



# Social Media Marketing to Seniors in China

# 2023

# KAWO

## Contents

Introduction ..... 02

### PART ONE

**Seniors in China ..... 03**

Evolution of a Generation ..... 04

### PART TWO

**Seniors on Social ..... 05**

Douyin & Kuaishou ..... 06

Move Free Case Study ..... 07

WeChat Channels ..... 08

Poise Case Study ..... 09

WeChat Ecosystem vs "Dou Kuai" ..... 10

Little Red Book ..... 11

Bilibili ..... 12

### PART THREE

**About KAWO ..... 13**

## Discover the hidden market opportunity...

*Respect and care for elders has always played a large role in Chinese culture. However, when it comes to the consumer market, they are massively underserved even though they are the fastest-growing consumer group.*

*In recent years, social media usage and purchasing power of seniors have increased exponentially, yet little effort has been put into studying their needs and behavior changes ... This is a missed opportunity for brands across many industries.*

*As the world economy and technology continue to rapidly evolve, it's important to maintain a long-term vision, learn to take a step back, and appreciate the value hidden in plain sight.*

*We hope this guide inspires you to explore this untapped market.*

*Jimakos*

KAWO Marketing Executive  
[Linkedin.com/in/jimakoschen](https://www.linkedin.com/in/jimakoschen)  
[jim@kawo.com](mailto:jim@kawo.com)



**[S]** At KAWO, trust is really important to us.

Just as we work hard to ensure our users trust the data inside our platform, we've worked hard to make sure you can trust the credibility of the information in our content. Wherever you see a **[S]** you'll find the link to the source of the information we used for a specific stat or insight. If you think we got something wrong, please let us know at [marketing@kawo.com](mailto:marketing@kawo.com).

**Subscribe**

*For more good stuff like this, click on the button to subscribe KAWO's newsletter*

PART ONE

# Seniors in China

TL;DR

The spending potential of China's senior citizens is expected to contribute to a third of China's GDP in the next 30 years, rising from RMB 5.9 trillion in 2021 to RMB 106 trillion by 2050.

Their presence can no longer be ignored.

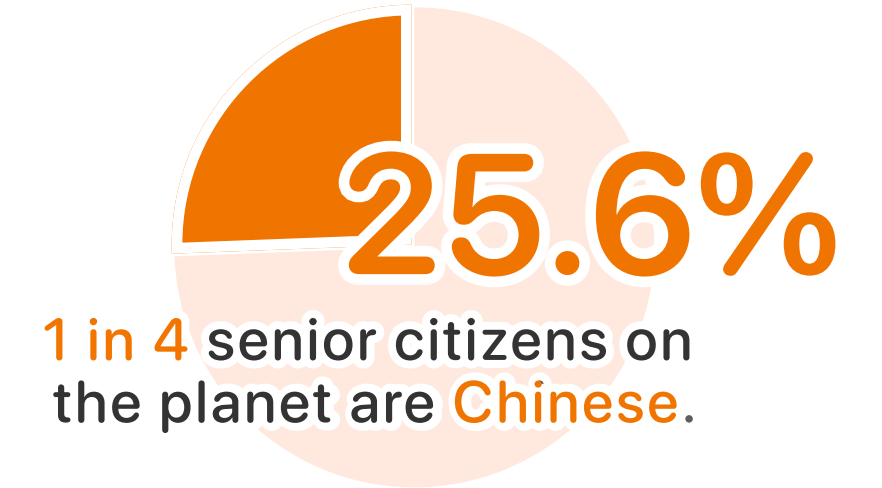
BRING THE GUIDE TO LIFE  
Schedule a Webinar With Our Team  
[kawo.com/webinar](https://kawo.com/webinar)



## China's Over-60 Population Approaches the Size of the Entire US

In 2022, China's population of 60+ year-olds reached 280 million, making up 19.8% of China's total population [S]. This is swiftly approaching that of the U.S.'s total population of 339 million [S].

The above number is increasing every year by 20 million to 25 million as the second wave of baby boomers, born between 1962 and 1978, retire — making China the fastest-aging country in the world.



### Their willingness to spend grows ... especially online



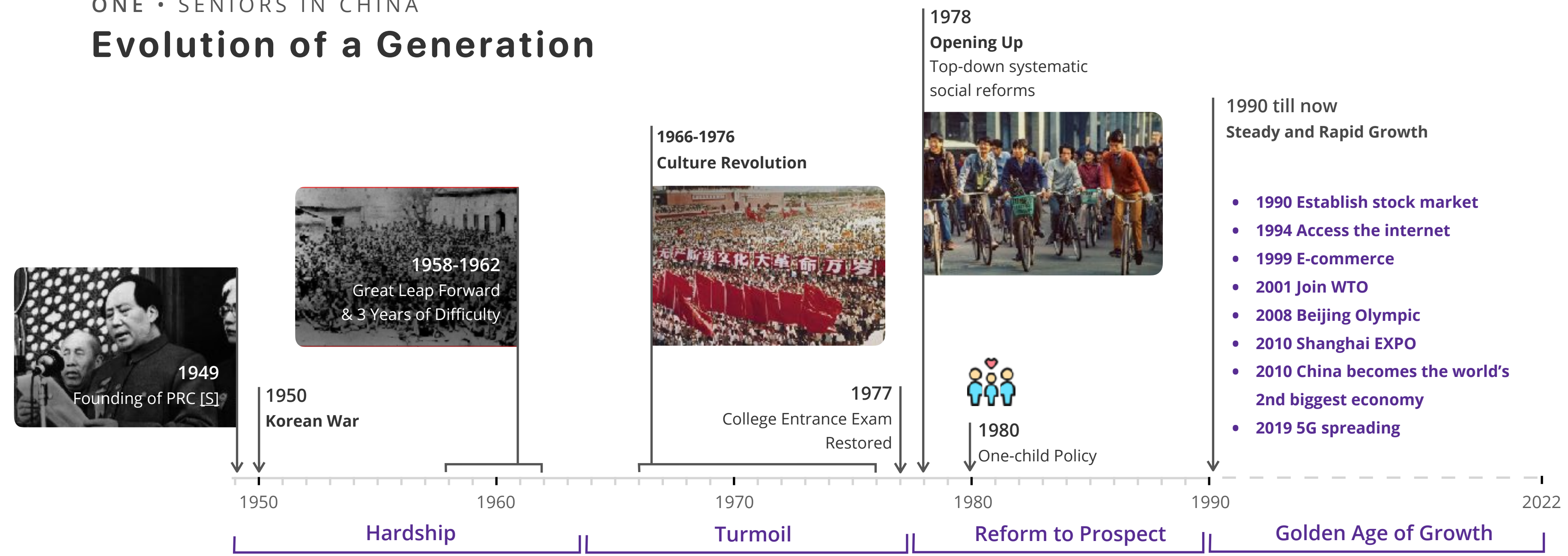
*It is the 2nd most popular shopping channel for seniors in China. [S]*

30.8% of China's 1.07 billion netizens are over 50 years old [S], and age isn't slowing them down anytime soon. Online transaction volume made by senior citizens has grown 3 times in the first 8 months of 2022 compared to 2021 [S].

There has been a 12.5% increase in MAU online among seniors and an 8.6% increase in average time spent online compared to 2021, making the 50+ group the fastest-growing consumer group by at least 4 times [S].

Not only are they making more purchases online, but their spending power is highly attractive. The number of seniors with CNY 1000+ online spending power increased by 10.6%, and their willingness to spend was 10.2% higher in 2022 compared to the previous year [S].

# Evolution of a Generation



**Break Down the Stereotype**

Seniors' mindset is rapidly changing, but the outdated notion that they are reluctant to spend prevails. [\(page 3\)](#)

Over 90% of entrepreneurs chose to target consumers under the age of 35 [S]. The potential consumer demands of senior citizens that could be explored are being ignored.

					Consumer Habits	Marketing Opportunities
<b>Conservatives</b> 72 + yo Born before 1950	<b>Minor Years</b> Learned to save resources from growing up in extreme poverty	<b>Youth Age</b> Believed in altruistic hard work under propaganda influences	<b>Middle Age</b> Devoted to family selflessly; Advocated collectivism	<b>Senior Year</b> Physical health in jeopardy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spend with caution</li> <li>• Basic needs only</li> <li>• Save for children</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target their offsprings</li> <li>• Prioritize healthcare</li> <li>• Value community</li> </ul>
<b>Adapters</b> 60 - 72 yo Born 1950-1962	<b>Minor Years</b> Grew up in poverty and exposure to propaganda	<b>Youth Age</b> Experienced major lifestyle shuffles reluctantly e.g. social movements and reforms; Adaptable to changes	<b>Middle Age</b>	<b>Senior Year</b> Have time and energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rational spending</li> <li>• Self-indulging from time to time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Price sensitive</li> <li>• Target them and their offspring</li> </ul>
<b>Boomers</b> 50 - 60 yo Born 1962-1972	<b>Minor Years</b> Had opportunities to receive proper education	<b>Young Age</b> Exposed to diverse culture; Cared more about life quality; Open-minded towards new changes	<b>Middle Age</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Various interests</li> <li>• Spend more for pleasure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Target them directly</li> <li>• Market research and education required</li> </ul>

PART TWO

# Seniors on Social

TL;DR

Social media capture most of seniors' attention online.

Mobile usage rate is 99.5% among senior netizens, and most online activities seniors engage in take place on social media apps, including instant messaging, short video and news feed.

## Seniors' Potential on Social

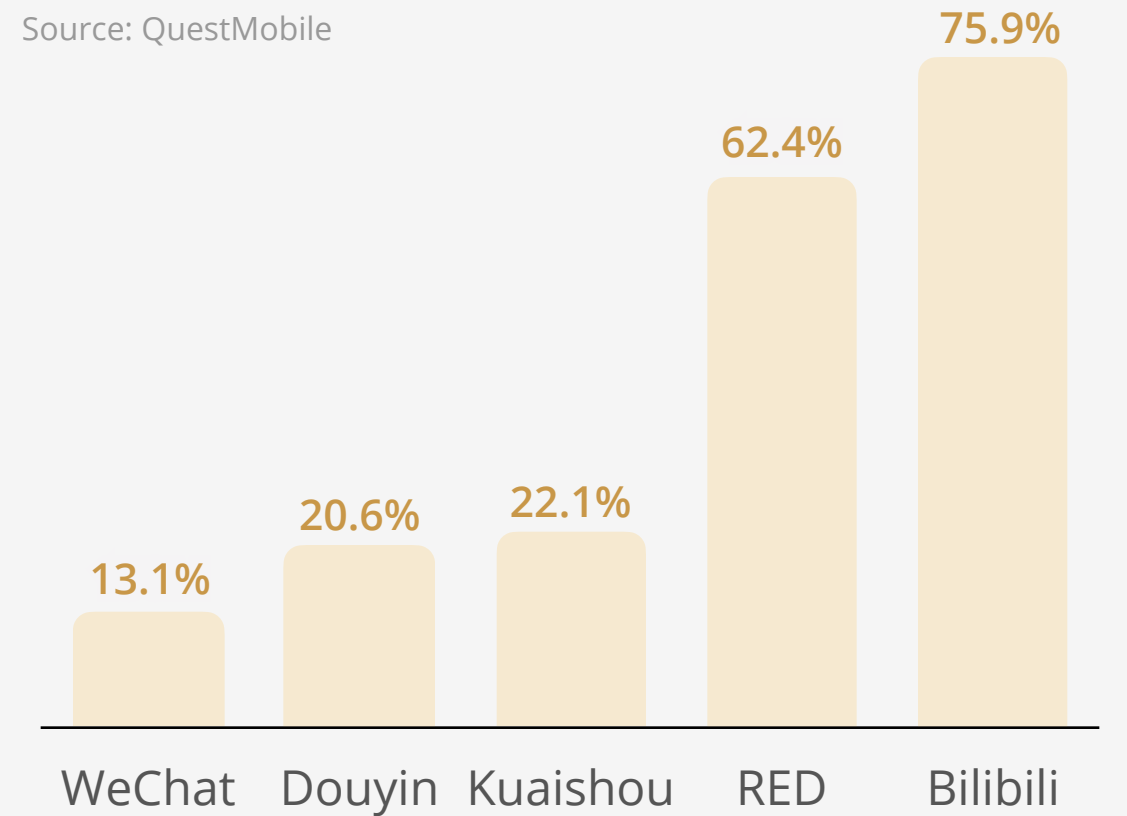
All major China social networks have modified their apps' interfaces for senior users, including simplifying the design and enlarging font. Douyin rolled out the "Old Friends Program" to optimize user experience for seniors by providing specialized customer service internet addiction and fraud prevention assistance as well as hiring

older employees to design better age-friendly content and functions.

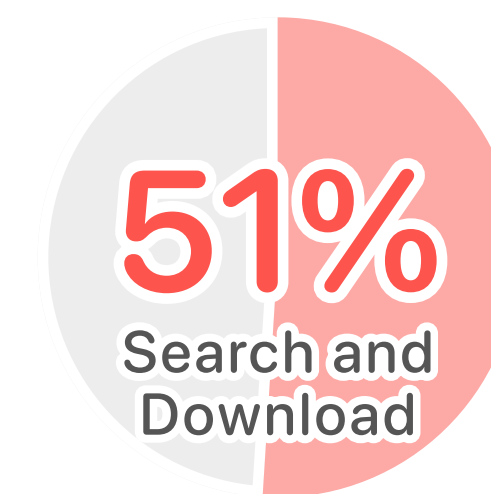
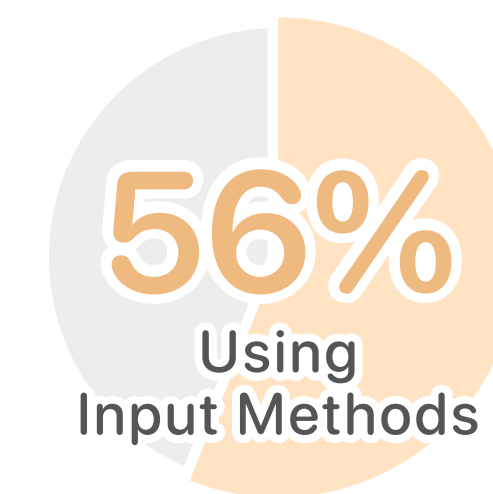
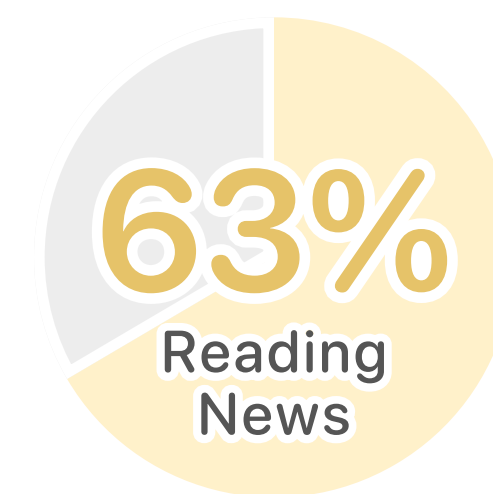
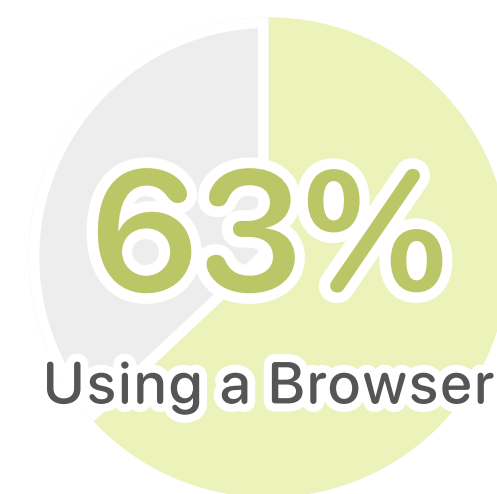
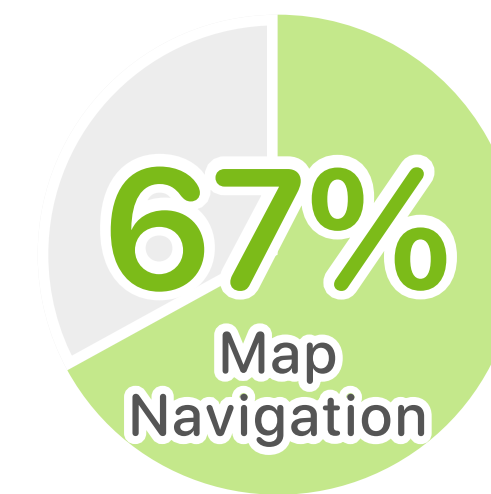
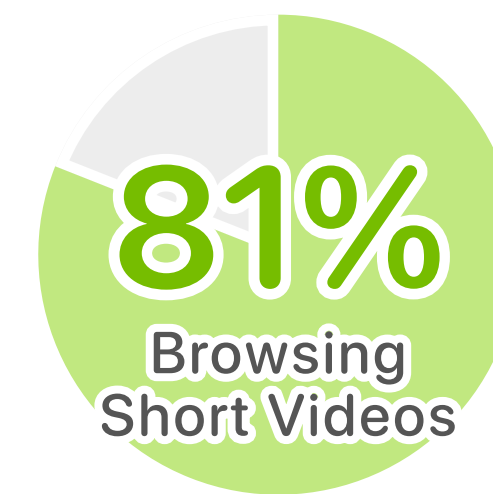
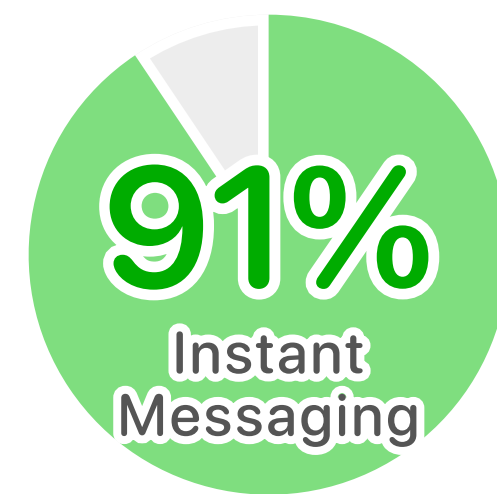
The inspiration behind this effort was largely thanks to the growing contribution made to social e-commerce by seniors. During the first half year of 2022, the sales volume of the category "Senior clothing" on Douyin reached RMB 1.28 billion [S].

Annual Growth Rate of Senior Users on Major China Social Channels (2022.08)

Source: QuestMobile



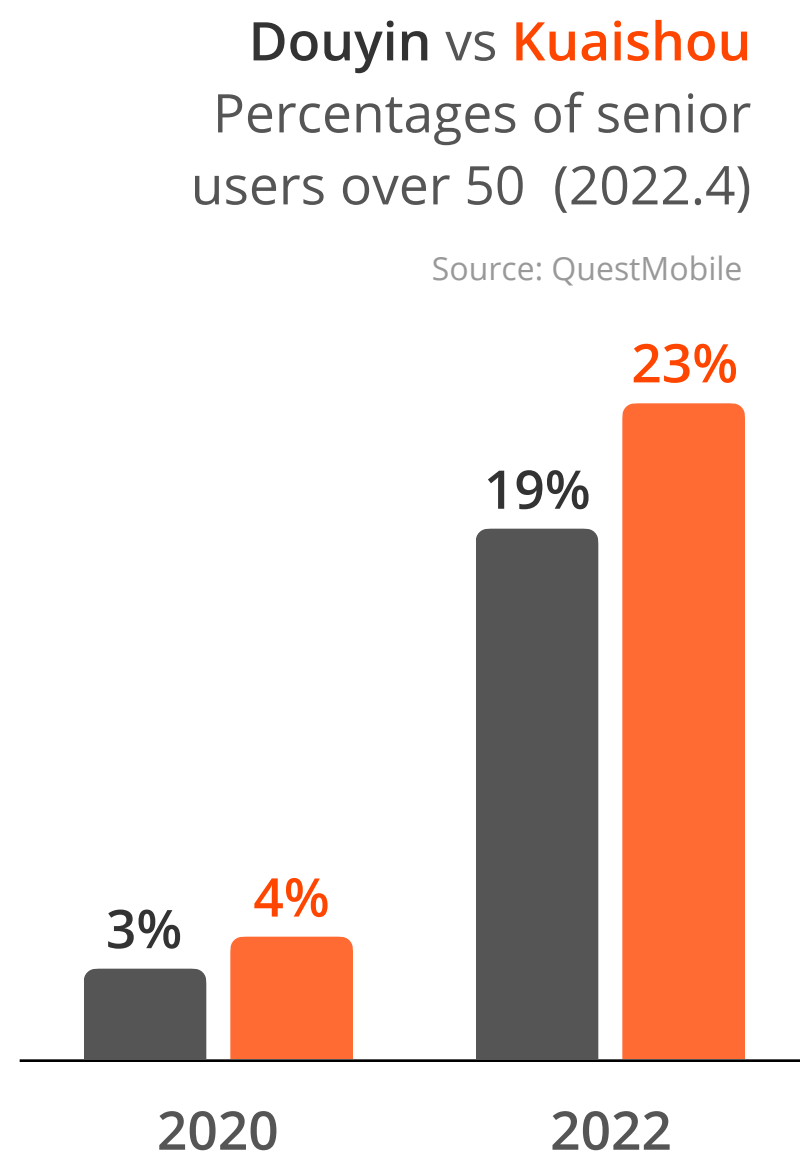
## What are Chinese senior netizens doing online ? [S]



**Short Video: Seniors' Favorite**

80% of netizens over age 60 spend on average 1.5 hours each day browsing short videos [5]. Many retired seniors report experiencing common issues such as loss of vision and hearing capabilities. Short video, offering graphic motion and clear sound, is more entertaining and effortless for seniors to enjoy and kill time compared to plain text and images.

Douyin and Kuaishou are China's two major short video players. 49.3% of senior viewers choose Douyin as their go-to video platform, while Kuaishou comes in a close second at 33.3% [5]. With both focused on live-streaming and e-commerce, "Dou Kuai" (Short for "Douyin and Kuaishou") continue to grow and increasingly encroach on each other's territory vying for viewers.



**How can Brands Conquer the Blue Ocean Market of Seniors on "Dou Kuai"?**

Live commerce and shoppable videos penetrate all generations including senior netizens. 28.8% of age 51+ viewers on "Dou Kuai" have an average online spending power of over RMB 2000 [5]. By the end of 2022, seniors became the fastest-growing group of users, driving social sales in categories like cosmetics, clothing, healthcare, etc. Catering to the interest-based "Dou Kuai" algorithm, collaborating with influencers on live commerce and shoppable videos is usually the most efficient way to reach a target audience and drive sales. However, the optimal solution for seniors might surprise you.

**Sales-driven content alone is not the answer**

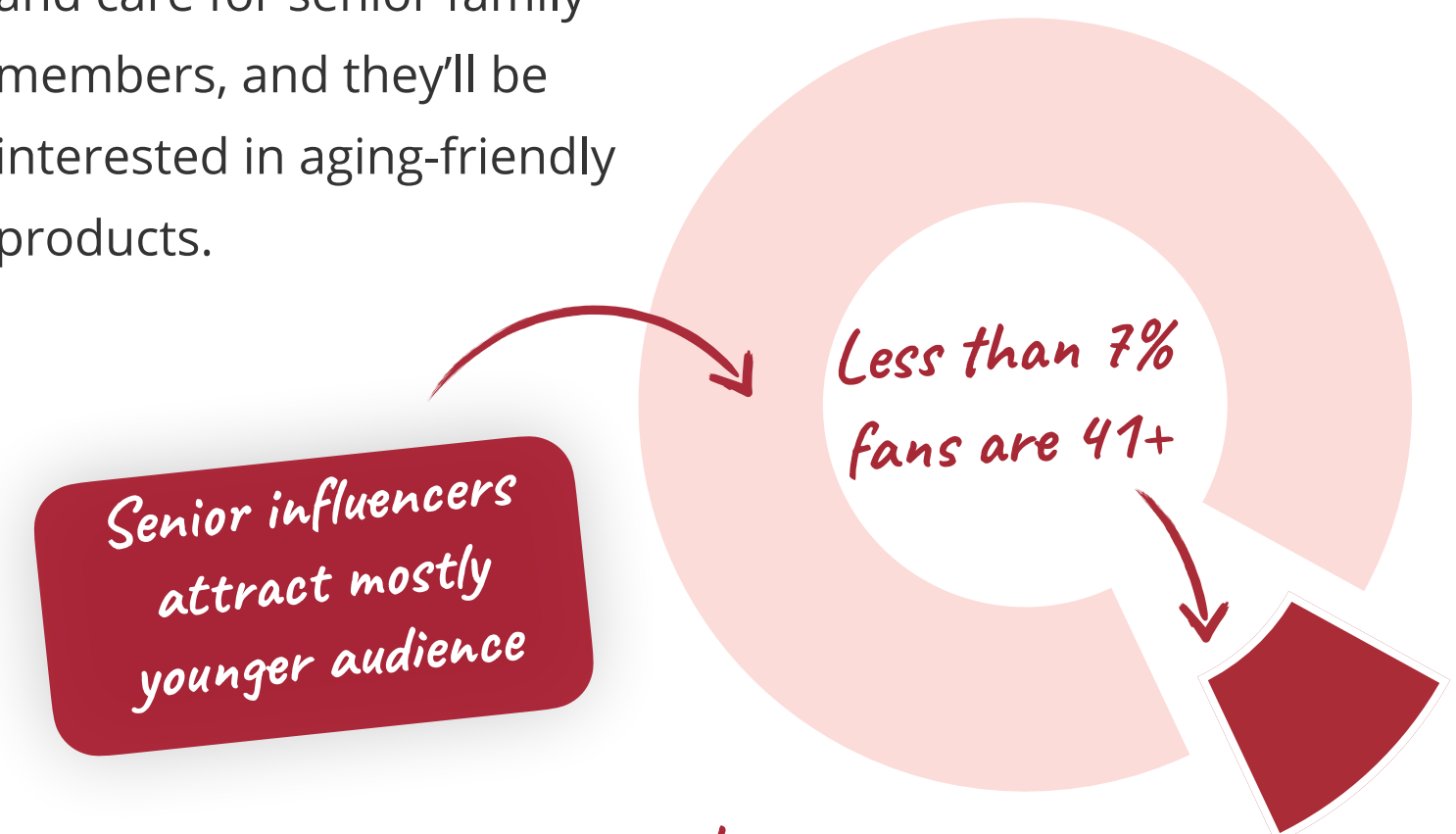
The majority of the so-called "senior" products in the current market are not refined for seniors' needs due to a lack of market research. For example, clothing labeled as "for seniors" is mostly just plus-size outfits in dull colors, otherwise categorized as mass-made products, easy for instant sales, and suited towards price battles with off-label brands.

*"Real" aging-friendly products (tailored home appliance, specific healthcare and rehabilitation aids, etc) are not well-known concepts and therefore often require additional education. It's easier to convince seniors to convert if they deem the product as entertaining or meeting their rigid demands. However, when facing unfamiliar products, it's much easier to convince younger generations, but even for them, it would require a considerable amount of market education before conversion.*

In order to educate, brands need to build trust and a positive brand impression. Focusing on sales-driven content only isn't enough, as counter-intuitive as it is to the usual "Dou Kuai" marketing strategy.

**Influencer Marketing has a different impact**

Senior influencers have a strong presence on "Dou Kuai", but collaborating with them might not work the way you expected. It's natural to assume that most fans of senior influencers would be seniors themselves, but it's not the case — most senior influencers on "Dou Kuai" have a lot more young fans than senior fans. Young people respect and care for senior family members, and they'll be interested in aging-friendly products.



*Influencer Marketing approach: Targeting towards the younger generation who will educate their elders on senior products or buy for them directly.*



TWO • SENIORS ON SOCIAL

# How Does Move Free Leverage Short Video?



## Believe in the value of owned social media

Move Free is known for its joint aiding supplements, and has been making their mark on China social media. As it's still a new concept to the Chinese market, they take control of the content narrative and adapt a softer approach to marketing.

Through the short-video series "The Great Parenthood" [S], where each skit focuses on relationship drama mostly between a daughter, son and mother-in-law, the brand leverages one of the most relatable generational topics in modern China to attract both young and senior audiences. The series is updated every 2-4 days, with over 150 episodes in total so far.

Some skits don't even mention Move Free products. The brand focuses on trust-building through prioritizing quality, entertaining content. When they do mention the product, a link to the brand's livestream will be added on the screen, those viewers who wish to learn more can follow the link to an e-commerce product page.



## Collaborating with influencer for brand awareness

Apart from owned content, Move Free leverages the power of senior influencers well. They worked with the esteemed IP "末那大叔" [S] feathering the daily life of the grandfather, father, and son. In a skit called "the trouble of being big and tall", a Move Free product was introduced when the grandpa tried to pick up a box but didn't squat right. The video has received over 700,000 likes.

*Each plot-twisting skit is under 120s*

*On average every 1 in 5 skits will have notably high engagement*



## From online to offline

Many worry that short video platforms would eat into seniors' outdoor time. However, the research shows that among seniors who spend around 5 hours or less on the platform daily are actually more likely to participate in offline community and leisure activities [S]. Brands can be inspired by this counter-intuitive result and leverage Douyin to attract senior users to visit offline stores and services.



## The Boom of WeChat Channels

Modeled after "Dou Kuai" and launched in 2020, Channels was not originally considered a serious competitor, yet just 2 years later, its video views have increased by 200%, and live-stream views increased by 300%. The number of Channels' content creators with 10k+ followers also increased by 308% [S].

### Seniors among the earliest adopters of Channels

In 2020, more than 70% of WeChat Channels users are over 45 years old, and most e-commerce purchases via Channels were made by consumers 55 years old or over [S]. The average age among viewers and purchasers only started to shift in 2022 after more young viewers joined the platform.

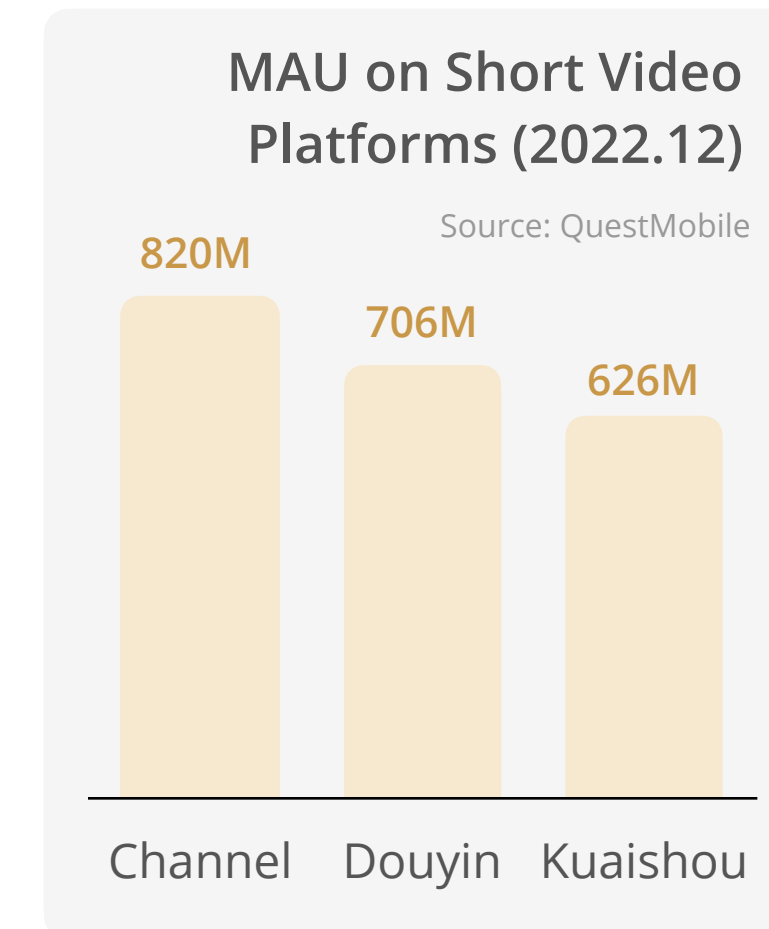
### Why do seniors love Channels ?

WeChat is where seniors engage with friends, family and form online communities. Content goes viral here through shares and recommendations within social circles. As part of the WeChat ecosystem, Channels has been effortlessly taking advantage of the following features:

- **One-click easy share to a friend, a group or on Moments**
- **Embedded in WeChat articles with seamless linking to WeCom or e-commerce mini programs**

Adding more touch points for content exposure and streamlining the conversion process.

- **Highlight videos liked & and commented by WeChat friends**
- Building trust through established social circles.



### The perfect place to engage directly with seniors

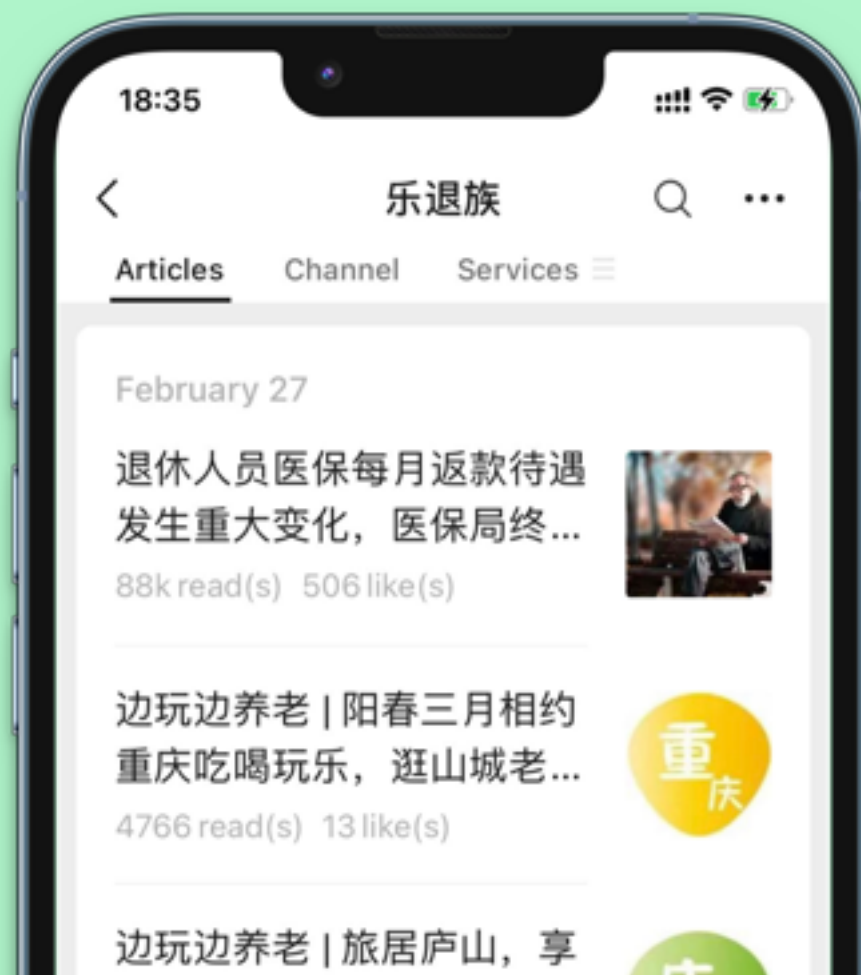
Seniors (51 years and older) account for 23% of WeChat's 1.31 billion monthly active users, [S]. WeChat's extensive list of features designed for better communication, content sharing and entertainment makes it the most popular social media platform for seniors in China.

In recent years, the open rate for WeChat Official Accounts ("OA") has been declining due to fierce competition for readers' attention. However, this is not the case for accounts with mostly senior followers who tend to stay loyal and focused.

### Wonderland for online community building

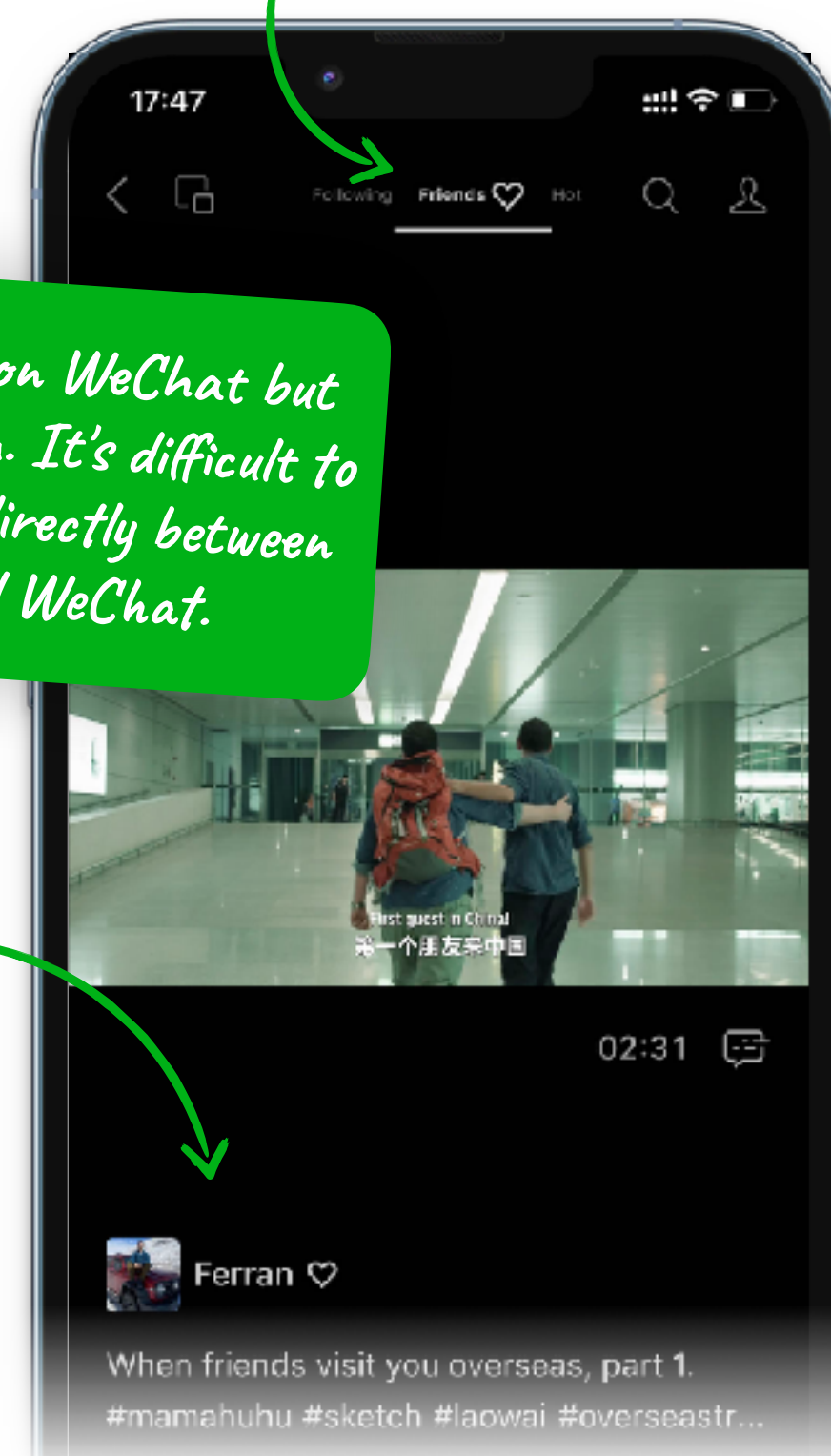
"乐退族" LORTUI (LOve ReTirement yoU & I) is a local company focusing on education, culture and domestic travel services for seniors.

Long-term senior followers of its WeChat OA have helped the brand maintain 30k+ average reads for each main article. In addition, articles continue to receive views long after publishing, signaling that followers continue to grow and that users continue to come back to this channel for news and info.



*Unique feed for you to bond with friends over the same content*

*All friends are on WeChat but not all on Douyin. It's difficult to share content directly between Douyin and WeChat.*







# How Does Poise Reach Its Audience?



## Embrace the WeChat ecosystem

Poise provides incontinence pads designed for seniors and women after pregnancy. The brand cleverly utilizes the WeChat ecosystem and app functions to reach and continuously engage their target audience.

*OA article link inserted in video comments*



*WeChat Channels video inserted inside an OA article*



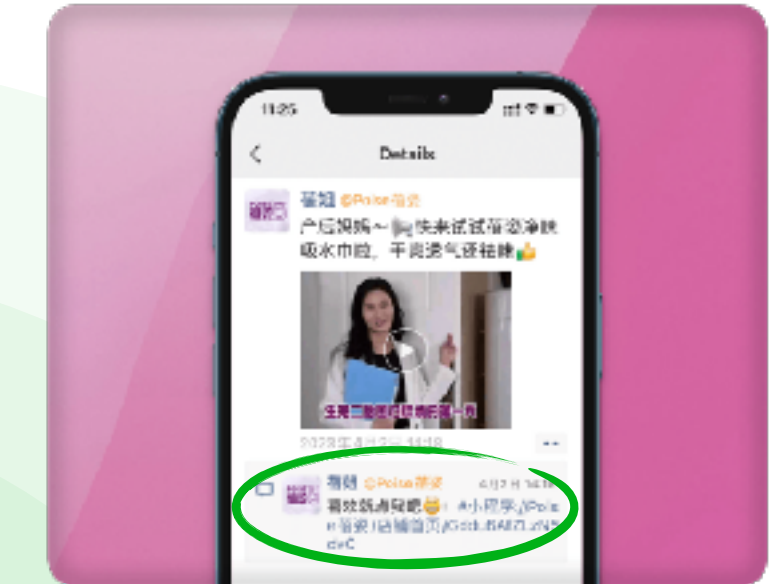
*QR code of brand's WeCom service account attached*



*Channels videos can be shown in the Moments section of the WeCom service account*



*Access to e-commerce mini program linked in the comments of Moments feed*



**Private Traffic**

**Mini Programs**

## Bond with audience by providing free value

Most videos on Poise's Channels account are not about the product but topics related to female body care with a brand character named "Sister Bei" sharing tips and tricks on how to regulate hormone and restore energy.

*Mini program inserted inside WeChat OA article*



*Private messages sent from WeCom service account*



## The magic of mini-program

WeChat mini programs offer a myriad of features that make linking to e-commerce, accessing services, product details, bookings etc. seamless and straightforward, especially for seniors.



TWO • SENIORS ON SOCIAL

## A Competition Between Entertainment and Loyalty

### “Dou Kuai” : Improve conversion rate of existing users

The average usage time of “Dou Kuai” is more than 100 minutes per day, per user, 3 times that of Channels [S]. The “Dou Kuai” algorithms are designed to stimulate dopamine releases and therefore these two platforms have been successful in capturing short-term attention.

However, the “quick and fun” rhythm of “Dou Kuai” provides only one incentive for senior audiences to stay — entertainment. A lack of diversity in the ecosystem has its shortcomings: after the rapid growth over the past 5 years, ads revenue and MAU stagnated in 2022. The need for “Dou Kuai” to improve conversion rate of existing users is urgent.

### Channels: Improve stickiness of WeChat users

Although lacking the addictive nature of “Dou Kuai”, Channels has 1.3 billion loyal WeChat users to draw from, and it’s not going anywhere.

Channels gives brands the opportunity to reach audiences who are ready to be nurtured (page 9). In some cases, brands even move from “Dou Kuai” to WeChat for community management.

Unlike “Dou Kuai”, the most urgent need for Channels now is to increase usage time and retain users. Channel has executed tactics to encourage original content by giving additional traffic and revenue bonus to creators [S].

Between 2022 and 2023 many creator accounts on Channels enjoyed a period of relatively easy growth, but it’s yet to say who’ll win the final race when it comes to stickiness and conversion.

## The Importance of Trust for Seniors

Unlike “Dou Kuai”, where a sophisticated algorithm pushes content to users, short videos and live-streams on Channels gain views from social influence. Content is shared and spread through private group chats and Moments. This creates an atmosphere of trust for seniors, who make 90% of their purchases based on recommendations from family, friends or immediate community. [S].

Trust plays a significant role in seniors’ buying habits, and senior KOLs on Channels have a much higher percentage of senior followers compared to other platforms. This setup makes it ideal for word-of-mouth to thrive, which is why live commerce has a higher conversion rate on Channels among seniors compared to other platforms.

Senior influencer “Classy Lady” reached 3 million views during her first month of live-streaming, with a conversion rate over 30%, a repurchase rate of 70%, and a return rate below 10%. [S]. The return rate of the live commerce benchmark is above 30% at the time.



## BREAKING NEWS

### The Enterprise Solution of WeChat Starts Charging for Private Traffic

Another important channel for reaching your audience directly, WeCom, the enterprise version of WeChat has been increasingly used by brands to reach and nurture your WeChat audience directly.

Starting June 22, 2023, WeCom will only offer 2000 free external contacts on the enterprise solution.

For each new contact added, RMB 0.1 will be charged, and if the contact is added from a WeCom short link, an additional RMB 1 will be charged [S].

Cost increases compel brands to reassess their customer acquisition strategy to balance the quantity and quality of leads.

It’s also an opportunity for brands to be clear on their purposes for private traffic: WeCom is good for improving efficiency in direct customer services e.g. after sales and customer feedback; For relationship bonding and education, WeChat Official Accounts are more suitable.



TWO • SENIORS ON SOCIAL

## Little Red Book & "Old Red Book"

### Seniors are flocking to RED

From must-buy recommendations, local service reviews to beauty hack and even apartment leasing — RED — with most of its content in text and images, has become the encyclopedia for modern life.

Though RED is commonly known as a playground for the younger (upper-to-middle class female) consumers, the number of active senior users on RED is estimated to be over 11 million [S], and the number of senior influencers has doubled in 2022 [S].

### The bottleneck of "Old Red Book"



Meipian is an image and text content sharing platform with more than 107 million senior users. However, after receiving 5 rounds of funding between 2016 and 2018, Meipian's revenue has been stagnant and the company downsized to less than 100 employees

### Community is the means to an end, not the end

"Building an online community to include seniors into the digital world" was the original intention of Tang Qi, Meipian's founder, when he first created the app.

However, its charitable nature puts too much emphasis on optimizing user experience instead of building capacity for commercialization. Seniors are accustomed to spending money on other networks ("Dou Kuai", WeChat, etc). In addition, cultivating spending habits on Mepian's existing users is tough, especially without a younger audience to educate and influence senior users.

## How can Brands Take Advantage of RED?

### Forget about the age differences

Seniors who prefer spending time on RED are the types that follow trends, pursue passion and are willing to pay for their various interests. They don't want to be branded as "old", and are reluctant to use senior apps. It's wise to avoid heavily age-related content.

### Explore the "Zen style" of live commerce

Despite its user base doubling in 2022, RED's commercial revenue grew by merely 20% (80% of which was from advertising [S]). Finding new opportunities for monetization is imminent, which is where live commerce may come in handy.



Forsaking the loud music, hawking, and gags galore, actress Dong Jie conducted her live-stream in a calm and collected manner, reaching 30 million in GMV and rose to No.1 on RED's live commerce chart [S]. This new "Zen style" suits middle-to-high-end products well, and creates a better environment to build trust with seniors.

### Target young users

Topics related to seniors are popular among younger generations who are supporting their parents/grandparents. With 72% of RED's users under 35 years old [S], it's the perfect environment for making an intergenerational impact on consumer education.



Over 210k pieces of content on "Gifts for grandma"



### A Sanctuary for sophistication and craftsmanship

Bilibili is uniquely positioned as one of the only major social platforms in China featuring UGC in mainly medium and long video format. With the majority of its users being Gen Z and millennial, Bilibili has also attracted senior influencers who are educated and skillful. It's easy to succumb to short attention span in this fickle environment, but **young people here who make up most fans of senior influencers are patient and thirsty for knowledge.** Thanks to the long-video format on Bilibili, information once considered obscure, e.g. dissecting knowledge in various fields, has a place to thrive, providing interesting marketing opportunities for brands as well.

#### Esteemed professors



*Known for explaining ancient Chinese poetry*

#### Inheritors of lost crafts



*Show the complex process of making arts and crafts while sharing history and culture background*

## Educate the Patient Young Audience

As a hotbed for knowledge-related content, Bilibili is the perfect platform for videos related to tech or tools which require detailed and lengthy feature explanations or reviews. Young audience here has high tolerance for them.



Bilibili influencer “诡计从不拖更” [SJ] is known for his home decoration videos. One of his videos discussed “how to decorate when living with your parents”. He shares advice on how to plan indoor spaces to suit the different lifestyles of both generations, and he makes recommendations on aging-friendly home appliances for convenience and safety, introducing the **Panasonic** washer-dryer as one such product. The 14-min video successfully attracted over 243,000 views and over 2,500 likes from its audiences.



THE SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGEMENT PLATFORM FOR CHINA

We are proud to be trusted by over 500 global brands:



Great Social Media Marketing Doesn't Happen in Chaos

Multi-Account Management

Data Insights

Competitor Analysis

Collaboration



The screenshot shows the KAWO dashboard interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with the KAWO logo, a search bar, and a user profile icon. The main content area is divided into several sections:

- Planning (THIS MONTH):** A grid showing the status of content across three platforms (Weibo, WeChat, Douyin). For each platform, it lists 'PUBLISHED', 'REQUIRE APPROVAL', 'APPROVED', and 'UNPLANNED' counts.
- Platform Performance (LAST 30 DAYS):** Three columns of data for Weibo, WeChat, and Douyin. Each column includes follower counts, engagement metrics (likes, comments, shares), and revenue.
- Active KPIs:** Three rows showing 'Sept Follower Growth' for Weibo, WeChat, and Douyin, with progress bars and target values.
- Highlights:** A section for 'Weibo Competitors' and 'Sept Reads' for Douyin.

Learn more at [KAWO.com](https://www.kawo.com) or email [marketing@kawo.com](mailto:marketing@kawo.com).