

2007 Global Brand (China) Summit
Brands' Competitiveness in the Context of Globalization
April 20-21, Shanghai, China
Conference Summary

The inaugural conference of the Center on Global Brand Leadership at Shanghai Jiaotong University (SJTU) was held April 20-21 in Shanghai, China. The theme of the conference was “Brands' Competitiveness in the Context of Globalization.” The conference, sponsored by Audi, was attended by over 200 executives as well as SJTU students and academics. The conference also enjoyed extensive press coverage in China. Center directors and featured speakers appeared on the show “Brain Storm” on the China Business Network the night before the conference where they discussed branding in China in front of a live studio audience.

The morning session on April 20 featured speeches from top business leaders and academics from China and around the world. The afternoon session included three panel sessions that addressed Chinese brands, international brands in China and emerging Chinese brands. The day concluded with an awards ceremony to recognize innovative, growing and increasingly competitive Chinese brands. A half-day session on April 21st showcased the best practices of the award winning brands.

After introductions from Chinese officials and University leaders on day one, Prof. Yu Mingyang, Director of the SJTU Center, delivered a keynote speech on the “Elevation of Brand Competitiveness of Chinese Businesses.” In his talk, Prof. Mingyang compared rising Chinese brands vs. established global brands to Chinese kung fu vs. U.S. boxing— noting that kung fu is more flexible than boxing and often uses “sneak attacks.” The key to successful Chinese branding, Mingyang argued, is to learn from Western companies but leverage Chinese distinctiveness.

Ralph Weyler, Board Member for Marketing and Sales, Audi AG, spoke about how Audi's brand history and promise are conveyed in different markets around the world. Weyler explained the importance of brand positioning in Audi's success in the Chinese market. He noted that the biggest success factors for the company were a superior product and the positive image of Audi drivers, but he stressed that the brand needs to be refined in the Chinese market to better suit Chinese culture. In the Q&A session, a member of the audience asked Mr. Weyler how he could convince him to switch from his Mercedes to Audi. Mr. Weyler happily gave the man his business card and said to call him to schedule a test drive.

Directors from partner Centers at Columbia Business School, University of Munich and Singapore Management University shared their perspectives on branding trends and their application in the Chinese market. Prof. Bernd Schmitt of Columbia Business School spoke on “Customer Experience Management,” addressing how Chinese brands can create experiences for consumers. Prof. Anton Meyer of the University of Munich spoke on the topic of “Branding in Europe.” In his talk, he gave examples of how European

brands have built themselves up over time and stressed that brand building in China is a long term investment for companies. In his speech “Reverse Brand Leap: From Action to Strategy,” Prof. John Davis of Singapore Management University stressed the importance of dispelling myths that brands are all about selling and promotions. He stated that branding must go beyond logos and slogans to address the culture and desired brand experiences of Chinese consumers.

The afternoon session featured three highly interactive panel discussions with top executives of Chinese and multinational companies. The first panel, moderated by Prof. Wang Fanghua, Dean at SJTU, and featuring senior executives from China’s largest dairy company and a top clothing designer, addressed “Internationalization of Chinese Brands.”

A panel on “Localization of International Brands,” was moderated by the Shanghai Center’s Executive Director Li Jie and included executives from multinational companies with extensive operations in China, including Honeywell, L’Oreal, Boeing and Unilever.

The final panel addressed “Growth of New Brands in the Context of Globalization.” Moderated by Mr. Yan Jiehua, Editor-in-Chief of Harvard Business Review China, top executives managing leading local Chinese brands discussed how Chinese brands could continue to grow and become globally recognized.

Day one of the conference concluded with an award ceremony, which recognized leading Chinese brands in four categories:

- Brand with the Greatest Potential Award
- Distinguished Brand Competitiveness Award
- Distinguished Brand Innovation Award
- The Golden Compass Award for Brand Leadership

The conference concluded on April 21 with a half-day session at Antai College of Economics and Management, SJTU. The session included video footage and talks by day one award recipients about how their brands have been successfully built over time. Mr. Wang Shaojie, Vice-Chairman, Ogilvy Group (Great China) gave the closing speech of the highly successful conference on “How Chinese Brands Go Global.”