

Leveraging China's K-pop Craze: What Your Brand Needs to Know

Two “Thoughtful China” Episodes Examine the Popularity of Korean Culture and Entertainment in China

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SUMMARY

In two recent episodes of “Thoughtful China,” Thoughtful Media Group’s online talk show about doing business and building brands in China, market research experts examine the origins of the Korean pop culture craze in China and look at examples of how brands are using Korean culture and celebrities like Jung Ji Hyun, Kim Soo Hyun, Cha Tae-hyun and Lee Min Ho, in local brand campaigns.

SHANGHAI, CHINA (February 12, 2015) China’s fascination with K-pop reaches far beyond the ubiquitous music video hit, “Gangnam style,” and is evidence of a long-lasting trend major marketers in China are eager to leverage in their marketing.

Korean culture and entertainment have become a driving force in China, and that’s not by accident. The popularity of Korean entertainment throughout Asia and even western markets is the result of a well-executed political agenda. In 1994, South Korea’s Ministry of Culture set up a cultural industry bureau to develop its media sector. Korean conglomerates soon joined the effort, leading to early success stories like the big-budget film “Shiri” and the drama series “Winter Sonata” that gave way to all-out blockbuster hits like “My Sassy Girl “ and “My Love from the Star” and, of course, Psy’s global hip-hop hit.

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Laurence Lim-Dally, managing director of Cherry Blossoms Market Research, discusses marketing efforts by advertisers like KFC, Coca-Cola and Yves Saint Laurent, three of many companies that have tapped into K-pop’s success in China. View that episode at <http://show.thoughtfulchina.com/en/decoding-koreas...> (Viewers inside China will find this link easier to access: <http://show.thoughtfulchina.com/en/decoding-koreas...>)

For example, KFC has capitalized on the popularity of fried chicken and beer – a dish often eaten by characters on “My Love from the Star” - with promotions themed around the show and featuring its lead actress. And Yves Saint Laurent’s Rouge Pur Couture No. 52 lip gloss shade was sold out worldwide last year after it was featured on the same series.

In the second episode, Korean-American Min Yoo, Country Manager for YouGov in China, quantifies the impact of K-pop wave, called Hallyu in China, with data compiled by his company about this phenomenon. View that episode at <http://show.thoughtfulchina.com/en/k-pop-the-impac...> (Viewers inside China will find this link easier to access: <http://show.thoughtfulchina.com/k-pop-the-impact-o...>)

“There are very quantifiable results we are seeing from the influence of K-pop and Korean celebrities,” Mr. Yoo said to host Kitty Lun, Lowe China’s chairman & CEO. “It is very, very difficult to find anybody who is not aware of Korea and Korean culture. That is a real game changer, you are talking about changing consumer behavior. This is absolutely impactful and brands and companies need to recognize this.”

Many of the Korean films, series and music videos that Chinese are lapping up are viewed online, which has prompted online video platforms to expand their entertainment portfolio accordingly. Late last year, for instance, Tencent Holding signed an agreement with YG Entertainment, a South Korean artist management powerhouse whose roster includes Psy, boy band Big Bang and girl group 2NE1. Tencent, whose online games and social networks have hundreds of millions of users, will become YG’s exclusive online distributor in China.

There are two key drivers behind the popularity of Korean entertainment in China, Ms. Lim-Dally said. “It’s a very aspirational culture because it is about sophistication, it is fashionable, it is about beauty. At the same time, it is very easy and very close. I think that is the secret recipe of this Korean craze in China.”

Thoughtful Media Group (TMG) has produced 144 episodes of "Thoughtful China," an online talk show about doing business and building brands in Greater China. The show's executive producer Normandy Madden joined TMG in early 2011 as senior VP, content development, Asia-Pacific. For the previous 13 years, she was Advertising Age’s Asia editor as well as the editor and managing director of AdAgeChina. Other episodes of the show are available at <http://show.thoughtfulchina.com>.



 **Decoding Korea's Influence in China (US version)**

<http://show.thoughtfulchina.com/en/decoding-koreas-influence-in-china-en.html>

 **Decoding Korea's Influence in China (Chinese version)**

<http://show.thoughtfulchina.com/en/decoding-koreas-influence-in-china-ch.html>

 **The Impact of K-pop (US version)**

<http://show.thoughtfulchina.com/en/k-pop-the-impact-of-k-pop-in-china-en.html>

 **The Impact of K-pop (Chinese version)**

<http://show.thoughtfulchina.com/k-pop-the-impact-of-k-pop-in-china-ch.html>

IMAGES



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Thoughtful Media Group (www.thoughtfulmedia.com) is a global multichannel network (MCN) operating across Youtube and the top video platforms in China. We create, maintain and aggregate online video channels that have unique, highly engaged and engageable audiences, and helping the world's leading brands and their agencies effectively reach these audiences. Thoughtful has offices in Los Angeles and Shanghai, and is made up of professionals who have significant experience in television, film, digital media, marketing, market research and advertising.

TMG Originals is China's first and largest MCN (multi-channel network) for video creators (www.tmgoriginals.com).



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