# How to Select the Right Celebrity Endorser

By Wang Minmin, Deputy Director of Ipsos Connect GMU

Rio Olympics has just ended, but the craze on Olympic athletes has not yet faded. However, do you know that the microblog comments of "Wang Baoqiang Divorce" (10 billion pieces) once surpassed that of "Rio Olympics" during the Olympic Games? It is unprecedented that celebrity gossips should take away the limelight of the Olympic Games. Moreover, Chinese swimmer Fu Yuanhui's exclamation that "I have swum up to my potential" and the news on Ma Long and Zhang Jike, rather than the number of gold medals China won in Rio Olympics, became an Internet hit.

In a time overwhelmed with entertainment and socializing, the public pays far more attention to celebrities and stars than ever. Naturally, smart marketing experts never allow to let any opportunities go. While hyping these hot topics, they would always bring forth their own brands or LOGO as an effort of propaganda.

Now, it's time for us to calm down and reflect upon this question: how to select the right star spokesperson in marketing activities to maximize marketing results?

## Will stars and celebrities in an ad contribute to its performance?

According to the analysis of Ipsos Connect advertising database, 40% of the ads have used spokespersons. The analysis of over 2300 pieces of ads in pre-testing database indicates that ads with star spokesperson have slightly higher ad recall and persuasiveness index that those without, which is also consistent with our common sense that "Stars are eye-catching."

### Ad recall index

Having star spokesperson
106

Having no star spokesperson
104

### Ad persuasiveness index

Having star spokesperson
110

Having no star spokesperson
110

It doesn't mean that stars contribute little to ad performance. Rather, to ensure the success of an ad, they need to try more hard. It is no longer a time when a charming smile of stars can capture the hearts of consumers.

# How to select a suitable "star spokesperson"?

A star is usually the spokesperson of multiple ads or categories. Therefore, you should be cautious and try not to "busy yourself but merely benefit others" when choosing a star as your spokesperson. Then, what are the standards for selecting the right spokesperson?

01 Compared with the popularity of the star, one thing is more important: whether the star fits the brand. A better fit can lead to better performance of the ad.

02 In general, to be a good story, the leading role must be played by the brand, rather than the star him/herself. Instead of taking away the limelight of the brand, the star in the ad will "serve" the brand.

03 The popularity and recognition of a star vary with areas in China. Therefore, prior to choosing the right star, a brand needs to know how popular the star is in the target area.

04 The negative news or word of mouth of the star spokesperson will directly harm the brand image. So, the reputation and image of a star is essential!

Want to know which "stars" are your target audience's favorite "spokespersons"? Ipsos Connect RAPP star index will surely be helpful to you.

# Who are better, stars at home or abroad?

When looking for a spokesperson, many advertisers may encounter such a problem: Should I choose a star at home or abroad? Actually, one can not make simple judgment as regards the nationality of the star, as the nationality of many "domestic" stars is no longer China (just kidding).

Let us look at the database analysis first:

**58 74** Recognition

**33 36** Popularity

**34 37** How he/she fits the brand

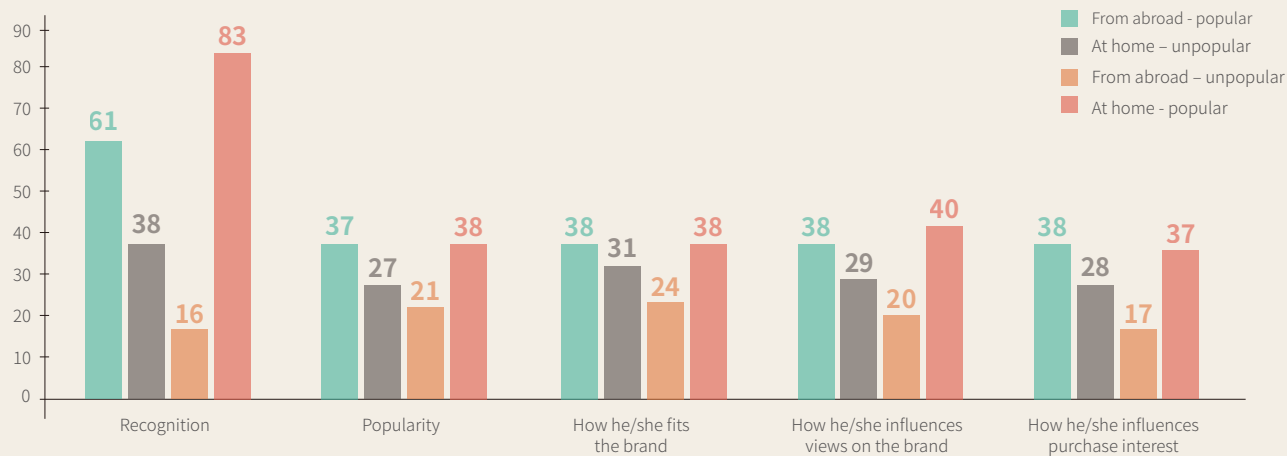**33 38** How he/she influences views on the brand

**31 35** How he/she influences purchase interest

■ Foreign star
■ Chinese star

As can be seen from the table, except for the gap in star recognition, namely, 16%, there is no significant difference in other pairs of KPI.

Next, let us take the perspective of **"popularity"**:

Legend:
- From abroad - popular
- At home – unpopular
- From abroad – unpopular
- At home - popular

Chart values by KPI:

| KPI | From abroad - popular | At home – unpopular | From abroad – unpopular | At home - popular |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Recognition | 61 | 38 | 16 | 83 |
| Popularity | 37 | 27 | 21 | 38 |
| How he/she fits the brand | 38 | 31 | 24 | 38 |
| How he/she influences views on the brand | 38 | 29 | 20 | 40 |
| How he/she influences purchase interest | 38 | 28 | 17 | 37 |

(Usually we consider popularity lower than 40% to be unpopular, and higher than 70%, popular)

The comparison shows that low popularity goes hand in hand with considerably lower recognition, how the star fits the brand, his/her influence on views of the brand and purchase interest than high popularity. However, the KPI (except recognition) of popular stars varies little with nationalities, indicating that nationality is not that essential in the selection of a star spokesperson.

# Will "high-profile" spokespersons be a guarantee of "sales"?

We know from above that nationality is not so important in the selection of a star spokesperson as "popularity".

**Then, will "high-profile" spokespersons be a guarantee of "sales"?**

| Popular | KPI | Unpopular |
|---|---|---|
| 77 | Recognition | 36 |
| 38 | Popularity | 26 |
| 38 | How he/she fits the brand | 28 |
| 39 | How he/she influences views on the brand | 25 |
| 38 | How he/she influences purchase interest | 24 |

The table reveals that the KPI of "high-profile" spokesperson is obviously higher than those "unpopular" ones, which also proves our common sense. But it does not mean "high-profile" is a "guarantee" to all!

**KPI**

| KPI | Low match - unpopular | High match - unpopular | Low match - popular | High match - popular |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Recognition | 8 | 34 | 85 | 89 |
| Popularity | 15 | 49 | 33 | 48 |
| How he/she fits the brand | 14 | 43 | 31 | 46 |
| How he/she influences views on the brand | 14 | 42 | 31 | 46 |

Legend:
- Low match - unpopular
- High match - unpopular
- Low match - popular
- High match - popular

When including "how star fits brand image"
(hereafter referred to as "match"),
we find that "popularity" is not the most important consideration.

**In case of low match, the performance of the ad can also be greatly reduced, even with high-profile star as the spokesperson.**

Actually, it may even be lower than that with "high match - unpopular" stars. However, the performance of the ad can be equally good, be it with "popular" or "unpopular" star spokesperson, as long as they are "high match". This is quite different from what we would always believe.

Our original question is whether "high-profile" stars are a guarantee of sales, however, given the difficulty to quantify the sales of different sectors and categories, the varied demands of a brand for spokespersons at different stages (to boost sales in a short period time, to perfect brand image, or to be more visible), as well as the different prices of endorsement, please notice that we can not simply define "a guarantee to sales".

## About Ipsos RAPP index:

Ipsos Connect Chinese team has launched RAPP index to assess the emotional driving capability of each candidate spokesperson from the aspect of recognition, attraction, presence and polarization. Through RAPP index, we can see the "List of Stars" in people of different genders, ages, income, and from different cities and occupations.

### Recognition
Do they know who he/she is?

### Attraction
Do the love it or hate him/her?

### Presence
Do they have an opinion about him/her?

### Polarization
Does everyone love or hate him/her?

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