

Sweet C mandarins

South African mandarin label introduces animated character as brand mascot in China

Sweet C mandarins from South Africa have been arriving in China and with it, its new brand mascot telling the story of this brand and its fruit journey. Sweet C™, a mandarin brand hailing from South Africa, has found some nice traction in China and Southeast Asia over the past three years with its bold consumer marketing campaigns and its distinctive blue packaging.



This season, shoppers were treated to an animated lemur character, named Sunny. Feedback from Chinese clients indicate that using the character as part of in-store promotions, and especially as a life-sized mascot, invites great interaction with children and their parents. They also say that shoppers consequently linger to taste the fruit.

"Creating special characters or mascots is a well-known marketing strategy, welcomed and enjoyed by adults and children alike," says Adèle Ackermann, marketing manager of the Sweet C and other global citrus brands. "In an environment where different messages compete against each other in often compact and busy spaces, a character draws attention, adds an element of fun, and provides the brand with a 'spokesperson'. In a way, consumers have an emotional response to such a character and the brand it represents."

Sunny the Lemur has a personality and language of his own. "There's such creative freedom that comes with a character. It can have its own language; and it can interpret the brand benefits or unique selling points through storytelling," Ackermann says.



Consumers have come to know Sunny as quirky and friendly, with a healthy appetite for citrus. Some retailers have taken the next step of creating mascot suits for promoters to be able to engage with shoppers – a move that has proven very successful with young and old alike. Another client mentioned that the placement of the character on packaging and marketing material arouses curiosity about its origin and relation to the brand, and draws consumers in for a conversation.

"It is important to consider your consumer when developing such a character. Thorough research and concept testing will reveal what consumers in specific markets will relate to and what could miss the mark completely, or even be considered as offensive," Ackermann adds.

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