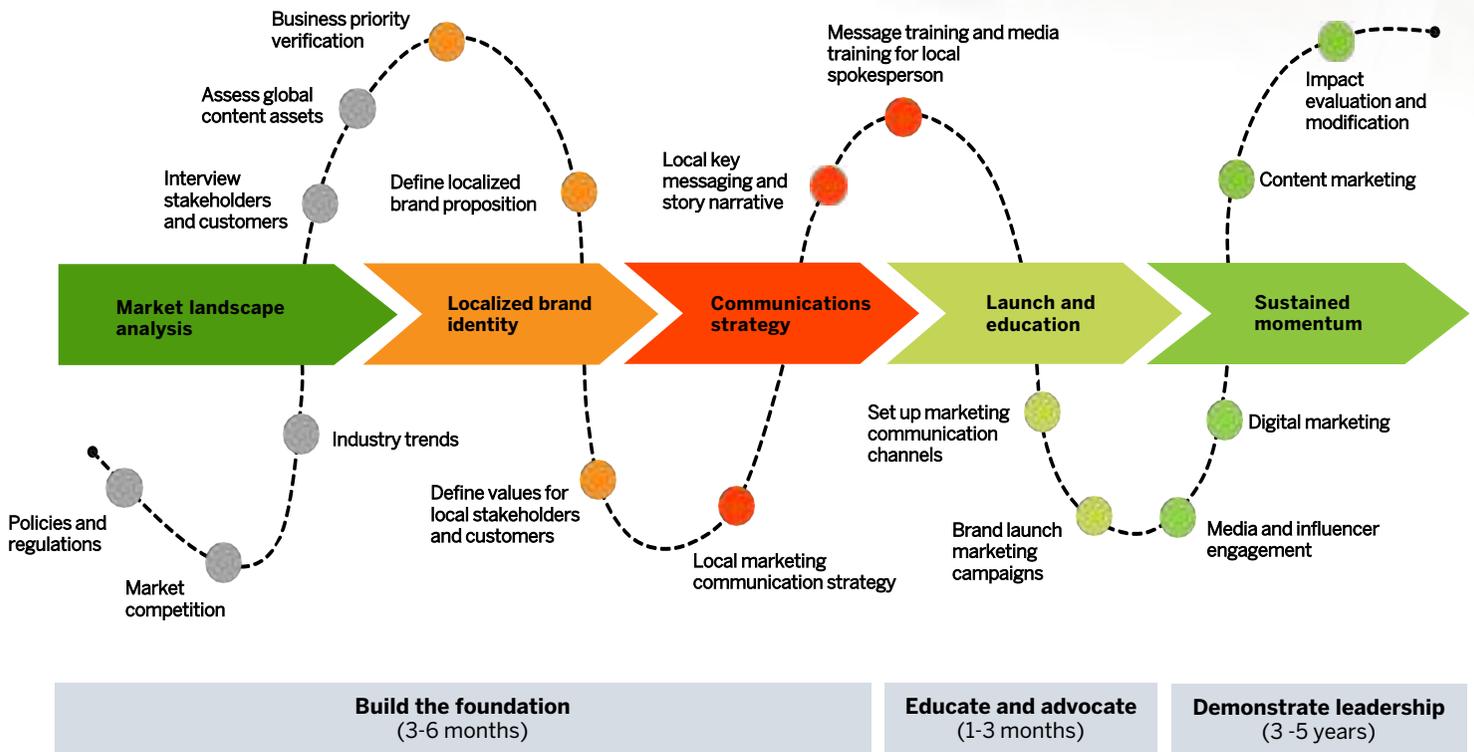
We help corporates confidently enter the Chinese market with our five-step methodology, achieving three milestones for brand success:

- Build the foundation
- Educate and advocate for your brand
- Demonstrate leadership over 3 to 5 years



We support MNC clients by curating an agile approach that defines their local messaging and builds a suitable communication strategy, all delivered on time and within budget.

- Joyce Zhou, Account Director  
WE Red Bridge



# Key Takeaways for B2B Tech MNC Marketers

## 3 pitfalls

MNC marketers should avoid the following common pitfalls upon entering the Chinese market: **unclear local brand positioning**, **weak media relations**, and **ineffective marketing approaches to lead generation**.

## 4 actions

MNC marketers should focus on **deepening local market analysis and insight**, **developing in-market brand identity**, **diversifying marketing channels**, and **building earned media influence** to ensure confident decision-making.

## 5 steps

Adopting our **five-step methodology** can help MNC marketers design a winning market-entry communications strategy and build brand momentum in the Chinese market.

## HOW WE CAN WORK TOGETHER

WE Red Bridge has several years of experience working with MNC clients across mobility tech, biotech, IT and manufacturing, landing brand stories and strengthening awareness in China, as shown in the case studies included here.

As tech optimists, we help B2B technology companies turn technical content and complex ideas into powerful and accessible human narratives. We partner with media, analysts and influencers to ensure that our clients earn the attention they deserve.

WE Red Bridge is uniquely positioned to build local messaging strategies that resonate with professional audiences in different industries, drawing on our in-depth sector knowledge to deliver measurable results.

[we-redbridge.com](http://we-redbridge.com)

Our services include **insight and impact, brand strategy and communications, corporate reputation, digital experiences and technology**, and more.

As a proven and trusted marketing communications partner, we'd like to talk with you about how to land your brand smoothly and successfully in the most dynamic market in the world.

### Interested? Let's talk.

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