

Welcome from Lesley Batchelor OBE, FIEEx (Grad) - Director General, Institute of Export & International Trade



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The first thing to be aware of when you are thinking of entering the Chinese market is that you are likely to need a long-term strategy to achieve success. You should do as much market research and planning as possible because many of the problems that businesses encounter when doing business in China can be avoided by carrying out some due diligence at the start of proceedings. This Doing Business in China Guide will help you to prepare to start trading with this dynamic market.

It is important to understand that China cannot be treated as one single market. Whilst China's population is becoming increasingly urban, there are nonetheless various different regional economies and economic hubs. You will therefore need to research the regional economic and cultural differences that could impact the success of your product and develop the right strategy for each market.

Before you try to enter the Chinese market, you'll need to know whether the market is open to you and if there are any restrictions. Certain sectors will be subject to UK controls and others to Chinese controls. In some sectors you may be able to set up a 100 per cent foreign-owned company while in others entry is possible only through a local partner – and in a few it won't be possible at all.

Furthermore, China also sets its own national rules around certification & standards. As such, you may even need to obtain a China Compulsory Certification (CCC) mark before you can export or sell certain goods into China.

It's no secret that doing business in China requires a different mindset from what we're used to for dealing with "western" markets. For instance, there is a stronger emphasis on respect and hierarchy compared to in UK business relationships. The Chinese believe in fostering meaningful long-term relationships and you'll need to understand that the concepts of "Mianzi" – i.e. the idea of saving face – and "Guanxi" – which roughly translates as "relationships" or "connections" – are a crucial part of business life in China.

Finally, in order to communicate effectively in China, it is essential to communicate in Chinese, so if you don't speak Chinese a good interpreter will be key to successful business relationships.

Despite its challenges, the Chinese market can be an extremely lucrative long term investment for British businesses and the Institute of Export & International Trade can help guide you through the intricacies of doing business in this dynamic country.

I wish you good luck and successful trading.

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