



Routes to the Chinese markets

There are different trading routes for Chinese businesses (B2B) and Chinese consumers (B2C) — in China, in your local market, online, or in person with visitors from China.

Before you start, protect your brand in China and understand certification and channel options so you can expand without locking yourself into a single route.



Foundation Being seen in China articles

Discovery Being found in China article

Execution Start trading in China articles

Focus: routes + risk control

Audience: overseas businesses

Last modified: v5.1 – 18 October 2026

Start with brand and compliance

Before trading, review your branding in China. If your business branding is not registered in China, correct this ASAP. Another company can undermine your marketing efforts by registering your brand(s) and reproducing products/services locally.

If you are selling goods inside China, products may require local certification (e.g., CCC). Importers usually manage certification, but it can be appropriate for your business to be involved so you own the final documentation.

Practical takeaway: Register trademarks early and understand any certifications that could block sales.

Your local market: Chinese visitors and internet sales

Many Chinese citizens study and work abroad. Visitors can see products first-hand and share information on Chinese social media, which can increase interest.

Chinese buyers often prefer overseas suppliers for perceived quality and authentic branding. Develop relationships with Chinese social media users with large followings and provide links to online content.

Practical takeaway: Encourage sharing and ensure your media and product information can be viewed from China.

Your local market: direct Chinese sales

Chinese visitors can be supported by:

- Local internet presence plus accessibility in China (with a short Chinese introduction)
- Meetings at trade shows
- Local trade organisations

This approach builds connections in China from within your local country and is often supported by trade organisations.

Practical takeaway: A cost-effective route to build relationships before deeper China commitment.

Direct selling to the Chinese market

Proactive marketing and sales strategies can begin without visiting China. The internet lets you do early-stage work from your office.

- Chinese B2B marketing (e.g., Alibaba)
- Chinese B2C distribution channels (e-Malls)
- Chinese social media (e.g., WeChat)
- New overseas channels (e.g., b2b66 project)

Practical takeaway: Use multiple channels and validate demand before making large commitments.

Appoint a local Chinese agent

A Chinese agent can become your local representative in Chinese markets. Success is networking-based—learn as much as you can about their network.

- Do not appoint an agent for all of China or an entire region



Use these checks to keep routes realistic and protect your position early.

Quick checklist

Use these checks to keep trust and usability high.

- Are your trademarks registered in China in your company name?
- Do your products require China certification (CCC or similar) for in-China sales?
- Which route fits your stage: local visitors, online B2B, B2C e-Malls, agents, or distributors?
- If using an agent, is the agreement performance-based with a clear exit clause?
- Have you avoided exclusivity that blocks other channels and direct enquiries?

Note: “Looking Chinese” is not the goal. Trust comes from consistency, authenticity, and a smooth mobile experience.

Need help?

If you'd like help improving mobile usability and China accessibility while keeping an authentic overseas brand feel, contact support@accesstochina.com

- Use performance-based targets and a clear termination clause
- Ensure B2C selling via e-Malls can continue where appropriate
- Allow Chinese customers to approach your business directly
- Register trademarks in your company name before deep engagement

Practical takeaway: Agent agreements should expand channels, not close them.

Distributor, office, licensing, JV, and WFOE

- **Distributor:** handles importing, storage, shipping, returns, servicing, and payments—aim for payment before arrival.
- **Representative office:** local contact and language support without full entity setup.
- **Licensing:** can be cost-effective; ensure your company name is on certifications and documents.
- **Joint Venture (JV):** less common now, but may help access funding or special agreements.
- **WFOE:** easier than before, but costly—consider after trying other options.

Practical takeaway: Move up the commitment ladder only after validating demand and channel performance.

 [Test a web page from China](#)

 [Download "Routes to the Chinese markets" paper \(PDF\)](#)

Access to China — Routes to the Chinese markets

Last modified: v5.1 – 18 October 2026

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Hits: 16,951