

KEKST
CNC

Strategic Communications Opportunities for Chinese Companies in Europe



Challenges for Chinese companies in Europe

China and Europe are closely linked as major trading and business partners, with strong bilateral connections. But there remains great uncertainty when it comes to Europe's stance towards China. Fuelled by differing political systems, technological competition, and China's stance on the Ukraine conflict, many in Europe see China as a strategic competitor and a 'systemic rival' rather than as a partner.

In our work with Chinese businesses we have seen a number of key challenges:

An increasingly complex socio-political environment



As international relations have become more complex, Chinese companies in Europe have found themselves caught in an intricate web of local, national, European, and global political systems. As such cross-border FDI and M&A projects can very quickly become complex. The critical view of China and Chinese companies in European media also adds further hurdles to successfully close deals. Careful and measured positioning across each level of politics and media therefore is vital to project success.

No narrative for Europe



Many Chinese companies overseas have historically chosen to remain low profile to avoid scrutiny, and as such haven't built strong local communication functions. In the absence of that clear story, Chinese companies are often regarded with more skepticism than necessary. As a result, it can be challenging to tell a powerful and compelling European story, either across owned channels or through the media. This is exacerbated by a lack of understanding of the complex local corporate governance rules, which Chinese companies are often perceived not to comply with.

Product focused and issues-driven communications



The communications of Chinese companies in Europe tend to be limited to product-focused and marketing-led PR. By contrast, corporate or financial communications, if present at all, remain highly reactive rather than strategic and proactive – mainly driven by issues or crises, rather than by a long-term plan.

How Kekst CNC can support

Delivering the right narrative in a given market will fuel business growth. This does not necessarily have to mean broad media coverage – it is about having the right strategy and precise implementation.

Kekst CNC is uniquely well-positioned to help foreign companies understand the societal, regulatory and media environments in Europe, given our understanding of corporate culture and the decision-making process, as well as our connections with key influencers.

We strongly believe that the ability to add value lies in a profound understanding of our clients' needs, which will help them communicate during critical moments. We have a strong team of senior advisors who are well-versed in working on cross-cultural mandates with Chinese companies, which includes mandarin speakers.

Our key areas of expertise for positioning Chinese companies in European markets and helping to reach both key external and internal stakeholders include:

› **Public Affairs**

Produce market sentiment analyses and regulatory briefings and facilitate conversations with key political stakeholders.

› **Corporate Reputation and Positioning**

Create an emphasis on business and technology storytelling, to help ensure that Chinese companies are not drawn into political discussions and ideological divergencies.

› **Crisis and Issues Management**

Identify potential reputational pitfalls, prepare crisis preparedness plans, and establish contacts with influencers who can be your partners in times of crisis.

› **Media Relations**

Support in building understanding among not only global but also national and key local media to help achieve balanced and targeted reporting.

› **Cultural Workshops**

Help new market entrants to build mutual cultural understanding with their business partners in Europe and to align the business goals through offering cultural audits and training.

About Kekst CNC

Kekst CNC is a global strategic communications firm that specializes in protecting and enhancing reputations. From 14 locations around the globe, our team of more than 300 professionals provides expert communications counsel informed by judgment, insights, and data-led analysis. We apply our communications expertise across high-stakes corporate, financial, and political matters, helping businesses communicate effectively through periods of disruption, transformation and growth. Kekst CNC is part of the Publicis Groupe.



Global and Local

We are a global firm with deep local roots in the world's key corporate and financial centres, drawing on ideas from some of our industry's most creative and experienced professionals to provide a global perspective for today's interconnected world.



Exceptional Teams

Kekst CNC's integrated teams of experts support our clients with innovative solutions to complex problems. We combine an unparalleled breadth of experience with informed judgment and a commitment to exceptional execution.



Enduring Partnerships

We succeed when our clients succeed. We are proud to become a seamless part of our clients' teams, supporting them through critical periods of disruption, transformation and growth.

China Desk Team



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