

MARKETING

## Weibo to launch new interest-driven social app

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Weibo's new app Planet could challenge short-video giant Douyin. It could also land it in hot water for promoting celebrity culture. What should brands do? Image credit: App Store

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Weibo, commonly known as China's Twitter, will launch a new interest-based social app named Planet, according to [various sources](#).

The new app is an upgraded version of Planet Video, which already has millions of communities spanning a number of topics.

Crucially, it will [largely function](#) as a way for Weibo users to follow celebrities and influencers, while embedding themselves in communities with similar interests.

Currently, Planet Video has five sections: Home, Discover, Shoot, News and My.

Right from the get-go, the app showcases Weibo's interest in short video content. Considering the high demand for live-streaming and short video content in China, the move is no surprise.

According to a 2021 report on China's short video and live-streaming industries by Research and Markets, the country's short video market is forecasted to reach a value of \$134.3 billion in 2025, growing at a CAGR of 33.46 percent during the period spanning 2021-2025.

For the same period, it forecasts that China's live-streaming market will be worth \$76.42 billion in 2025 and grow at a CAGR of 35.29 percent.

Evidently, short-video features will continue to dominate China's marketing sector for years to come.

Nevertheless, the increased regulatory scrutiny of the technology sector and the [strict licensing system for all online shows](#) might hamper innovation and pose new threats to companies such as Weibo.

Expanding the scope of Planet will likely increase Weibo's market share as well as its profit margins.

The app's focus on celebrity culture is a double-edged sword.

On the one hand, Weibo will tap into younger, celebrity-obsessed users on the lookout for new ways to connect with their idols since the government began cracking down on fan clubs.

Planet could also help Weibo challenge Douyin and lure young users to its platform. According to Pandaily, a number of Weibo stars are expected to flock to the new app, which are good signs for monetization and growth.

Planet and its celebrity bent could prove troublesome for Weibo, and the move could irk officials waging a **battle against celebrity culture**.

Nonetheless, luxury brands could leverage the launch to amp up community building efforts and brand awareness.

At the same time, rising fashion brands that do not have a firm foundation in China could partner with Planet to reach and engage new users.

The app could prove a valuable partner by allowing global firms to create tailored content that speaks to specific consumer segments.

In the past, the likes of **Louis Vuitton, Burberry and Gucci** have overcome localization challenges and won the Chinese market by using the co-creation approach.

Conversely, the association with an app that encourages fan communication and celebrity culture could be seen in certain social circles as disrespectful towards the government's efforts to restrain "excessive fan culture."

Accordingly, the luxury brands connected to Planet could find themselves in the hot seat, facing backlash and reputational risks.

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