

Navigating Diverse Cultures in the Asian market from a Branding and Marketing perspective

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Branding and marketing for the Asian market are often complex, given the highly diverse cultures. The general population is also digitally engaged from a young age and exposed to Western cultures alongside the inherent Asian cultures within the region.

To position a business brand in the Asian market, it is good to take into account cultural sensitivity and localization. Learning and understanding cultural nuances, traditions, and values can highly benefit a business when it comes to branding as a whole or for their products. Language, symbolism, colors, and even numbers can connote differently across Asian countries. For instance, the number 4 is considered unlucky in many Asian cultures due to its phonetic similarity to the word for "death." Yet, in Hindu culture, 4 is a sacred number.

Asia has a massive digital population with high engagement on social media platforms. Each country may also have a predominant communication platform. For example, in Singapore, WhatsApp is highly used; in Japan, they predominantly use Line; WeChat is widely used in China; KakaoTalk is popular in South Korea, and there are others relevant to specific countries. Marketing strategies should leverage this by focusing on platforms that are most widely used in the relevant country. Influencer marketing, especially with local celebrities or influencers, can be highly effective due to the trust they command, for example, in Hong Kong, Japan, and Korea. Even in Singapore, which is uniquely exposed to many different cultural influences, influencer marketing varies with the types of products in focus, whether they are Japanese, Korean, or from a Western country.

Since smartphone penetration is high in most Asian countries, mobile marketing can be highly effective, and if possible, location-based mobile marketing, as most of these countries are very urbanized, and their populations are increasingly mobile. In these countries, mobile-optimized websites and apps are crucial. Marketing and sales strategies should include mobile payment systems, which are widely used in countries like China and India.

Community and relationship building are integral to the overall marketing goals for businesses aiming to be entrenched in the Asian market. Building long-term relationships rather than just transactions is key to branding and marketing in Asia. This might involve creating community events, loyalty programs, or engaging in corporate social responsibility activities that resonate with local values.



Marketers increasingly realize that adaptation over standardization is a better option in their marketing plans for the Asian market. While global branding has its merits, adapting products, packaging, and marketing messages to fit local tastes and preferences often yields better results. This could mean altering product features, flavours, or even the brand's visual identity.

Navigating the Asian market in terms of branding and marketing may pose some initial challenges, but by integrating these strategies, brands can effectively leverage these cultural differences to penetrate, create impactful branding stories, content, and communicative messages, and succeed in the diverse Asian market, which is not monolithic but comprises numerous distinct markets with their own dynamics.

When you can brand it well and market it right, the Asian market offers great potential for many businesses.

