



China's Samples Economy

2024


daxueconsulting



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1. Behind the craze for samples in China

China's samples economy is flourishing thanks to a conducive ecosystem

In China, the astonishing popularity of sample-sized products has given rise to a thriving samples economy which has not seen similar growth in the West. China's samples economy benefits from the unique circumstances listed below.

6 key drivers fueling the samples economy in China

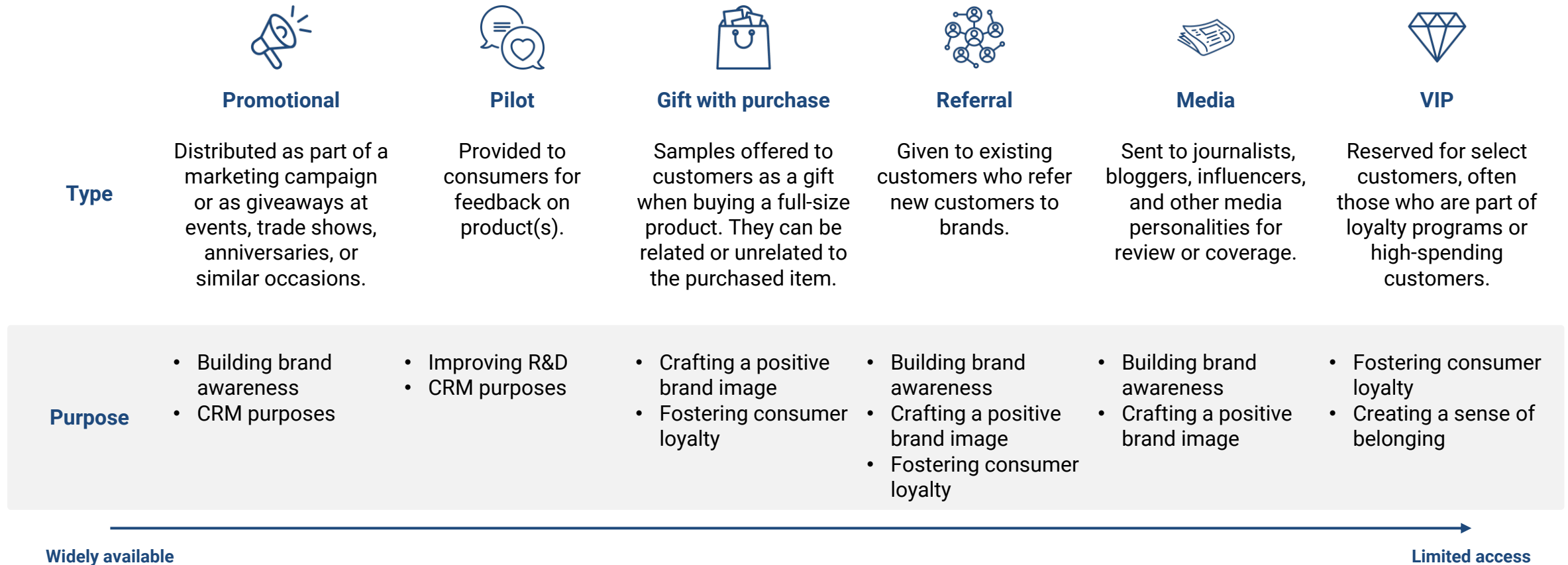
Logistics	China's delivery sector experienced fierce price competition, with many e-commerce platforms lowering the free-shipping minimum orders, making it advantageous to buy samples online without extra shipping costs.
Low brand loyalty	In 2024 Q1, 64% of Chinese consumers expressed willingness to switch brands, with Gen Z emerging as the least likely demographic to advocate for brands, turning samples into a great way to test new brands.
Novelty craze	Besides having low brand loyalty, Chinese consumers love trying new things. This has made samples popular, as they allow consumers to experiment with new products and try those advertised by KOLs with a low investment.
Consumption downgrade	Recent trends like consumption downgrade (消费降级), low-profile living (低配生活), minimalism (断舍离/极简主义), and low material desire (低物欲) have boosted the samples economy. As consumers aim to spend less and buy fewer items, they increasingly turn to samples to meet their needs.
Cute economy	Chinese consumers are drawn to cuteness, evident in the "Meng" (萌) culture, which favors cute and tiny designs. This preference translates into a willingness among many online users to invest in adorable and collectible items, further driving the popularity of samples.
Packaging size preferences	In product categories like skincare, makeup, perfumes, and snacks, Chinese consumers lean towards smaller, portable packaging for ease of use or consumption. This preference for compact sizes makes samples a convenient and attractive option for everyday use or consumption.

Sources: SCMP (2023), Chnbrand (2024), BCG (2023)

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to product sampling

Brands use samples for promotion, brand awareness, enhancing R&D, creating a positive brand image, and fostering consumer loyalty. However, product samples in China are evolving, they are becoming a packaging option rather than a promotion tactic, and brands will have to adapt to Chinese consumer preferences of directly purchasing sample-size items.

Main samples types and marketing purposes



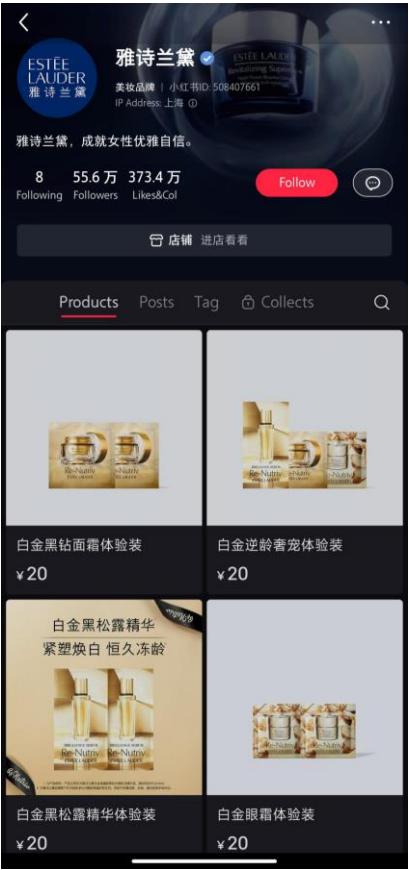
Chinese consumers will pay for samples, so brands now sell them directly

Chinese consumers' increasing appetite for samples has led to a market shift from free to purchasable samples. Previously, third parties often distributed them without the authorization from the brand, but more and more brands are now seizing the opportunity by directly selling samples themselves.

Samples' sales grew 4-fold in 4 years

- x4.3 Increase of online sales of sample-size products between 2019 and 2023
- 20% Drop in samples prices between 2019 and 2023

Source: JD (2023)

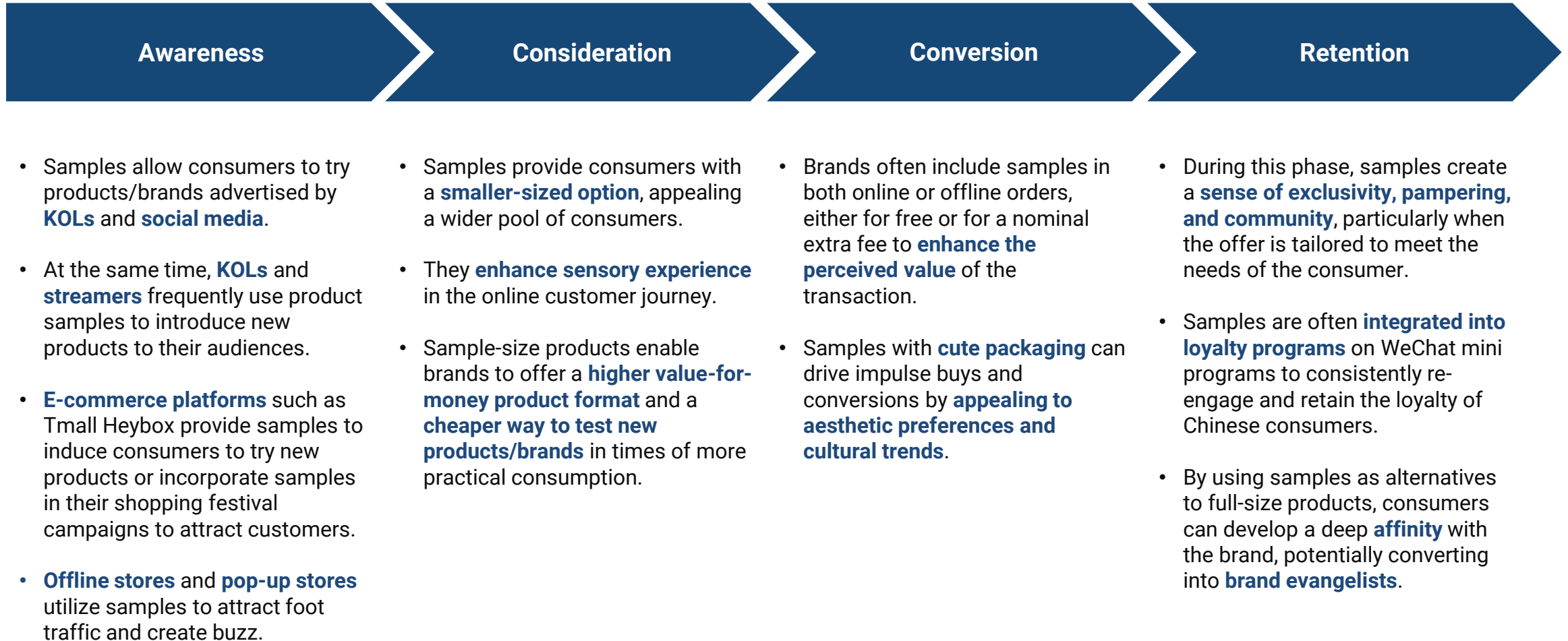


Estée Lauder and L'Occitane directly sell product samples on their e-commerce and social-commerce channels in China.

Image source: Xiaohongshu, Tmall

Product samples play a role in every phase of the marketing funnel

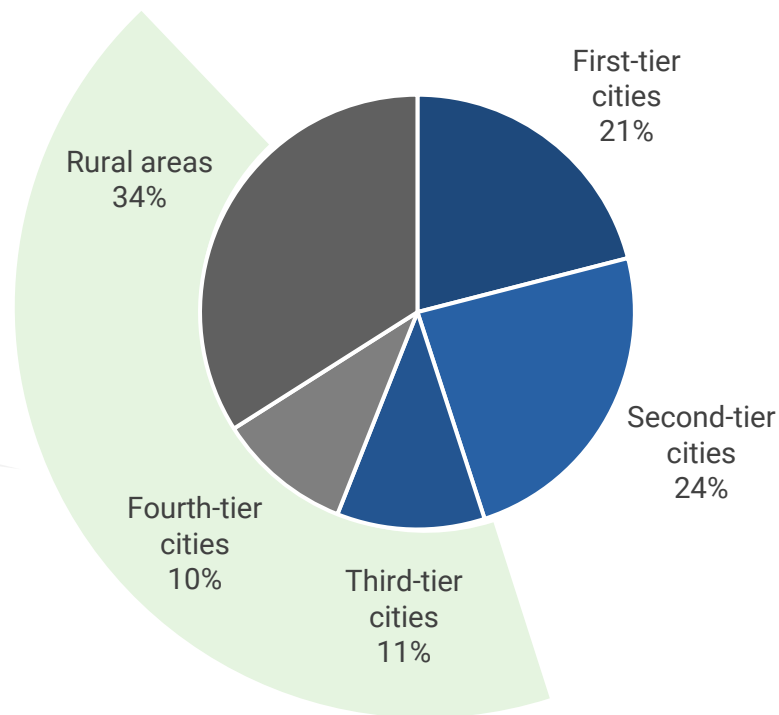
In an omnichannel market environment where customers interact with brands across multiple platforms and channels, the role of samples in the marketing funnel has to adapt and expand, offering various touchpoints for engaging potential customers.



Samples enhance brand awareness and penetration in lower-tier cities

Middle class consumers in lower-tier cities allocate more of their budget to daily consumption, along with a focus on practicality and convenience. They also tend to compare options before purchasing, suggesting a strong potential for the samples economy. Moreover, in lower-tier cities, samples fill the gap that offline stores do not reach.

2023H1 sample sales volume by city-tier



Sales in Tier-3 and lower-tier cities exhibited a remarkably high growth during 2023H1, of 42%, 45%, and 73%, respectively.

Over 70% of consumers in lower-tier cities prioritize firsthand product experiences, often comparing options through personal trials and seeking information from friends, online reviews.

Indeed, unlike Tier-1 and Tier-2 cities, consumers in these markets **are more prone to compare brands and prioritize convenience** over brand loyalty.

Source: Accenture (2022)

Tier-3 and -4 cities are projected to see the largest rise in middle-class and above population, with around **47%** of that demographic residing in these cities.

Source: BCG (2023)

Source: JD (2023)

Luxury brands' targeted strategies to avoid brand dilution

Luxury brands prioritize giving away samples for free over selling them, opting for methods that preserve exclusivity and perceived value while ensuring targeted distribution. This approach maintains brand integrity and encourages deeper customer engagement.

1 Brand activation campaigns

Luxury brands distribute promotional samples during brand activation campaigns, such as pop-up stores, events or co-branding initiatives, to engage with consumers.



2 Holiday sets

During holidays, luxury brands often sell blind box sets featuring sample-sized products. For instance, advent calendars have become increasingly popular in China in recent years.



3 Gift-with-purchase

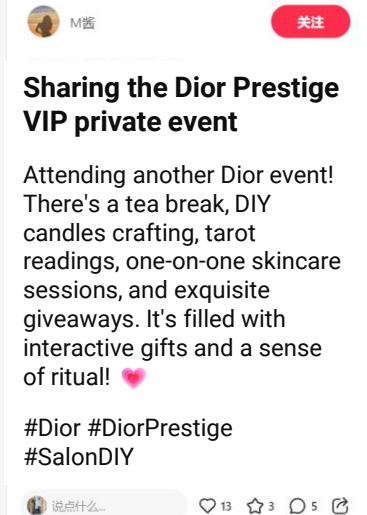
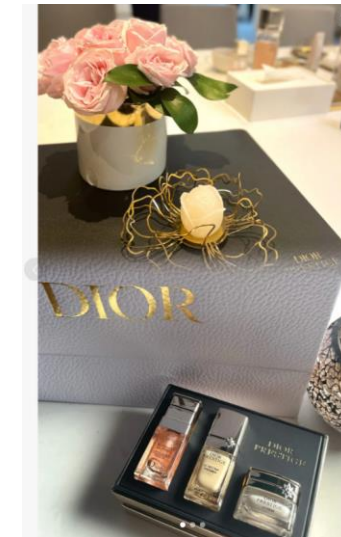
Offering samples as gifts with purchase ensures a better targeted samples distribution and encourages higher spending.

4 Loyalty programs

Brands sell or give away for free sample sets to members of their loyalty programs, promoting exclusivity, engagement, and encouraging repeat purchases.

5 VIP gifts

Luxury brands often reserve samples of some of their products for exclusive events like VIC gatherings, maintaining exclusivity by controlling access and ensuring targeted distribution.

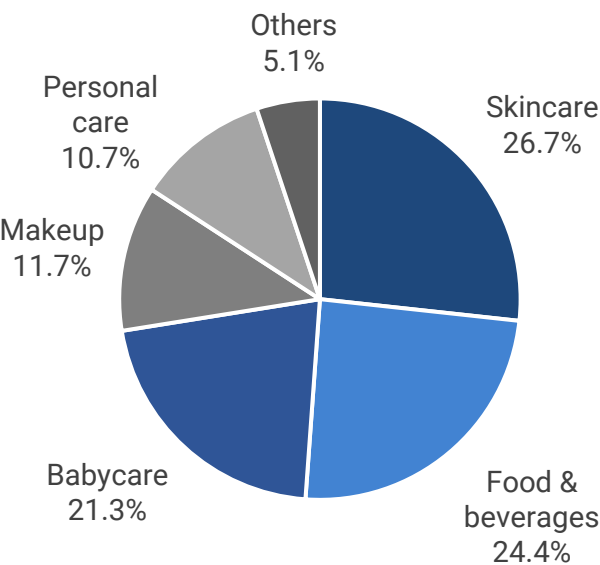


2. Sample category sizing and trends

Skincare, F&B, and baby care are dominating the conversations on samples

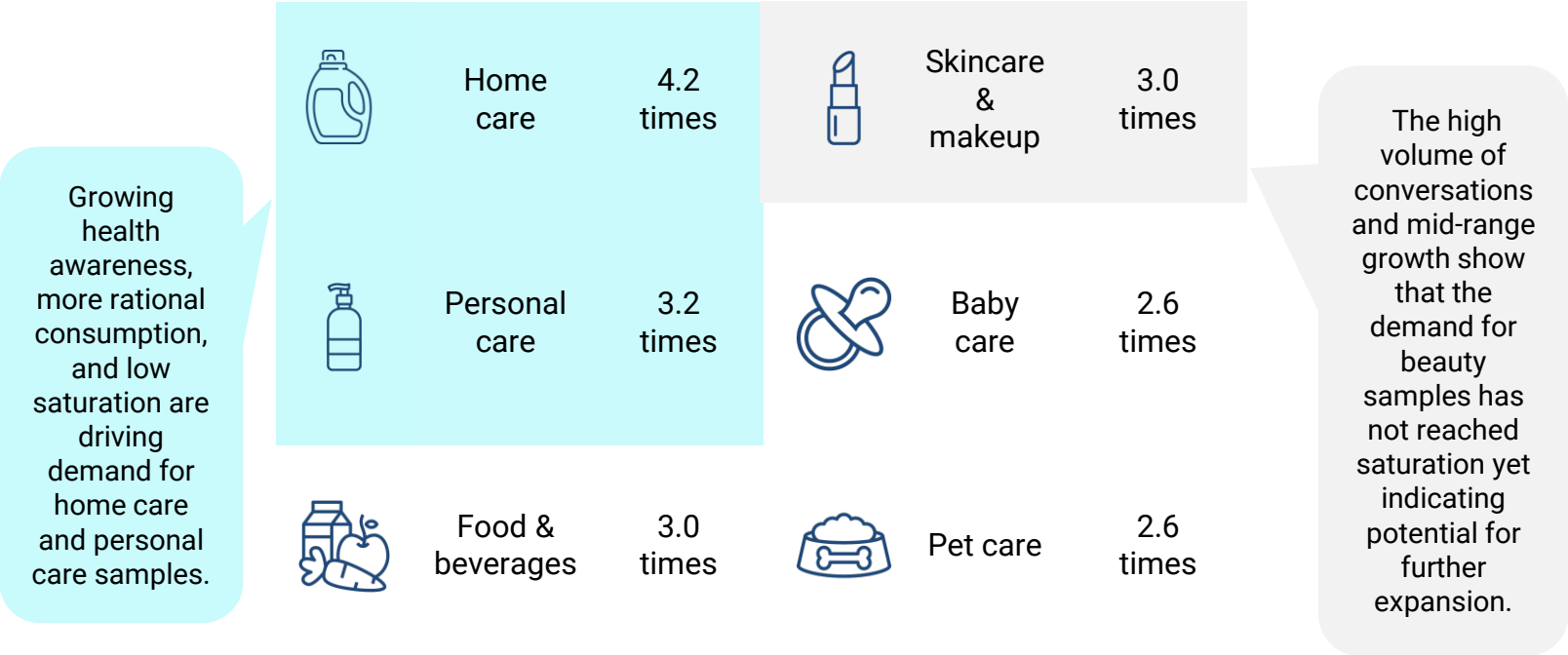
China's samples economy boasts impressive diversity across industries and product categories, extending beyond beauty products to include sectors like baby care and food & beverages.

What are the most discussed sample categories on social media?
2023 Jan - 2023 Oct



Data source: Daxue Consulting social listening analysis

Growth in the number of sample products in each category
(H1 2019- H1 2023)



Source: JD (2023)

Beauty: Samples help consumers address pain points

Beauty samples empower consumers to explore new products and find the best fit for their skin type and tone at minimal cost. They address issues related to frequent changes in skincare routines, cater to entry-level and busy consumers, and provide a portable option for always looking impeccable.

Top 5 most mentioned skincare samples

Jan 2023 – Oct 2023

Top 5 most mentioned makeup samples

Jan 2023 – Oct 2023

As serums contain the highest concentration of active ingredients and are often the most expensive skincare product, consumers want to ensure they suit their needs and skin type before making a purchase.

Serums **21.4%**

21.4%

Face creams **15.1%**

15.1%

Face masks **10.3%**

10.3%

Toner/lotion **8.5%**

8.5%

Sunscreen 8.4%

8.4%

Foundation **25.3%**

25.3%

Makeup removal **11.8%**

11.8%

Primer **10.1%**

10.1%

Lipstick 9.6%

9.6%

Eye shadow 3.8%

3.8%

Samples that include more than one color are often highly appreciated, as they allow consumers to test various shades and find the best fit. Moreover, makeup samples are attractive to consumers with minimal needs.

66

Daily Advice | Buying foundation samples is enough!!

(...) I used to wear makeup all the time back then—literally my peak makeup days. (...) Even with all that, I still had so much left over after it expired! Then, I started buying foundation samples on Tmall. (...) I rarely wear makeup now. (...) I just checked my shopping records and realized that I haven't even finished a small sample in three years—how funny! The best part is you can try high-end brands easily!

66

Hidden gem oil serum, will definitely repurchase!

I got totally hooked on this Hanaumi oil serum thanks to a recommendation from a Xiaohongshu blogger! I started with a sample and didn't expect much, but wow—I'm obsessed! Wish I'd found it sooner! Having sensitive skin means I have to be super careful with products. This brand focuses on sensitive skins, so I decided to give their serum a try. It's so comfortable, super light, and absorbs quickly. (...) Since I started using it, all my other oil serums are just sitting unused, lol.

Data source: Daxue Consulting social listening analysis, percentages correlate to portion of conversations about samples on the topic

F&B: Coffee bean samples won the heart of Chinese consumers

As coffee consumption spreads in China, consumers are actively seeking information on coffee types, flavors, brewing methods, and brands. The online popularity of trial-size coffee products is noteworthy, witnessing a remarkable 142.39% year-on-year increase between January and October 2023.

Most mentioned F&B product samples

Jan 2023 – Oct 2023



Coffee 7.9%



Tea 6.3%



Soft drinks 5.2%



Image source: Xiaohongshu

The coffee craze in China has led to the emergence of coffee bean samples. These samples not only allow consumers to try them out but also cater to Chinese consumers' desire for variety and exploration, enabling them to experiment and change more frequently. Sophisticated coffee connoisseurs can also try sought-after, high-quality beans to make hand drip coffee at home.

Related hashtags

- #咖啡豆推荐 #coffee bean recommendations (170 million views)
- #咖啡豆分装 #coffee bean samples (270 thousand views)
- #咖啡豆小样 #coffee bean samples (31 thousand views)

Data source: Daxue Consulting social listening analysis

Baby care: Classy mums (精致妈妈) trailblaze sales of baby care samples

Despite the declining birthrate between 2016 and 2023, China's maternity and childcare sector grew to around RMB 4 billion in 2022. This growth was fueled by consumers' focus on quality, higher spending per child, and new needs, driven by health and safety awareness. Sample sales of maternity and childcare items are also on the rise.

Most mentioned baby care product samples

Jan 2023 – Oct 2023



Diapers **29.7%**

While sample-size packs of diapers and baby formulas are used to find the one that better fits one's baby's needs, maternity pads and disposable changing pads samples are mainly bought for convenience.



Baby formula **16.2%**



Maternity pads **8.9%**

When it comes to maternity pads, it's difficult for a new mom to utilize all the pads contained in a large pack. Many find it more reasonable to buy samples.



Disposable changing pads **8.5%**

Moreover, sample-size packs are an ideal option for travel, hospital stays, and post-partum recovery (坐月子).

Between 2016 and 2022, the percentage of **maternity and childcare items purchased online** rose significantly,

from 22.6% to 34.6%

This rise in online shopping makes samples even more important for ensuring the right product choice.

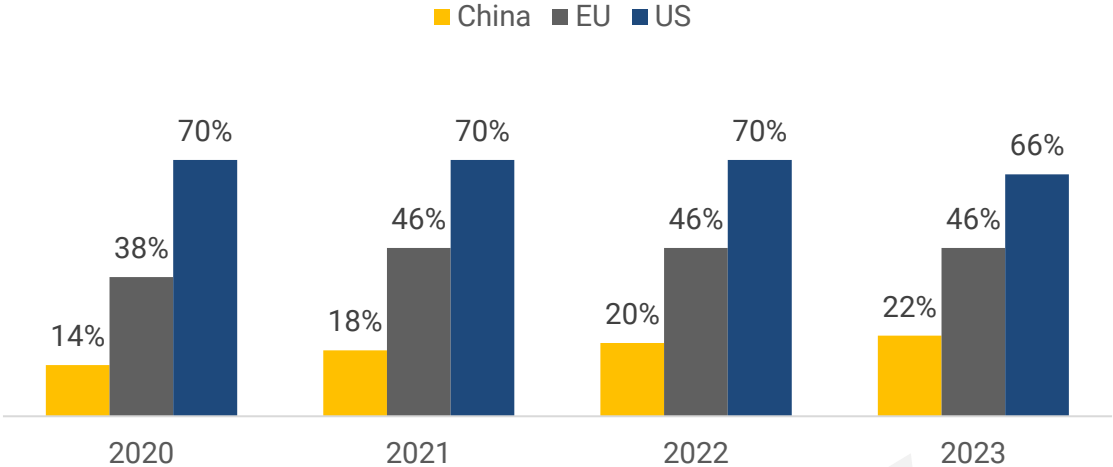
Source: iResearch (2023)

Data source: Daxue Consulting social listening analysis

New category: Growing pet craze drives samples of pet food and supplements

With the rising number of singles opting to raise pets, the sales of pet food samples, particularly cat food, are on the rise. The growing popularity of independent yet cute and insta-worthy pet cats has contributed to this trend, with their numbers reaching 69.8 million—an increase of 6.8% from 2022—outpacing the growth of dog owners.

2020-2023 pet household penetration rate in China, the US, and the EU



Source: iiMedia (2023), APPA, FEDIAF

Declining marriage and fertility rates, the rising cost of raising child, and the shift from functional to emotional pet ownership are driving the growth of the pet economy in China. Although pet ownership in China has not yet reached the levels seen in the US, there's still significant potential for growth.

Top 3 pet care sample products by sales growth
2019H1–2023H1

- 1. Cat snacks x16
- 2. Pet supplements x12
- 3. Dry cat food x3

Source: JD (2023)



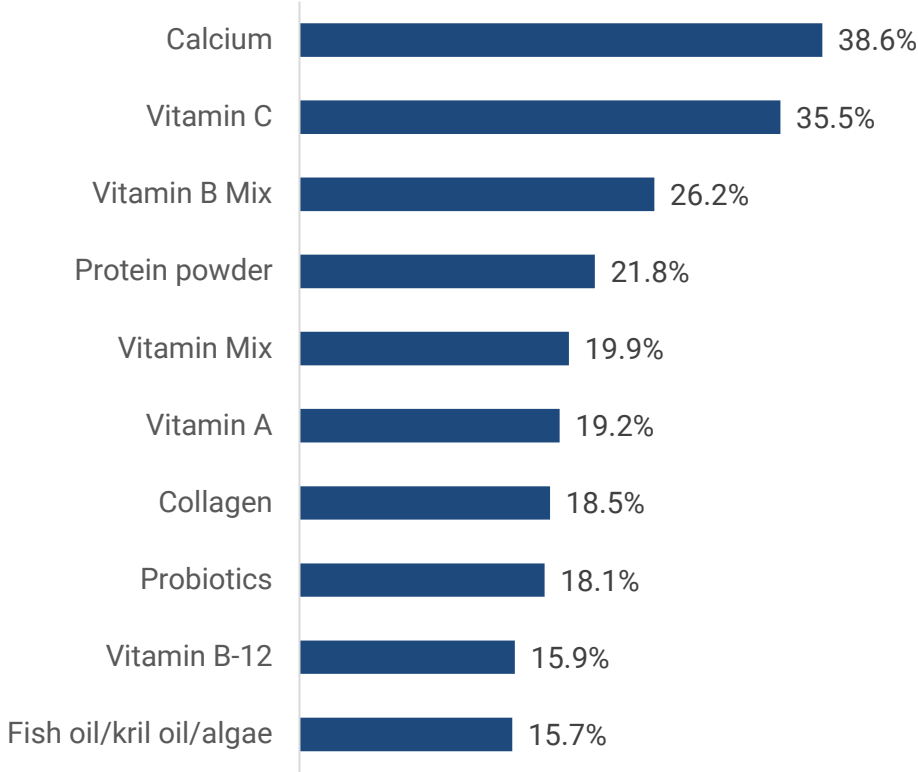
Cat food samples dominated pet care-related social media conversations from January to October 2023, mainly because cats can be pickier eaters than dogs. Owners want to make sure their furry friends like the food before buying a big pack. Some (especially students) also look for samples as a **cheaper** way to feed their cats.

Data source: Daxue Consulting social listening analysis

New category: Dietary supplements samples sales rose 4-fold in ten months

Online conversations surrounding supplements samples experienced a notable surge between January and October 2023, marking a substantial fourfold increase compared to the previous ten months.

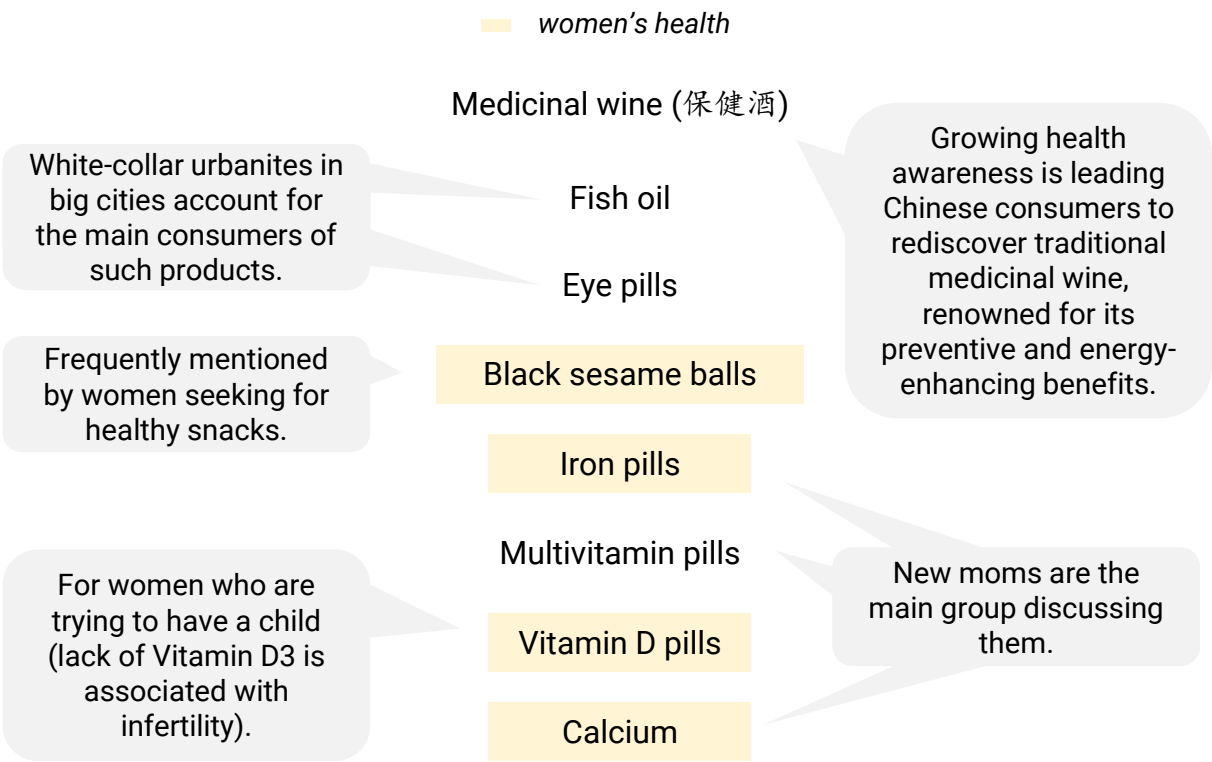
Top 10 most popular supplements in China in 2023
(N=1,000)



Source: Daxue Consulting survey (2023)

Most mentioned supplements samples

Jan 2023 – Oct 2023



Data source: Daxue Consulting social listening analysis

3. Chinese samples consumer habits



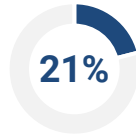
Beyond testing, daily use and collecting drives sample sales

The predominant reason for consumers purchasing product samples is trying out new products before making full-sized purchases. An emerging trend sees samples being utilized as daily alternatives and sought-after collectibles, further driving the demand for samples.



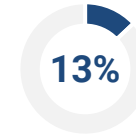
Testing

Many people purchase samples to try out new products and determine their suitability before committing to full-sized purchases.



Daily alternative

Consumers increasingly opt for cost-effective and convenient samples (especially when it comes to beauty) for daily use, prioritizing variety and flexibility in their routines over full-size products.



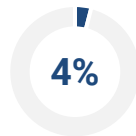
Convenience

Samples offer a convenient and portable option, ideal for travel or incorporating into busy lifestyles, highlighting their practical appeal.



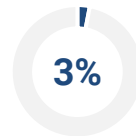
Collection

Collecting cute samples has become a hobby, showcasing their allure beyond functionality.



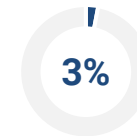
Curiosity

Consumers seek samples to explore new brands and products out of curiosity, often driven by KOL endorsements.



Gifting

Samples are seen as convenient and practical gifts for both oneself and friends, because of their versatility appeal.



Refill

Consumers purchase samples as refills for their favorite products, converting them into a cost-effective solution.

Data source: Daxue Consulting social listening analysis, percentages correlate to portion of conversations about samples on the topic

Why sample-size products make their way into daily routines

Some Chinese consumers prefer using sample-sized products as alternatives to purchasing full-sized ones due to their convenience, ease of changing products frequently, and appropriate product volume. This trend is particularly evident in beauty but is also popular in categories such as baby care, personal care, and perfumes, among others.

Why Chinese consumers prefer sample-size products



Budget-friendly & convenient

Sample-sized products provide consumers with a cost-effective alternative to full-size options, offering affordability and convenience for on-the-go use.



Flexibility

Sample products cater to Chinese novelty-seeking consumers, enabling them to continually experiment with new items and easily switch brands/products.



Light needs

Sample-sized products are perfect for those who find full-size options too bulky. They offer just the right amount, fitting seamlessly into minimalistic lifestyles and lighter needs.



I really like buying samples

*I really love Taobao's "U先试用" section
Most of the samples there are from flagship stores
After buying a lot, I found it's even cheaper than buying full-sized products
Especially foundation, since I can never finish a full-sized version
If I don't like one of the samples, I can just throw it away without feeling guilty*

@mayliii



Life hack: perfume samples are more than enough!!!!

You can never finish a full-sized bottle! A 10ml sample can last a long time, and it's cost-effective, so you won't feel bad when buying it. The best part is that you can stock up on different scents, and it's convenient to carry in your bag when you go out~

@千禧香馆



Wow, I never realized 5ml could be so much!

Never buying full-size again. Bought a sample of foundation, picked the wrong shade, so I might as well swatch it all! Turns out 5ml is actually enough. For someone who doesn't wear makeup often, full-size products are pricey and expire before finishing them. Using samples instead seems like a great idea!

Sisters, let's embrace this mindset.

@D姑娘早安

Posts source: Xiaohongshu

Samples allow consumers to always have their favorite products

Sample-sized products provide practical and convenient solutions for travel, office use, hospital stays, and everyday outings, meeting the needs of young urbanites, while also indicating a strong need for more compact packaging in a range of product categories.





春娇不娇

关注

I'm the kind of person who carries a whole bottle of foundation with her every day

The ultra-mini foundation bottle is my favorite among all foundation samples. Paired with a mini foundation brush, it's really convenient.

Foundation: MAC Studio Fix Fluid Foundation 1.6ml

Brush: Included into Chanel Bubble Foundation Sample

#MiniCosmetics

 评论

 9404

 2437

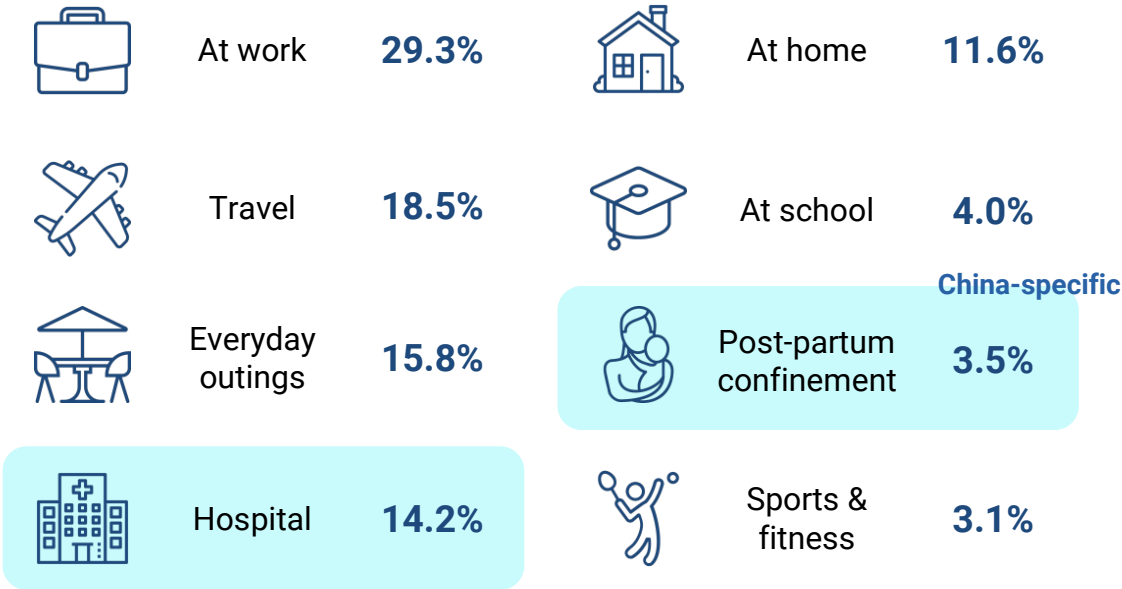
 940



Images source: Xiaohongshu

Most mentioned occasions when consumers need product samples

Jan 2023 – Oct 2023



Private hospitals can be key spots for distributing product samples.

Data source: Daxue Consulting social listening analysis, percentages correlate to portion of conversations about samples on the topic

Craze for cuteness converts miniature products into sought-after collectibles

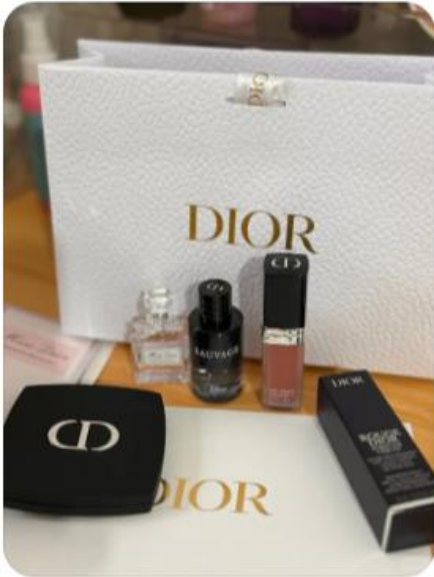
Miniature products are prized for their cuteness and attract a pool of consumers eager to collect them. In some cases, consumers buy full-sized products solely to obtain the accompanying gift-for-purchase sample.



In China, cuteness is a powerful marketing tool, captivating consumers' attention, driving sales, and giving rise to the emergence of the "萌" (cute) economy.

There is a segment of consumers who purchase beauty product samples mainly due to their cute and charming packaging. Enthusiasts are even buying full-sized products **solely to add the adorable samples to their collections.**

The samples which appeal to these consumers are miniature versions of full-sized products, often referred to as Q-versions (Q版). Originating from the manga and anime world, this term used to indicate action figures and cartoonized miniature characters. The letter "Q" sounds similar to the English word "cute".



Bought a lipstick for the accompanying gift!



fyiue

♡ 473



Who is using such lovely sample-sized perfumes?



APINK | 贩卖香喷喷

♡ 1148



It's not that I can't afford the full-size product, it's that the Q-version has higher value-for money



哒哒香氛福利社

♡ 376

Images source: Xiaohongshu

Consumers find refilling with samples more cost-effective than buying new ones

Online discussions about netizens using samples to refill their empty full-sized products are more common than one might expect. In fact, due to the low cost of delivery, purchasing many samples, especially through unofficial channels, can be cheaper than buying a new product.



玥小喵

关注

You guys always say that samples are small

After 4 months of effort, I've finally managed to refill a bottle of eye cream.
Six 2ml samples perfectly filled up the 15ml regular bottle.
Though there might still be a few air bubbles inside, I believe this amount should be enough.

While some argue that samples are too small, I can't help but wonder if it's because it's tricky to squeeze out all the cream from the tube. With samples in jar, I can scrape them clean, even using the leftover residue on my feet and neck.

说点什么...

34 6 58



Videos showing how to use samples to refill empty full-size products are popular on Douyin.

Images source: Xiaohongshu, Douyin

Sample gift boxes offer a cost-effective gift without compromising prestige

Sample gift boxes are praised for their convenience and affordability, ideal for both self-enjoyment and gifting. They provide a low-cost access to high-end products at a fraction of the cost and allow for exploration of many cute and fancy items. Moreover, they cater to all consumer needs, from trying out products to seeking daily alternatives.



花花

关注

Who spent RMB 800 on a set of mini samples? Oh, it's me.

Recently, I've been really obsessed with Diptyque perfumes. After doing a lot of research and seeing everyone's varied opinions on the scents, I was especially worried about picking the wrong one. So, I ordered a classic set of eau de toilette minis—five 7.5ml samples.

They weren't cheap: I could have almost bought a 100ml full-size bottle with a bit more money. But I wanted to try all the scents, and as a socially anxious person, I really didn't want to go to the store to test them. So, I bought the set. As it turns out, each scent is quite unique.

说点什么...

33 15 56



阿业的酒水日记

关注

The most viral mini liquor gift box of 2023, featuring 17 bottles of baijiu

The most popular gift box of 2023 has arrived! Chinese mini baijiu gift box including 17 mini bottles of baijiu

It's simply stunning, exuding luxury and elegance. Featuring top Chinese liquor brands such as Maotai, Fenjiu, Wuliangye, Shuijingfang, Gujing Gong, Luzhou Laojiao, Shedao, Langjiu, Dongjiu, and more.

Ideal as a gift for bosses, elders, fathers-in-law, parents, as well as for display and collection purposes. Absolutely perfect, beautiful.

说点什么...

594 348 488

Images source: Xiaohongshu, Douyin

Packaging matters when it comes to samples

In China's mature samples economy, samples are much more than just product trials. As a result, consumers are picky about packaging, favoring miniatures and sample sets over sachets and basic samples.

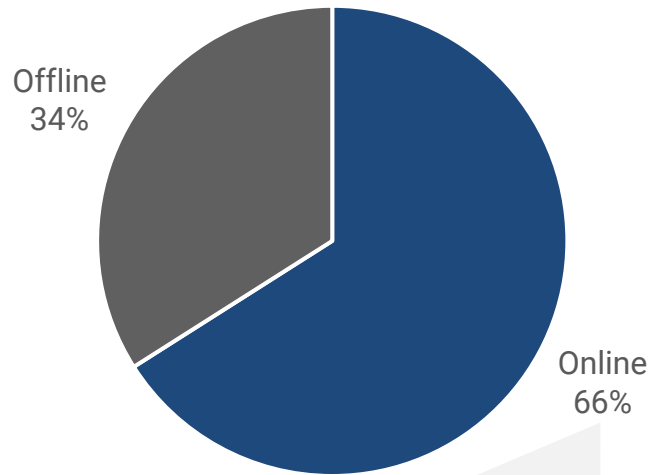
	Sachet/small samples	Deluxe sample	Miniature/travel size	Sample set
				
% of discussions	3%	5%	11%	81%
Description	Small single-use packet	Larger than standard sample size	Small-scale version of full-size product, ideal for travel	Collection of multiple samples
Advantages	Easy to carry and hygienic due to their single-use nature	Allows for extended product testing	Convenient, big enough, and the best-looking	Provides variety for testing multiple products. Good as gift
Disadvantages	Small amount, Single-use	Low value-for-price	It can be pricey	Possible mismatch between samples and user preferences/needs
% of positive comments	14%	16%	19%	51%

3. Sample distribution channels

Vending machines and duty-free are the fastest-growing channels for samples

Online platforms account for two-thirds of sample distribution, while offline flagship stores emerge as the single most popular channel, followed by social commerce and marketplaces. Conversations overlapping samples with vending machines and duty-free stores increased by over 5 times and 3 times, respectively, during the first 10 months of 2023.

How users obtained their samples, as discussed online
(Jan 2023 – Oct 2023)

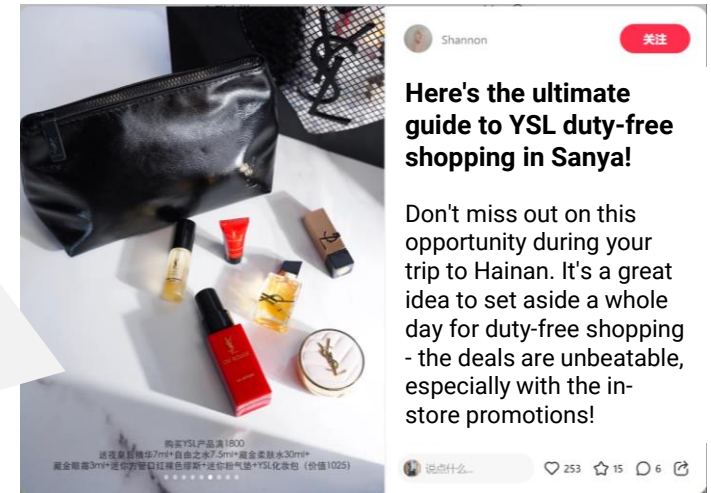


Brand.com emerges as the fastest-growing online channel, driven by brands changing their not-for-sale policy and growing concerns about counterfeit samples spreading online.

x5.5 times posts mentioning samples vending machines between January and October 2023 compared to the previous 10 months.



With the establishment of the Hainan Free Trade Zone, duty-free has become a key channel for luxury sales. This is also reflected in the realm of samples, with a **3.7-fold increase** in posts mentioning duty-free stores samples compared to the previous 10 months.



Data source: Weibo, Xiaohongshu, Douyin

Images source: Xiaohongshu

Harmay's woes highlights need for official samples sales channels

The warehouse-style new retail brand Harmay (話梅) both surfed and fostered the samples economy in China, meeting the burgeoning demand for beauty samples among young consumers. Nevertheless, the scarcity of authorized samples and reliable sourcing channels poses a significant obstacle to this business model's sustainability.



Image source: Harmay

Initially born as an online store on Taobao, the multi-brand cosmetics retailer Harmay turned beauty samples into one of its core businesses.

The chain currently operates 11 offline stores in 8 cities in China.

Harmay is famous for selling samples of international beauty and perfume brands at bargain prices.

However, in 2022, the multi-brand retailer was fined by the Shanghai Municipal Administration for Market Regulation over RMB 800k for lacking essential information on sample labels.

This incident underscored the potential risks associated with selling and purchasing samples sourced from unofficial channels and engaging in grey zone business practices.

Currently, the demand for product samples exceeds supply, increasing the likelihood of encountering potentially counterfeit or ambiguously sourced samples.



肖丞echo (上海ver.)

关注

Gosh, Harmay is so cheap!

After browsing around, I feel like I've been such a loser for always buying full-priced items...

Not only is there a wide variety of products, but there are also many samples available. It's so convenient to buy samples.

There are even products that are consistently 60% off.

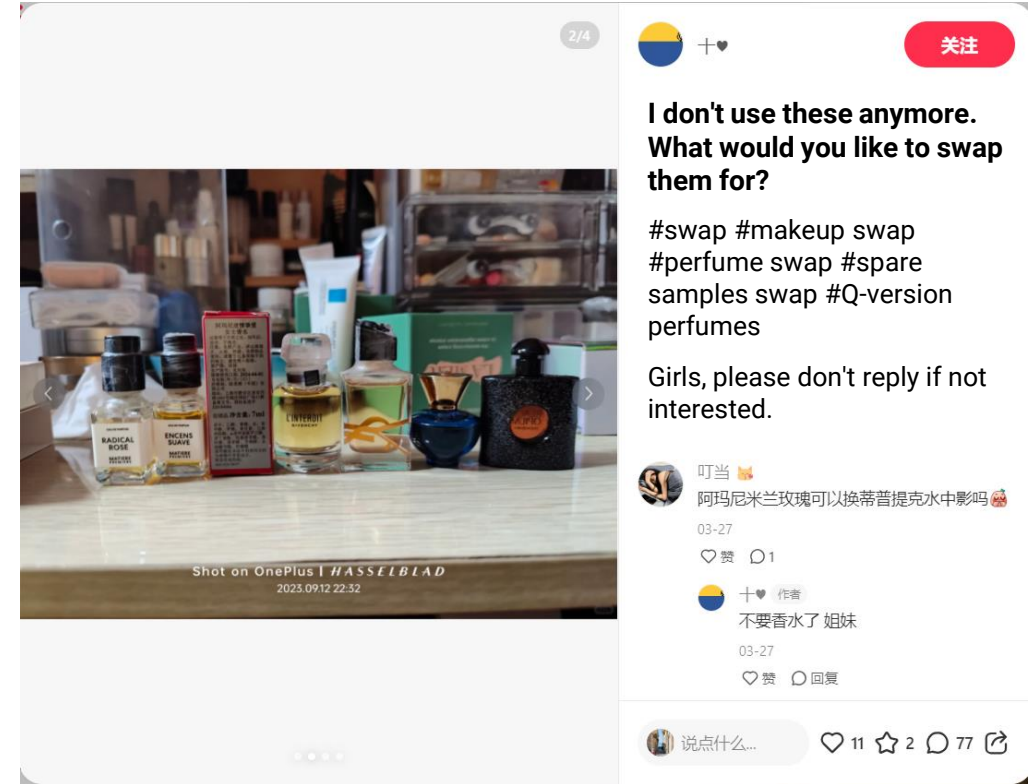
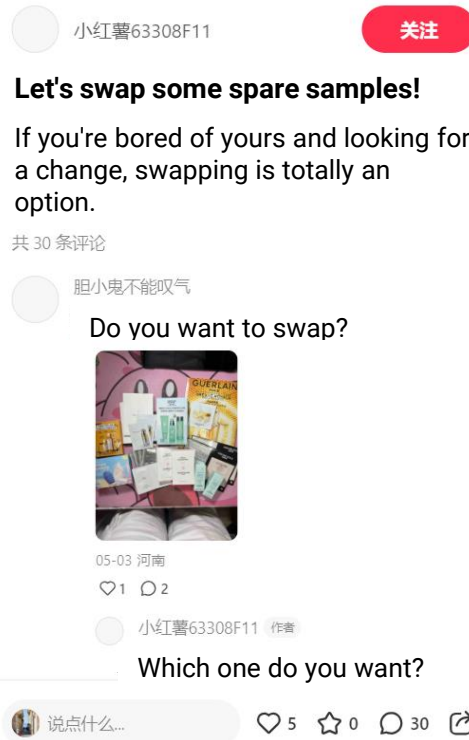
They even have brands I frequently buy, like Maison Margiela and Avène.

No wonder everyone grabs a basket when they come in. It's impossible to resist buying!

Even though Harmay accounts for just 1% of social media posts about samples, Chinese consumers instinctively associate its name to beauty samples.

Sample swaps highlight increasing demand for personalized sample offers

Chinese social media users are open to exchanging samples that don't align with their preferences, reflecting an untapped demand for tailored free samples to match customers' purchasing histories and habits. 5% of sample-related social media posts refer to swapping.



Images source: Xiaohongshu

Between January and October 2023, posts about sample swaps surged by 102% compared to the previous period. Swappers seek to exchange samples they no longer like, won't use, or have too many of, potentially expiring before use. They typically switch samples via delivery, searching for ones that better suit their preferences.

Though niche, hotels are an important distribution channel for high-end samples

Distributing branded sample-size products through hotels enables better consumer segmentation, facilitates reaching a broader consumer base, and leverages the hotel's reputation to enhance the brand's exclusivity. This win-win approach preserves consumers' sense of ritual, creates a memorable experience, and helps both brands and hotels stand out from the crowd.



炸鱼尾.俏生活

关注

I love every hotel providing LE LABO complimentary toiletries like Edition and Park Hyatt

Compared to the one in Edition hotels, I still prefer the Santal 33 scent, as it makes me feel like at home.

Pros of the Park Hyatt in Beijing: Close to Xinerongji, near to Guomao for shopping.

Cons: Average view (perhaps not to blame on Park Hyatt).



说点什么...

♡ 82

☆ 12

💬 13



Image source: Xiaohongshu

Providing branded samples in hotels is a win-win strategy



Maintaining a sense of ritual

Sample-size products enable guests to continue their skincare or grooming routines away from home, promoting a sense of comfort and continuity during their travels.



Creating a memorable experience

Incorporating sample-size products into a hotel stay elevates the experience, fostering and completing a sense of luxury and pampering.



Extended branding exposure

When offering branded sample-size products in hotel rooms, guests are likely to take these items home, prolonging their engagement and interactions with the brand over several days.

Goals satisfied

Showcase brand value



Tap into new consumer base



Gain validity in new market

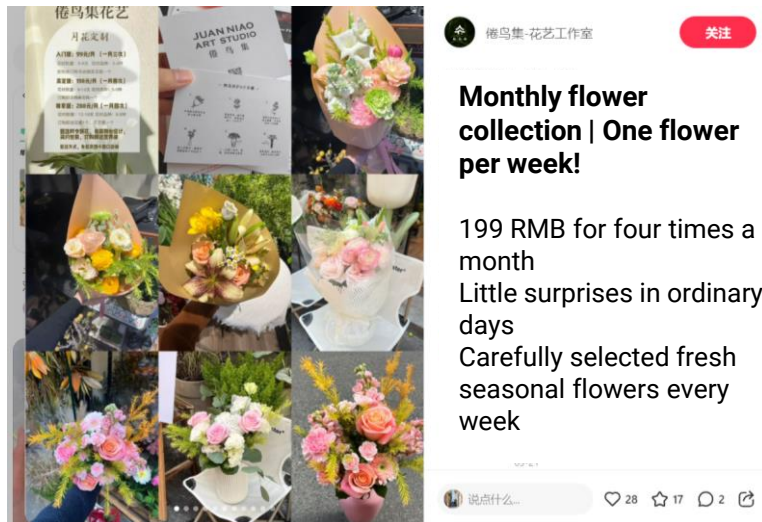


Commitment, value, and efficacy doubts hinder beauty sample subscriptions

Chinese consumers' appetite for novelty fueled a craze for blind boxes across many industries. However, while flower subscriptions thrive, beauty sample subscription boxes face structural challenges.

China's blind box economy leaped from RMB 2.3 billion in 2015 to roughly **RMB 15 billion in 2022**, recording a **x5 growth** in 7 years.

The blind box craze impacted a wide range of industries, from **beauty** to **F&B** and **travel**. Recently, **flower subscription-based blind boxes** have quietly gained momentum online, offering consumers the opportunity to receive fresh bouquets on a weekly basis.



Subscription-based beauty sampling programs have yet to gain traction in China

Despite the popularity of blind boxes, there are some factors hampering the success of beauty samples subscription boxes, such as:

1. Longer minimum subscription periods
2. Uncertain value-for-money
3. Concerns about skin sensitivity or allergies
4. Lack of personalization in a market where efficacy is paramount

With 45k followers on Xiaohongshu and 31k fans on Douyin, Nikibox stands out as one of the most popular beauty sample blind box subscriptions in the country. To overcome challenges inherent to this model, Nikibox reveals some of the items within the blind box and their price points in advance, and it offers consumers some degree of choice.



4. Hypotheses on the future of China's samples economy



Hypotheses on the future of the samples economy in China

1. The direct-purchasing of sample-sized products indicates a need for smaller packaging and product volume which could cause beauty brands to adapt their China strategy accordingly.
2. Brands will reclaim their potential for samples by selling them through their own channels.
3. Daigous (代购) and unregulated trading will rise as a threat to brands image.
4. We will start seeing IP collabs and limited-edition sample-sized products.
5. Samples will become a key aspect of brands' strategies in non-Tier-1 cities.
6. Big data and CRM will enable tailored sample strategies, enhancing engagement.
7. Sample packaging will become more sophisticated and convenient, driven by increasing consumer demand for practicality and aesthetic appeal.
8. Chinese consumers' appetite for niche brands and products will further boost the samples economy.



ABOUT


daxueconsulting

Daxue Consulting in 6 characteristics

- 1 A China-origin growth-centric advisory firm helping companies uncover hidden opportunities in East Asia
- 2 700 projects since 2012, 60% from returning clients
- 3 Research-intensive strategy consulting
- 4 40+ strong globally-educated multi-cultural team with local understanding of each target country
- 5 50,000+ mentions of our work on the internet
- 6 We are creatively analytical and analytically creative

Our mission is to help companies uncover and harness hidden opportunities in uncharted territory

A large, detailed image of a traditional Chinese temple roof with ornate blue and gold decorations, featuring a dragon sculpture on the ridge. The image is split diagonally, with the top-left corner being white and the bottom-right corner being blue. The text 'SS' and 'the' are visible on the white background.

What we do

STRATEGIC RESEARCH

- ✓ Pricing
- ✓ Competitive Benchmarking
- ✓ Sensory (Taste & Test)
- ✓ Consumer Understanding
- ✓ Market Sizing
- ✓ Trends Report
- ✓ Brand Audit

BRANDING & STRATEGY

- ✓ Naming
- ✓ Brand Book
- ✓ Brand Positioning
- ✓ Brand Activation
- ✓ Toolkit
- ✓ Co-branding Strategy
- ✓ China Messaging Strategy Localization

SALES & DISTRIBUTION

- ✓ Route-to-market
- ✓ Distribution Mapping
- ✓ Brand Activation
- ✓ Toolkit
- ✓ Retail Safari
- ✓ Channels Strategy

MANAGEMENT CONSULTING

- ✓ Market Entry Strategy
- ✓ Business Plan
- ✓ Learning Expedition
- ✓ PMO
- ✓ Growth Models
- ✓ Prospective And Foresight
- ✓ Product / Market Fit

400+ clients since 2012

LVMH

COTY
SINCE 1904

L'ORÉAL

SKINCEUTICALS
ADVANCED SKINCARE BACKED BY SCIENCE

BIOThERM

KERING

BOBBI BROWN

L'OCCITANE
EN PROVENCE

Elizabeth Arden
NEW YORK

Kiehl's

FARFETCH

ESTÉE
LAUDER
COMPANIES

P&G

SHANGRI-LA
HOTELS and RESORTS

FILLMED
LABORATOIRES

VALENTINO

SANDRO

The Coca-Cola Company

ROSEWOOD
HOTEL GROUP

REVLON

diptyque
paris

LACOSTE

ANDROS

CAMUS
MAISON FAMILIALE DEPUIS 1881

TEMPLESPA

BOSS
HUGO BOSS

BURBERRY

innocent

Pernod Ricard

kimrobinson

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