

# China Marketing, Modelled

Airport City  
Manchester

China Roadshow 2014

A Case Study by UKC Company



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Airport City Manchester is major development, set to become a globally connected business destination located at Manchester Airport. UKC Company was commissioned to raise awareness of the development to China's business community; managing a number of strategic marketing activities to support a series of promotional events in major Chinese cities.

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## Context

With an investment of £800m, Airport City Manchester is to become one of the UK's most desirable destinations for international businesses. And key to unlocking its vast potential is in attracting companies from China to locate their UK operations within the development.

Programme lead Manchester Airports Group (MAG) and property developers Argent devised a series of events, the Airport City Manchester China Roadshow, which would promote the development to business leaders in four major Chinese cities; Tianjin, Beijing, Shanghai and Shenzhen.

With a substantial investment earmarked for the roadshows, it was critical that the opportunity to tap into the China market was maximised. A tight deadline, combined with a having a wide range of stakeholders, meant that the partners needed to work with marketing experts that could deliver consistent, insightful results under pressure. They appointed UKC Company to work as a key component of their marketing team.



Cities visited on  
the Airport City  
China Roadshow

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“With an investment of £800m, Airport City Manchester is to become one of the UK's most desirable destinations for international businesses

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英国曼彻斯特空港  
城项目是目前最令  
人振奋和向往的开  
发项目之一

Airport City  
Manchester is one  
of the most  
exciting business  
destinations in  
development today

UKC Company  
deployed an  
in-house team  
of Chinese  
language  
experts to  
transcribe all  
20,000 words

## Information, Delivered

To support the roadshow events, a substantial Investor Guide was produced, detailing the not only the development, but also information on Manchester's infrastructure and business community: a 20,000 word document which needed to instantly sell the vision to investors.

UKC Company's design credentials were called upon. But that wasn't all.

With just a week to turn around the document from plain text into a lavish sales document, UKC Company was presented with a further, and considerable, challenge: it was necessary to produce both an English version and a Chinese UKC Company version.

UKC Company deployed an in-house team of Chinese language experts to transcribe all 20,000 words, working around the clock to ensure that every message, and every nuance, was perfectly represented to a Chinese reader. And of course, simultaneously producing two versions of the guide in entirely different languages effectively doubled the work that the design team needed to deliver in completion of the task.

The booklet had to be delivered on time - there was no alternative - therefore tight project management was needed, with the design and translation teams diligently working into the night to ensure that this essential element of the Airport City Manchester China Roadshow hit the required delivery milestone. And it did.

It has proven so successful that Airport City Manchester equity partners BCEG (Beijing Construction Engineering Group) have subsequently used it for within a high-profile SME conference in Beijing.

# Connecting With Chinese Corporations, Socially

Whilst the Investor Guide was designed to provide a definitive overview of the Airport City Manchester development for those already attending the roadshow events, it was also critical that the profile of the scheme was promoted to new audiences across China.

UKC Company identified two primary audiences to target; in addition to communicating directly to Chinese corporations, it would be vital to engage journalists and bloggers in order that the message could be carried widely across China.

WeChat is emerging as one of the most dominant mobile messaging platforms used in China. It allows users to subscribe to blog feeds from a variety of news sources, and on subscribing to a feed any new content from those sources is pushed to a user's device. With the platform enjoying particular popularity amongst professionals, it offers a very effective means of engaging with premium Chinese businesses.

## WeChat

With this in mind, UKC Company developed a social media campaign specifically around the WeChat platform. To significantly drive up subscriptions, UKC Company created a 'branded' QR code, directly linking to the Airport City Manchester WeChat account. The QR code was incorporated into key marketing materials, including a postcard alongside a large-scale standalone display unit used within the roadshow events. These activities alone lead to a 100% increase in subscribers to the Airport City

Manchester account.

WeChat was then used to send timely updates to subscribers throughout the campaign. For example, after each roadshow event an article was written up and distributed via the account. The most popular post during the campaign was read by 730 subscribers and shared over 51 times. And those 'shares' amplified the Airport City Manchester message to each users' own business circles.

Where WeChat was used to talk directly to the business community, Weibo further exposed Airport City Manchester to another critical audience; journalists and bloggers. These 'influencers' were exactly who we needed to reach to give the Airport City message flight.

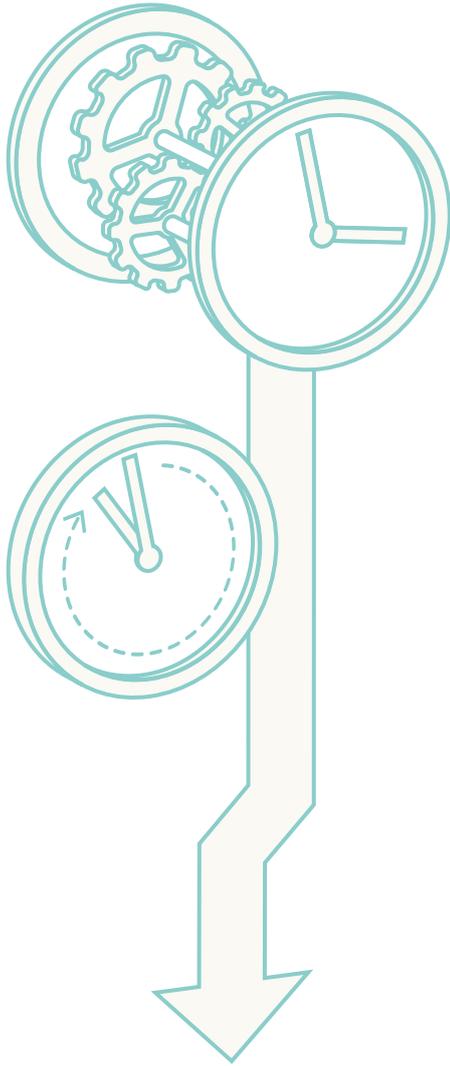
## Weibo

Weibo is one of China's major social media platforms, with over 30% of Chinese internet users on the service. 100 million messages are posted every day, and the service has over 503 million users worldwide. Given this wide usage, the platform is used by many journalists as a source of content for news stories. Therefore, using Weibo meant that UKC Company was able to reach out to those 'influencers'; spreading communication about the roadshow to bloggers and journalists.



Read by over  
730 subscribers

Shared over  
50 times



**A specific team was set up to work across the time-zone, providing real-time updates to Chinese audiences during the roadshow**

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## Managing The Message

UKC Company's social media team managed the two accounts during the campaign.

With over four different partners involved in the Airport City Manchester project, there was a great deal of information that needed to be disseminated; further, any content distributed through the channels needed to be agreed by all parties, and be consistent in tone and message. This required solid lines of communication between UKC Company and the project partners.

Timing was critical, too: 'tweets' from the accounts needed to grab the attention of the audience. A specific team was set up to work across the time-zone, providing real-time updates to Chinese audiences during the roadshow, and responding to incoming messages from people in China. By doing this well, UKC Company managed to expose the Airport City Manchester scheme to a wide business audience.

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## Sustained Business Engagement: Connecting China's Industry Leaders To Other UK Developments

Having created social media accounts that had been well-received amongst Chinese professionals, it became apparent that these could be used for more than promoting activities on the ground in China.

They became a means of creating direct awareness of relevant developments outside of China to that audience: for example, when a Chinese 'Smart Cities' delegation visited the UK, the accounts were used to share news from the mission back to those already engaged industry leaders in China.

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“Fantastic Service!

Angela Fielding,  
Senior Project Director, Argent



## What The Client Says

UKC Company believes that the words of clients can speak volumes. Following the completion of the campaign, we immediately received the following commendations:

*“I am very impressed by your team’s ability to turn things round and the quality of the document.”*

Ruairidh Jackson, Senior Project Director, Argent

*“Fantastic Service!”*

Angela Fielding, Senior Project Director, Argent

Airport City Manchester presents a fantastic opportunity to attract inward investment to the UK, but with so much at stake there was no room for error. Complex projects, which need to be delivered within strict timescales, need thorough project management coupled with engaged, insightful and diligent teams. As ever, UKC Company delivered.

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## About UKC Company

We’re a full service creative agency. With an emphasis on the service.

We help brands communicate with their audiences, create beautiful designs, and we craft considered digital solutions.

Interested in UKC Company? Call us now to start the conversation.

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language.