

Star Status Isn't Enough to Impress Chinese Consumers

Local Heroes On and Off the Big Screen Like Yao Ming, Jay Chou, Andy Lau and Jackie Chan Lead Engagement

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Basketball star Yao Ming is China's favorite celebrity

BEIJING (AdAgeChina.com) -- Chinese viewers spend a lot of time in front of the television, but they don't always love what they are watching. As a result, they don't always remember plot lines or the names of stars and easily forget about sponsors.

"With the demand for return on marketing investment never higher, understanding what viewers like and why they like it should have a major impact on program selection, program sponsorship and content creation," said Matt Brosenne, international client services director of CSM Media Research.

To evaluate how much Chinese care about programs and celebrities,

CSM and the independent marketing consultancy R3 created a survey called En-Spire. The results are based on face-to-face interviews conducted every three months with 1,500 consumers in ten Chinese cities.



CSM's Matt Brosenne

In the first findings released this month, "Audience engagement was reflected in the values perception analysis," said R3 principle Greg Paull in Beijing. "The higher the value perception score, the more engaged and connected the consumer feels."

In seven out of 10 Chinese cities, for example, two programs produced and broadcast by China Central Television (CCTV)--the prime time evening news and "The Legend of Bruce Lee"--were ranked among the top three shows, based on TV ratings recently produced by CSM.

When audiences were probed on engagement and programs they actually cared about, CCTV news dropped out of the top three in every city except Shanghai, where it ranked third.

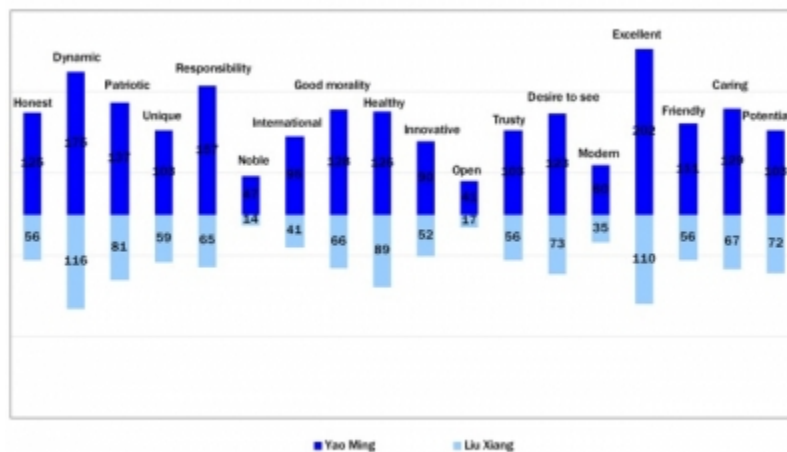
"The Legend of Bruce Lee," a 50-episode Chinese TV series based on the life of Chinese martial arts legend Bruce Lee airing on CCTV since Oct. 12, 2008, was the number one rated program based on engagement in four cities. It fell within the top three programs in three other cities.

"The Legend of Bruce Lee topped the ranking with a combined value perception score of 641, compared with CCTV news, which was ranked 10 with a score of 168," Mr. Paull said. "Clearly, Bruce Lee is still a much

admired figure and his life story continues to engage and appeal to a mass audience."

"Yao Ming is a high profile athlete who continues to inspire and engage the nation," said Mr. Paull. "Not only is he the star with the highest awareness recall (24%), Chinese people truly admire Yao Ming, describing him as excellent, dynamic, responsible, and patriotic."

Yao Ming, the star center for the Houston Rockets, wasn't the only local hero who resonates with the Chinese people. He is closely followed by hurdling champion Liu Xiang (16.5%), and female Olympic diving champion Guo Jing Jing (6.2%).



Yao Ming is China's favorite celebrity

Among all the celebrities cited in the survey, sports stars accounted for 55% of all mentions, followed by entertainment celebrities (41%), and entrepreneurs/writers (4%).

When CSM and R3 analyzed audience engagement and connection with these stars, Yao Ming's value perception score (2055) was almost twice that of Liu Xiang (1125), and four times higher than that of Guo Jing Jing (510), cementing his status as a much-loved celebrity.

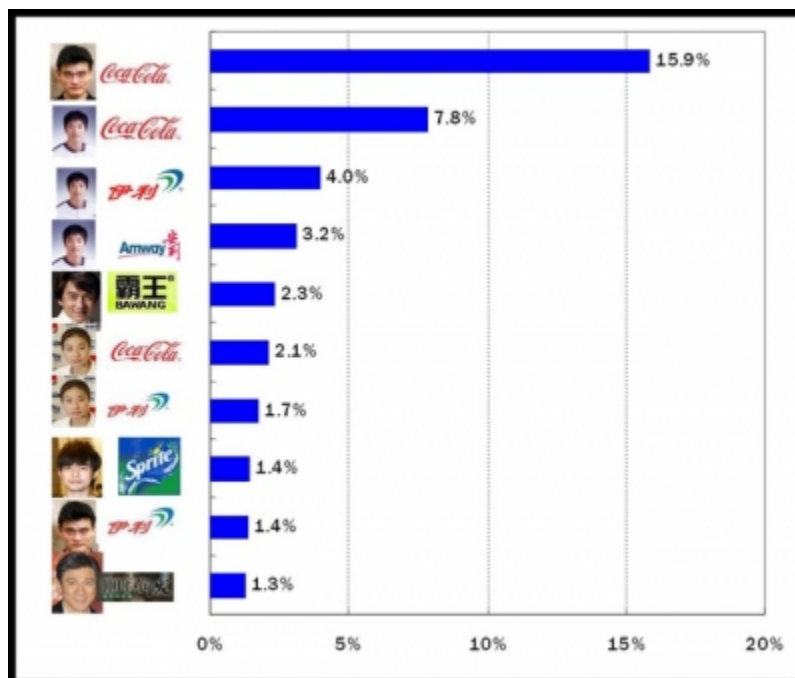
Olympic brands still gain strong residual impact

"Even months after the games, there is still strong residual recall and

positive recognition of the Olympic brands, suggesting a positive ROI beyond the event itself," said Mr. Paull.

Unprompted recall of Coca-Cola's sponsorship of Yao Ming was high (16%), followed by its sponsorship of Liu Xiang (8%) and Guo Jing Jing (2%). For Yili Group, by comparison, the unprompted recall of the dairy marketer's sponsorship of Liu Xiang was 4%, followed by Guo Jing Jing (2%) and Yao Ming (1.5%).

When prompted, 63% of respondents recalled Coca-Cola's sponsorship of Yao Ming, and recall of Liu Xiang and Guo Jing Jing increased to 42% and 41% respectively.



R3 En-Spire chart

Jay Chou is China's most loved pop star

Although their awareness rankings trailed the mega sport stars, Chinese entertainment celebrities Jay Chou, Andy Lau and Jackie Chan ranked as the top 3 celebrities within the entertainment industry, and carried similar value perception scores.



Sprite's Jay Chou sponsorship has high recall

Unprompted recall of Jay Chou's endorsements was high among respondents: 25% for Coca-Cola's Sprite brand, 13% for local snack food brand Copico, and 11% each for Shan Liang, an eye drop brand, and Youlemei, a local tea brand.

Andy Lau's association with the 100 Runfa shampoo brand is strong (57%) in unprompted recall, but his connection is substantially lower with the Chinese cell phone maker Gionee (22%). The sponsorship recall for Jackie Chan and the shampoo brand he endorses, Bawang, was also high at 66%--but his connection with Visa registered only 5% recall.

Chinese consumers are also fascinated by the lives of successful entrepreneurs, entertainment celebrities and international sporting stars. Asked who they would pay the most money to meet, the winners were Li Ning (an ex-Olympic gold medalist and founder of the Li Ning sportswear company), Kobe Bryant and Jackie Chan.

Despite DVD piracy, cinema attendance is high

Among all activities Chinese consumers participate in, cinema-going leads the list (42%).

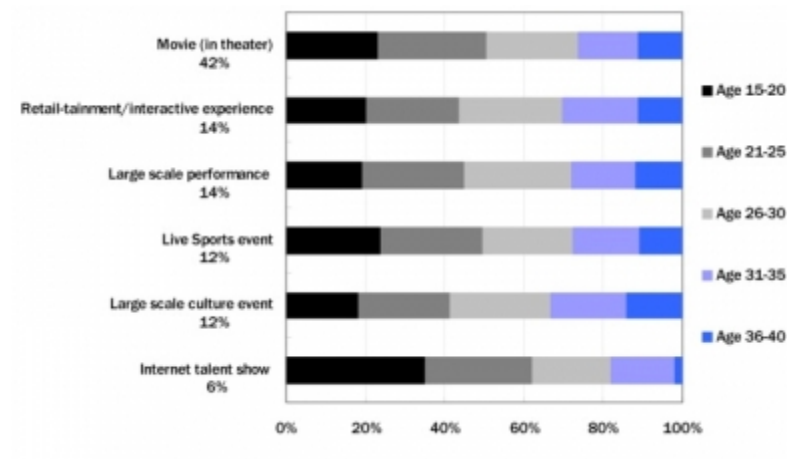
Retail-tainment (shopping center performances/live road shows) and concerts ranked second with 14% share each. After that, respondents cited live sports events (12%), cultural events (12%), and finally,

internet talent shows (6%).

Cinema is an engaging medium. Consumers often recall many details about the movies they watch, includes the names of actors and directors.

Traditional mainstream media (TV and newspapers) are the primary awareness drivers of events and activities. Word-of-mouth and online internet news are also high.

More than half of Chinese consumers aged 15-25 take part in internet talent shows. These talent shows often require participants to upload photos or movie files showcasing their talent or creativity around a chosen theme. But this demographic is also the group least likely to participate in large-scale cultural events, more popular among respondents aged 26 to 40.



R3 En-Spire chart