

# WeChat Online: The Definitive Guide

China's Premier Communication Tool

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## What is WeChat

WeChat is a multi-purpose Chinese App – the world's largest standalone app or more aptly described as an ecosystem. You can download it on your phone.

Called Weixin in Chinese, it was launched in 2011 by a Chinese company called Tencent, one of China's most valuable companies. It has become the single largest Chinese communications platform (only exceeded by western apps FaceBook, WhatsApp and YouTube which are all banned in China), and the world's biggest marketplace.

It combines so many applications that Chinese people use it almost exclusively for all their communication and purchasing activities. WeChat keeps reinventing itself and adding features to make life both easier, more interesting and fun. The app is attractive to western businesses too as their target Chinese audience can be found there and marketed to.

Want to learn more about WeChat: contact our Marketing Team - [info@chincommunications.com.au](mailto:info@chincommunications.com.au)

### 84% of your target market in one place

It sounds too good to be true. If you are targeting the Chinese market in Australia, 84% of them are on WeChat (estimated 1.5 million users). Extrapolate that to China and it means over 1.2 billion monthly active users online (against China's population of 1.4 billion).

WeChat is a super tool that you can't ignore. Used correctly, it can supercharge your sales.

People on WeChat want to check out your brand or service before they buy. They also pay attention to influencer or friend recommendations. But first things first, they need to find you.

And your competitors won't ignore it either! So you have to be strategic. Whether you hire an expert (like Chin) or do it yourself, our guide aims to help you harness the power of WeChat.





## Why WeChat Marketing is a Must

The Lowy Institute undertook a survey in 2021 in Australia and ascertained that 84% of Chinese in Australia get their news and information from WeChat. The numbers stack up whether you are selling something to local Chinese in Australia or wanting to get in front of their mainland counterparts.

Especially during Covid and border closures, WeChat has been a lifeline to staying in touch and keeping stakeholders close (users spend an average of 4 hours a day on the Wechat app).

Described as “one app to rule them all” by Harvard Business Review, WeChat impacts every facet of life for most Chinese: work, health, travel, food, entertainment, education, arts, investment, shopping, lifestyle, government, even politics (if you are in Australia that is).

Many people make purchases directly in WeChat – if you want to sell directly, you need to make it easy for them to find you and buy. You need to set up a WeChat account and then a WeChat pay mechanism (more below).

Whatever business you are in, if the Chinese market is on your radar, WeChat is an essential marketing tool.



# Where do I start?

## How can I get on WeChat!

First of all you need to set up an account – there are a few options to consider depending on your business and purpose or please reach out to Chin on 1300 792 446 with any questions.

You should immediately set up a personal account so you can delve into the WeChat world (it's free). Download [here](#).

The various account types available on WeChat, and their inclusions.

Account Type	Qualifications	Registration requirements/fees	Followers	Posts (articles) - number and length	Other
Personal account	No requirements	Free	Limited to 5000 friends	No limit	Run your own group/s with max. 500 people per group (great for cafés and restaurants, retail shops, beauty clinics, etc)
<b>Official accounts:</b>					
Subscription account	Chinese individuals, Chinese companies	Free for individuals; Must be verified with a Chinese entity's details; CNY300 annual verification fee. (i.e. entity needs to be in China)	Unlimited	One post per day, maximum eight articles per post	Can be verified as official account (trusted). New messages will pop up in your followers' "subscription" folder (great for media)
Service account	Allows overseas companies. Needs Australian registration documents	USD99 annual verification fee	Unlimited	Four posts per month, maximum eight articles per post	Able to connect to WeChat store. New messages will pop up in followers' home page, similar to a friend's chat messages. (most popular with businesses targeting Chinese markets)

## WeChat social media strategy

Like other social media platforms, you can advertise and market in various ways and you can allocate a budget to match. To ensure your budget is well directed, firstly you need to develop a strategy.

Set your aim, for example:

- Brand awareness,
- Growing local followers,
- Making sales,
- Keeping in touch (while travel is difficult),
- Getting votes (for politicians)

Define and research your target market (in China) choose particular consumer groups or cities, and likewise in Australia.

Get a Chinese website or pages – followers will want to check you out so develop a few pages in Chinese translation on your website (or a Chinese hosted site). This is important for trust. Select the right account type (see table above or ask us if unsure).

## How to market on WeChat

Once you've chosen your ideal account type (and seek our help if you're still not sure), you need to get the word out there! The account will have a QR code (example below) You can scan it and follow – put it on all your marketing materials (in particular Chinese ones) so your target audience can follow too.

It is especially important if you are a brand aiming to get into China that you build up awareness at home first. If the local Chinese find and like your offering, they'll promote and may even send your products to China.

As on other forms of social media, there are a multitude of ways to market to your audience. You can post interesting and engaging content, you can even include video. You can reach out to other accounts and share content; banners, advertising and influencers are all good methods to adopt; even a Chinese phenomenon called Livestreaming has become popular for selling masses of consumer goods.

Find out more about WeChat marketing: contact our Marketing Team - [info@chincommunications.com.au](mailto:info@chincommunications.com.au)



Example: QR code for Chinsight





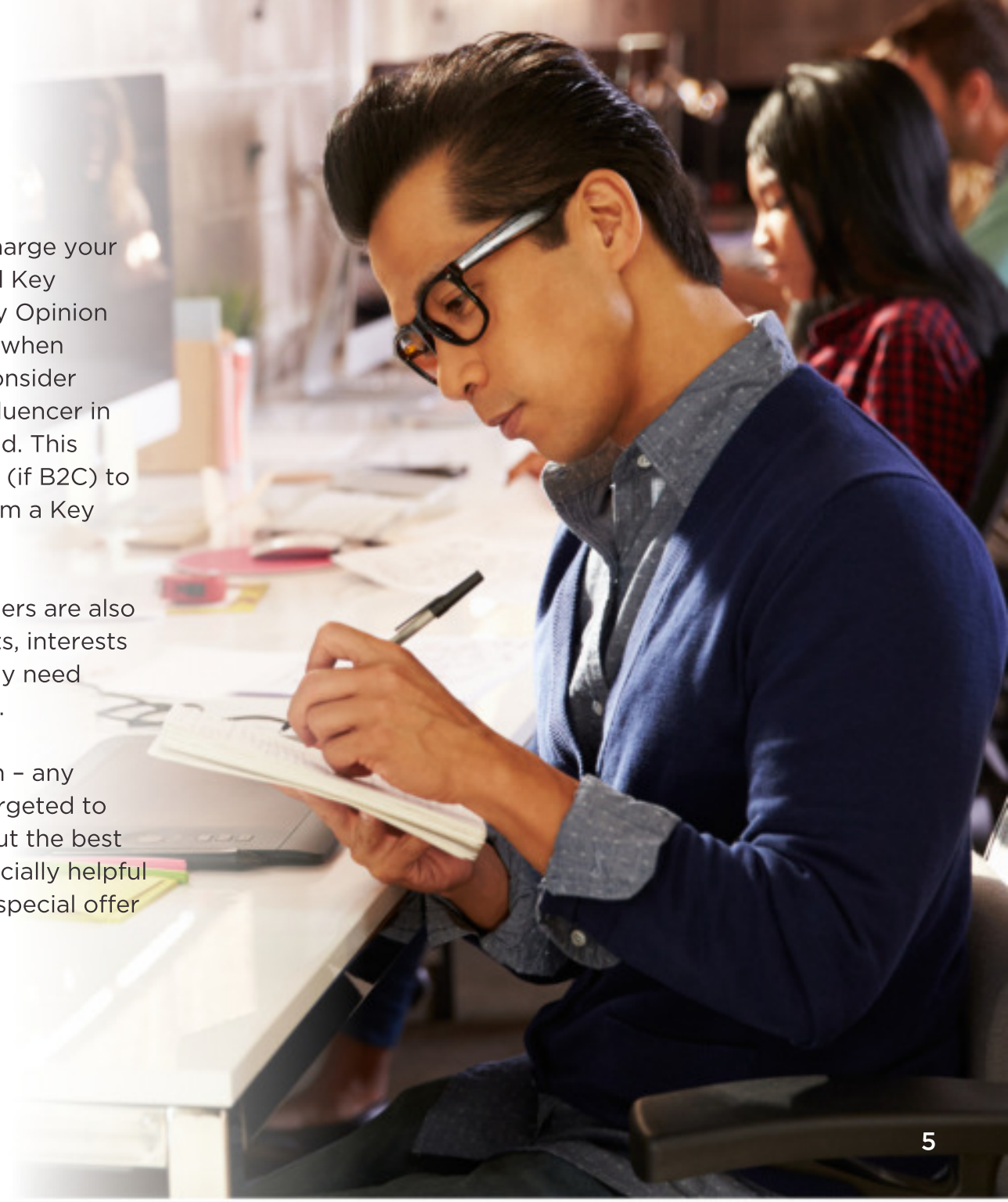
# WeChat Management

As you probably do with other social media in English, you need to actively manage your WeChat account. You can outsource this to an agency like Chin Communications to get the most value and save resources and time.

Elements to consider are:

- Budget – set a budget for running your WeChat social media. Factor in management (if outsourced), promotions or WeChat advertising to boost your reach (this is important early on), any influencers to promote you, copywriting of content (please use experts); also set up costs (budget for at least \$2,000 per month for management).
- Content - prepare content appropriate to market, research what they are interested in, hot topics in your space, benefits, how-to's, and use cultural insights to appeal. Look and learn from competitors.
- Frequency - post regularly with engaging topics, news, good images, even video and special offers where available. Set up a calendar with topics to help keep you on track.
- Boosting - promote or supercharge your WeChat with influencers called Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) or Key Opinion Consumers (KOCs), especially when starting out, to raise profile. Consider whether you should find an influencer in your sector to boost your brand. This might cost you some products (if B2C) to earn some positive reviews from a Key Opinion Consumer.
- Influencers - Key Opinion Leaders are also available for a range of budgets, interests and target audiences – you may need some help to nail the right one.

Spend some budget on promotion – any budget can be well utilised and targeted to the right groups. Seek advice about the best ways to boost your account (especially helpful at launch or during campaigns or special offer periods).



Depending on your business, here are some other recommendations to boost your WeChat:

- Giveaways or competitions
- QR code everywhere
- Media placements
- Co-events or cross promotions
- Respond to feedback and comments
- Pay attention to festivals and shopping days
- Choose readable fonts
- Collaborate with other official accounts
- Reach out to all your contacts, stakeholders, clients, etc and get them to follow and repost content.
- Make a special offer (especially before and during festivals) and track purchases or queries with a code or coupon).
- Monitor data

Don't leave it too long either, the competition is hotting up and if Chinese are on your radar, WeChat shouldn't be ignored.

Give it time to gain followers and views and be flexible to tweak your strategy and plan along the way.

## How to set up WeChat Pay in Australia

Chinese consumers want to order and pay directly on WeChat. There are a number of platform payment providers in Australia and they give the merchant access to Chinese buyers – 70% of Chinese use online payments on their phones. Generally Chinese consumers do not have credit cards. Transaction fees are lower and the settlement time of 2 days is fast.

The payments are executed on a POS terminal using QR codes by the merchant which the customer scans; once approved a receipt prints out from the terminal that the merchant is given.





## Success Stories – Who's on WeChat in Australia

Many famous Australian brands are on there: Qantas, David Jones, Australia Post, government agencies like tourism.

The Prime Minister and Opposition Leader realise the influence of Chinese voters with their own accounts.

Over 10,000 restaurants in Australia are using WeChat Pay; simply displaying a WeChat QR code in a restaurant window or on marketing materials will bring in customers who want the convenience and don't have any other pay options. You can even have a translated menu linked.

- Arts organisations – Chinese are keen subscribers
- Real estate – new developments, luxury properties, investments
- Tourism – sites, hotels, airports, events and experiences
- Consumer products/services – especially good for luxury products, beauty and services

- Education institutions – private schools, government education departments and universities as a recruitment tool and means of keeping in touch and generating philanthropy.

Private girls' school MLC in Melbourne recently held Giving Day 2021; they reached out to the generous Chinese community of students and families on WeChat to help fund scholarships. MLC raised over \$300,000 in 24 hours.

Dairy Australia, our national body for the dairy industry, uses WeChat to keep in touch with its important Chinese stakeholders and export market – especially critical during Covid, the account quickly gained several thousand followers.



## Mistakes to Avoid

- Using AI or platform translations. WeChat is very 'social' and content and layouts need to be creative, engaging and align with your business image – a talented human team is a must.
- Be mindful of WeChat regulations including the number of posts allowed for your account, create a content calendar beforehand so you can fit in all your content - planned and ad hoc – into the permitted number of posts.
- Trying to target everyone in your account – you need to address your niche.
- Focusing too much on 'you' instead of bringing value to readers.
- Publishing spasmodically or infrequently – like your other social media, regularity keeps you front of mind.
- Beware of censorship; content that is controversial or perceived to be sensitive to China will be deleted.





## Glossary to help

- **Post** – What is published - each post can contain multiple articles.
- **Personal account** – or personal contact account, similar to your WhatsApp and Messenger accounts.
- **KOL (Key Opinion Leaders)** – Professional accounts with large numbers of followers and specialising in one sector.
- **KOC (Key Opinion Consumers)** – Active users on social media with fewer followers, but specialising in one sector and able to encourage other users to purchase certain products.
- **QR code** – we are all familiar with this device now used when we register to dine out or go shopping – a QR code can also link to a website or WeChat account.
- **Mini program** – sub applications that include tools to use in daily life where you don't have to leave the WeChat app, e.g. ordering food deliveries.
- **Moments** – similar to Instagram, individuals can post content to generate the feed for their followers, including text, images, videos, and re-posts of other articles.
- **WeChat Groups** – you can create your WeChat group or join other WeChat groups. If you are running your own business, creating a personal account and setting up some WeChat groups may be the fastest way to know your customers and let them know you!
- **Tencent** – one of the behemoth companies ruling China's media. Its products include WeChat, QQ, Tencent video, QQ music, plus a variety of mobile games, etc.

Weixin (pronounced Way Shin) is the WeChat name in Chinese.

Want to learn more about WeChat marketing including do's and don'ts: contact our Marketing Team for free consultation: [info@chincommunications.com.au](mailto:info@chincommunications.com.au)

# About Chin

For 30 years, Chin has helped businesses, organisations and governments communicate with and market to China and Chinese audiences around the world. The media landscape is fast changing in China, we partner with our clients to achieve their aims and protect their reputations.

Language services – translation and interpreting; Marketing including social media, strategy, branding, graphic design and more.

All the services you need in one award-winning agency.

For more information, or to book a free WeChat introductory webinar, contact our Marketing Team -  
[info@chincommunications.com.au](mailto:info@chincommunications.com.au)

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