

Marianne Friese Consulting GmbH (MFC)

Marketing and Communication in China: Hot and loud!

The literal translation of the Chinese expression “Re Nao” is “hot and loud” – according to Marianne Friese, this is what marketing has to be in China. Lion and dragon dances to attract customers and press are familiar scenes.

Marianne Friese Consulting GmbH (MFC) in Beijing helps German companies such as automotive supplier Hoerbiger, Jägermeister or the German state brewer Rothaus find a communications foothold in the Chinese market. From Chinese naming and media placements over market entry and positioning studies all the way to full campaign development, the international team at MFC covers a wide range of PR and marketing consulting services.

Solving cultural differences

Twenty pretty ladies all dressed in red, holding a 20-metre red ribbon – the opening of Hoerbiger Orient Gear in Taizhou was opulent, which is not a bad thing: An event which through European eyes may be seen as exotic sent a strong message to the Chinese public and workers – Chinese culture and work ethic were to merge with German engineering know-how with the aim of firmly establishing the company on the Chinese market. Even though the show itself has high importance at events such as openings, other aspects also need taking care of. For instance, the Chinese attendees will not only pay attention to how much money was spent on the festivities, but also to stylistic sense and the correct assessment of guests of honors’ rank and influence.

Identifying and balancing cultural differences between China and Germany is part of the daily working life at MFC, whom CEO Marianne Friese describes as “China enablers”.

Achieving emotional attachment to brands

What may be seen as “over the top” from a Western point-of-view can often be just right for the Chinese taste. Even purely technological products need to appeal to the senses and a product name or company name needs to live up to these sensual requirements. Here, attention needs to be paid to the numerous alternate meanings that a Chinese character can convey – often there can be both positive and negative connotations.

Turning Western names into successful Chinese brands

Thus, successfully turning Western names into Chinese names takes great skill and experience. This is demonstrated with the Chinese version of the Jägermeister brand: After extensive competitor research, quality market research and group discussions with target group representatives, bartenders and journalists, MFC suggested the name 野格 (Ye Ge), which means “wild type”. This way, the new Chinese brand name not only sounds like the first part of “Jägermeister”, but its meaning in Chinese also fully conveys the essence of the brand.

In addition, MFC developed a Chinese name for the hugely popular German beer brand “Tannenzäpfle”, which is aimed at foreign and Chinese revelers in China’s largest cities. Here, Marianne Friese was also able to put her personal experience to good use, as this is her favourite beer. Soon, she will be able to order it in China using its new Chinese name, 塔浓 (Ta Nong).

Marianne Friese Consulting GmbH – Background

Based on her rich experience of over 15 years on three continents, Marianne Friese, founder and owner of Marianne Friese Consulting GmbH offers services in global market- and brand-building and communications, corporate reputation management and market analysis. She headed the global brandcommunications department for an American PR agency, also heading the agency's German office for seven years, culminating in the establishment of their Beijing office. Marianne Friese has been in China for six years, working with an international team consisting of China experts and Chinese marketing experts. Clients in China include a range of companies, from toy manufacturer Ravensburger and retailer Metro to the German Engineering Federation (VDMA).

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