A guide to building your practice in the Chinese market

Marketing and prospecting to multicultural consumers
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Welcome to the Chinese market!

This guide is designed to give you a starting point for working with Chinese prospects or consumers, knowing that your individual plan is what will ultimately make you successful.

Working in a multicultural market can be an essential element to maintaining and growing a sustainable practice because the demographic landscape of the United States is changing. Chinese consumers account for $176 billion, or 22.9 percent of Asian buying power, and constitute the largest sub-group of the Asian market in terms of population.

This strong gain, coupled with a fast-growing immigrant population, means that Asian buying power is expected to grow to $1 trillion in 2019, according to The Multicultural Economy, an annual report on minority group buying power produced by the Selig Center for Economic Growth.¹

Client development process for the Chinese market

This guide addresses the client development process for the Chinese market. While the process for the Chinese market is similar to the process you would use with everyone, there are cultural and procedural differences that you should know when working with this market.

Like all immigrant groups who arrive in the United States, Chinese consumers are diverse in terms of language, place of origin, and financial background. When developing your marketing and branding strategy, you must take care to effectively approach this group. The diversity of cultures and people can have a direct impact on the sales process.
While you don’t need to be Chinese to find success in the Chinese market, based on our consumer research and industry research, here are some things to keep in mind when working in this market:

• Chinese persons purchase life insurance for family protection. Specifically, they prefer permanent protection products like whole life because of the guaranteed features and benefits.

• Word-of-mouth recommendations strongly influence the choice of insurance company. Chinese consumers prefer companies that are financially stable and have good reputations.

• The home office offers in-language materials to help you reach the Chinese community.* Regardless of their fluency in the English language, Chinese immigrants strongly prefer to read and speak in Chinese.

• Producers play a vital role within the Chinese community. With proper fact-finding, a producer can assist with which products and companies will fit their client’s needs.

• When marketing to Chinese consumers, the sales process is often longer than in the general market and it may take more time to build trust and rapport with clients. Remember that obtaining trust and confidence is based on the client’s timeline and not your own.

• Some prospects/clients may require multiple meetings to feel ready to do business with you. Some may ask that you join them for dinner or a cup of coffee. This is a natural part of the rapport-building process.

• Family plays an important part in the life of Chinese consumers. Do not ignore opportunities to ask your customers about their family and friends and don’t be surprised if family members want to attend your meetings.

• Recognize and acknowledge the client’s professional achievements. This is especially true of prospects or clients who have earned advanced degrees (e.g., medical, academic, professional, industry). Do so with subtlety, for example, “Good Morning, Dr. Ye. How are you today?”

• Refrain from addressing others by first names unless you have a personal relationship with them. It’s always a safer bet referring to someone as Mr., Mrs., Dr., etc. When you approach customers this way, you’re demonstrating respect.

* Applications, forms, policies, contracts and administration documents are provided in English and cannot be translated.
Education and awareness is the first step in building your multicultural marketing practice. MassMutual has developed tools and tips that will help you kick start your practice from helping you to determine if you are ready to work in a multicultural practice to learning about your client and their culture.

- Do your research — we’ve made it easy for you!
  - Visit the Multicultural Marketing section on FieldNet for marketing materials, research, and other tools and resources for the Chinese Market. The path is FieldNet/Marketing/Target Markets/Multicultural Marketing/Chinese Market.
- Learn best practices from producers and agencies already engaged in marketing and selling in the Chinese and other multicultural markets.

**CHINESE CONSUMERS...**

- prefer in person business dealings. Face-to-face meetings help build a solid foundation that is built on essentials; credibility and trust.
- do not want to leave behind a financial burden for their families. They focus on caring for different generations ranging from elderly parents to young children.
- want objective advice and recommendations. Some have a concern that a producer will only offer a preferred product and not all products.
- view life insurance as an essential component for a personal sense of security and well-being. Protection of their family is a key motivator in their purchase of life insurance.
First and foremost, creating trust and building relationships is the foundation of networking and marketing to the Chinese community. Below are some suggestions on how to gain the trust and interest of Chinese consumers.

- **Cultural insights to keep in mind:**
  - During the Chinese New Year, it is important to remember that death is not discussed; this is the time to talk about prosperity. While the primary purpose for life insurance is the death benefit, this is the time to educate the consumer of the living benefits of a whole life policy too.
  - Chinese consumers put a heavy emphasis on education for their children and savings.
  - When wrapping a gift or sending flowers, avoid the color white; it is the symbol of death. Instead, choose red and/or gold as they are considered lucky.

- **Potential actions to take:**
  - Brand yourself and MassMutual in your local market.
  - Advertise in local cultural publications. Consumers in the Chinese market want to know about the company they are doing business with. To help get the message out to these consumers, leverage in-language ads available through Adworks to help build awareness of MassMutual’s history, strength, stability and mutuality. For more information about placing ads, visit FieldNet/Marketing/Marketing My Practice/Local Advertising & Media/Custom Ads: Adworks.
  - Send Direct Mail. MassMutual’s Direct Connect program offers a bilingual direct mail piece to use with Chinese prospects.
  - Pitch public relations stories to local cultural or ethnic newspapers in your community as these have a high impact. We find that in-language and/or in-culture media are more likely to pick up MassMutual stories than general market media. For assistance with Public Relations, please visit FieldNet/Marketing/Market My Practice/Local Advertising & Media/Press Releases and Templates.
  - Hand out your business card frequently; it is one of the least expensive forms of branding/advertising you can do for yourself. In-language business cards have been developed for use by those who speak Chinese.
Chinese individuals prefer to work with individuals who are active in and support their local community!

- Attend local festivals, fairs and celebrations to be visible and build relationships in your local community. Introduce yourself and get to know people while attending these events.
- Join professional cultural networking groups or associations to develop access to prospects.
- Develop relationships with centers of influence in the community, such as leaders of local organizations, businesses, active community volunteers, etc.

Consider affiliating with cultural schools or immersion schools. These types of schools teach children and teens how to speak, read, and write a foreign language – for example, a Chinese immersion school.

Encourage prospects to visit massmutual.com/chinese for basic information about the company in Chinese. The website provides information on the company’s strength, stability and mutuality, an overview of the life and disability income insurance products and information about connecting with our financial professionals.

Know about cultural holidays and celebrations in the Chinese market!

Examples of some popular events are:
- Chinese New Year
- Lantern Festival
- Qing Ming Festival (Ancestors Day)
- Duan Wu Festival (Dragon Boat Festival)
- Mid-Autumn Festival (Moon Festival)

Organizations to consider building relationships with:

Examples are:
- Chinese Chamber of Commerce
- Chinese American Medical Society (CAMS)
- Chinese American Dental Association (CADA)
- Association of Asian American Bankers (AAAB)
- Asian Women in Business (AWIB)
- Organization of Chinese Americans (OCA)
- The National Association of Asian American Professionals (NAAAP)
- Local institutes of Chinese culture
- Local Chinese schools
When deciding to work in the Chinese market, it is important to understand that you will need to choose your language carefully. Make sure to utilize unique phrases related to saving, such as saving for education, saving for retirement and/or saving for an emergency. Use words around savings and then take a couple of minutes to listen to what your consumer plans to save for and how you can help build a trusting relationship.

– HUA PENG, CHARLOTTE AGENCY MANAGING ASSOCIATE FOCUSING ON THE CHINESE MARKET

** NETWORKING TIPS **

- Attend culturally oriented fairs and festivals. If you can, arrange to have a booth and giveaways that feature your name and contact information.*
- Don’t just collect business cards! When you meet new people, ask about their hobbies, families, etc. The Chinese community likes to feel connected.
- Share your knowledge and expertise when and where possible.
- Don’t rush it! Be patient and show prospects that you’re willing to take the extra time needed to build trust.
- Develop centers of influence!
- Go to local colleges and universities to meet folks. Offer to speak at events or to classes about financial topics. Become a trusted source and educator.**

* Producers must use Compliance approved signage and materials when exhibiting. Please refer to the Field Compliance Manual regarding gifts/raffles/giveaways, section 6.2.1. (Sales Material) and the Business Gifts and Business Entertainment Policy guide for more information.
** All sales material must be approved in advance. Also, depending on your licensing status, you may also need to obtain your General Agent approval prior to speaking at a school. Please refer to sections 6.34.1. (Public Appearances) and 6.35.10. (Outside Business Activities) of the Field Compliance Manual.
The approach meeting is an important opportunity to make a lasting impression on your prospect about you and the services you offer. In this phase of the process, you can learn more about the consumer and uncover their needs and interests. When working with Chinese consumers, there are some things to keep in mind when approaching the market.

- Educate prospects or clients about MassMutual. Hit on key selling points about you and your relationship with MassMutual because the company may not be well known in the local market. Specifically mention that MassMutual:
  - is a mutual company
  - has served our policyholders for more than 165 years
  - has amongst the highest ratings in the industry. When discussing ratings with a potential client, be sure to mention our current ratings and that they are subject to change.
  - has paid dividends to eligible participating policyholders consistently since the 1860s. Be sure the person you’re speaking with understands that dividends are not guaranteed.

- Consider having general marketing materials translated that discuss information about the agency (agency location, hours of operation, general capabilities, areas of specialization, producer information, etc.) Refer to the Standards for Field Translated Documents on FieldNet for more information. As a reminder, all material you create must be submitted to compliance for approval prior to translation.
  - When creating agency marketing material in-language, make sure to place the culturally adapted MassMutual logo/tagline on your pieces; it is very well received and addresses the consumer more effectively than the general market brand.

- Some consumers may be bilingual and find it important to receive media, brochures, etc. in Chinese to ensure they have a full understanding of the company. MassMutual has created in-language and cultural materials available in Chinese to help educate consumers on our products, services and corporate capabilities. Visit the Multicultural Market page on FieldNet to learn more.
• Mention LifeBridge℠ to help develop your market and relationships.
  – LifeBridge is an effective way to build visibility and help educate the community and a variety of audiences about MassMutual. This program is unlike any of our competitor’s programs and can help position MassMutual — and you — as giving back to the community. LifeBridge events receive great PR in multicultural markets.*

• Sell your skills, affiliations, and if appropriate the length of time you’ve been in the business.
  – Educate consumers on your credentials and experience. These go a long way in establishing your credibility. In some cultures, longevity, accomplishments, certificates and licenses in a profession is an indicator of maturity or success.

– Mention college degrees, diplomas and/or licenses when telling a new customer about yourself and how you can help bring value to their financial plan.

– Share with your client if you’re a member of a local chamber of commerce, civic group or professional association.

– If you speak their language, let them know. You’ll be the best judge on how to best accomplish this. Some consumers may prefer to speak in English even though they speak another language.**

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Use corporate pieces that have been translated to educate prospects on MassMutual’s history, strength and stability. Utilize the Quality and Performance brochure (LI7602CH) available in Chinese to help share this messaging.

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*For more information on LifeBridge, please visit massmutual.com/lifebridge.

**Policies, applications, administrative documents and forms are available in English only.
LIFEBRIDGE PROVIDES

- free life insurance for income eligible families. It is designed to help protect the dream of providing education for a child if the parent dies before the child completes school. Under the LifeBridge Free Life Insurance Program, MassMutual will issue a $50,000, 10-year term life insurance policy to a trust on the life of a qualifying parent or legal guardian. The $50,000 is used to cover educational expenses of eligible children after the parent’s death. All premiums are paid entirely by MassMutual with no fees ever charged to the qualifying families.

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In Asian and other cultural markets, the trust in an adviser starts from zero. I have to answer the question, ‘Why should I do business with you?’ through my dress and my presentation. That’s why you often see Asian professionals dressed very well, in suits, with nice watches, nicely groomed, often driving nice cars. Appearance is very important — right down to the title on a business card. Trust starts from zero but gradually builds up until people feel comfortable with you. The process for building credibility may be longer, but repeat business comes a lot easier.

– BRIAN LEE,
SAN FRANCISCO BAY AGENCY GENERAL AGENT
FOCUSED IN THE CHINESE MARKET

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During this phase of the client development process, your role as a financial professional is to create an environment that helps your clients feel comfortable and open to sharing confidential information. This is why the rapport-building process is so important because if you don’t have a solid foundation to start from, talking about finances and financial needs can be a challenge.

From a cultural perspective, there are a few things to keep in mind in order to be effective in the Chinese community:

- Learn where your client or their family is from because it will give you insight as to what to expect. For instance, if your client is from Mainland China, they may be more reluctant to provide financial and personal information compared to persons who may be from Taiwan or Hong Kong.

Here are some tips to establish trust and rapport when communicating with your client/prospect:

- Be ready to visit someone’s home or business where you may be asked to enjoy a meal or cup of tea* as a part of the rapport building process. You may be also introduced to relatives, friends or family members as a part of the sales process. Don’t be alarmed — this process is about building trust, familiarity, and rapport.

- Be genuine. Most people can spot a phony, so don’t try and be someone you are not.

- Be patient. Expect several meetings may be required before a purchase decision is made.

- Avoid using humor with clients since humor rarely translates well across cultures. Remember, for your client and/or prospect, there is nothing funny about planning for their financial future.

- Keep your promises. Don’t say you’re going to do something unless you are really going to do it. Promise only what you will deliver, no matter how unimportant it may appear to be to you.

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* Be sure to consult the Business Courtesies and Entertainment Policies section of the Compliance Manual.
During your case analysis and preparation, organize all of the information you gathered during the fact finding process to pull together a solution and recommendation for your client.

When preparing your professional presentation, here are some things to keep in mind when working with Chinese consumers:

- Do not use English clichés. Phrases like “You could get hit by a bus tomorrow” may be somewhat okay with the general population; however ethnic consumers might not understand what that means and it will come across as offensive. Some things get lost in translation and do not translate well.

- It is very important to limit the number of times you use the word “death.” While you may need to use this term in various points in your presentation, it is important during your preparation to think of other ways to refer to the word “death.”

- Discuss both the death benefits and the living benefits of whole life, if whole life is a potential solution. While the primary purpose of life insurance is for the death benefit, mention the living benefits of the product and themes that resonate effectively with a Chinese consumer, for example:
  - College education for their child is extremely important in this culture, especially for those who came to the states to help provide a positive future for their children. Topics such as living benefits of the whole life product and how it can be used to help fund their child’s education can be a powerful message. Explain to our client that access to cash values through borrowing or partial surrenders will reduce the policy’s cash value and death benefit, increase the chance the policy will lapse, and may result in a tax liability if the policy terminates before the death of the insured.

- MassMutual offers a number of approved financial software systems to help you produce your analysis and product illustrations and provides an in-language brochure to help your client understand how to read their illustration.
Begin your presentation by reviewing the important information gathered during the Fact Finding session that led to your recommendation. Provide your recommendations and demonstrate how they can help meet their needs. It is important to touch upon the themes that resonate well with Chinese consumers such as how your suggestions can help with the college education funding for their children.

Here are some tips for the Presentation and Application phase.

- Educate prospective clients on the underwriting process. Some multicultural consumers are wary of providing financial information during the underwriting process. Explaining the need and use of this information upfront helps to alleviate concerns and minimize the potential for prospects who may not understand the process or need to be underwritten.
  - Utilize the Annotated Life Application brochure when helping a client through the process of filling out an application. This brochure provides snapshots of the application with a brief explanation of what is being asked and why.
  - Get the Client Acknowledgement form signed if any part of the sales was conducted in-language or if your client is more comfortable completing the underwriting process in-language. This form will certify that the client understands and acknowledges that MassMutual conducts business in English and it will also trigger an in-language personal history inspection (PHI).

- MassMutual’s underwriting guidelines and travel restrictions may help you write more business. A full listing is available on FieldNet/New Sales/Life Insurance/Underwriting/Foreign Risk Guidelines.

- As part of the underwriting process, a Paramedical Exam may be required in order to assess your client’s current health. If needed, be sure to arrange for an in-language paramedical examiner to explain the process, what is being asked for, and why.
Keeping in touch with a client after the policy has been delivered and educating your client on services available to them is a great way to building long-lasting relationships and it creates the potential for future sales and additional referrals. Below are some very simple ways that you can continue to build upon your existing relationship.

- Send cards or make a personal phone call on important holidays and life events. The key to client development and management is continuing to build on your relationships with your clients; one way to maintain this relationship is by mailing a greeting card. Use messaging around prosperity,* luck and/or fortune in your card and utilize imagery that resonates within the culture such as cherry blossoms, Chinese scenery or paintings. Below are three examples of times to keep in touch with your client:
  - Chinese New Year
  - Moon Festival
  - Birthdays
- Educate clients on in-language services available for policy servicing. In-language customer service is available in several languages via customer service lines on life insurance, disability income insurance, long term care insurance and annuities.
- Seek referrals from your clients. Recommendations from friends and relatives are not easy to come by and are extremely valuable when working in the Chinese market. The best time to ask for a referral is when a customer thanks you or says something like, “I don’t know how to thank you.” That’s a perfect opening to tell them how they can show their thanks — by referring people to you.
  - When meeting with a referral, make sure to mention the other person’s name in your discussion and how you were referred (only if you have permission from the referring individual). For example, you can say, “Last week I met with Dr. Li and helped him with his financial needs and he suggested that I may be of assistance to you.”

* There are a number of prosperity messages that are considered promissory from a regulatory perspective. Be sure your message does no more than wish your client prosperity. If you have questions about other prosperity messages, please contact your agency’s reviewer in the Advertising Review and Consulting Department of USIG Compliance for assistance.
To find success, you need to first define what success looks like — and that differs for everyone. Below are ways that you can measure success in multicultural markets, but be sure to work with your sales manager to set goals for yourself:

- You ARE the go-to person! Your clients see you as someone who can help them and their loved ones plan for their financial futures. You have successfully been able to stand out from the competition in your target market as a problem solver, solution finder and educator and as a result have clients and organizations coming to YOU!

- Keep track of your progress! Track the sources of your business to know from where it’s coming. Consider creating a spreadsheet of your activities or contact to track activity. Here are some things to consider tracking:
  - Policies sold (type, premium and FYC)
  - Events (leads gathered and sales results)
  - Seminars conducted (attendees and sales results)
  - Organizational connections
  - Direct Mail pieces sent out (how many people did you send the piece to, how many calls and sales results)
  - Ads placed (what publications, how many calls and sales results)
  - Public relations efforts

Multicultural segments provide MassMutual general agents and financial professionals with an opportunity for growth and diversification. As the demographics of America continue to change, so will the population and the continued need for quality insurance products and financial services. We encourage you to examine the multicultural segments available to you to determine the most appropriate direction for your practice.
Visit FieldNet/Marketing/Target Markets/Multicultural Marketing/Chinese Market for more information, tools and resources.