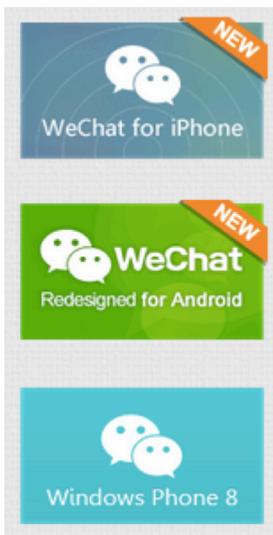




## What is WeChat?

WeChat is a social media platform with a suite of strengths that has gained in popularity since it was released in 2011. Its mixture of text messaging, hold-to-talk voice messaging, and photo & video sharing has already attracted **more than 600 million users globally**, including 450 million users in China and 150 million overseas. Companies that want to market their products or services are starting to include WeChat in their marketing strategy as a must-have promotional tool for their brand.



## Types of Accounts

There are two types of WeChat accounts: one for individual users and another for corporate accounts and organizations called WeChat Official Platform. Below are sample features of the two different types of WeChat Accounts.

*“... more than 600 million users globally, including 450 million users in China and 150 million overseas.”*

WeChat Individual Account	WeChat Official Platform (Subscriber Account, Service Account and Corporate Account)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Video chat</li> <li>- Group chat</li> <li>- Moments</li> <li>- Broadcasting messages</li> <li>- Shake to add friends</li> <li>- Search for people near by</li> <li>- Digital wallet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Broadcast messaging</li> <li>- Auto-reply</li> <li>- Customized menu</li> <li>- Direct messaging</li> <li>- Follower management</li> <li>- WeChat store</li> <li>- Followers management</li> <li>- Analytics</li> <li>- APP developer kits</li> </ul>

## 1) Real People, Real Connections

WeChat is a platform that's built on real friendships and real connections. While users have the ability to connect with people that are physically near them who also use the app, they are more likely to add friends from their contact list than people they don't know. WeChat users add their friends from their mobile contacts or instant messaging platforms such as QQ. According to results from a web survey conducted by the CNNIC (China Internet Network Information Center), the majority of individuals registering for the Chinese texting app used their own personal information (rather than using different names or identities).

Unlike the public nature of micro-blogging platforms like Twitter, Facebook and Weibo, WeChat enables much more one-on-one communication that is targeted to individual users. This paired with the fact that so many of its users are authentic makes WeChat a wonderful tool for building connections between companies and consumers.



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*“According to CNNIC (China Internet Network Information Center), the majority of individuals registering for the Chinese texting app used their own personal information”*

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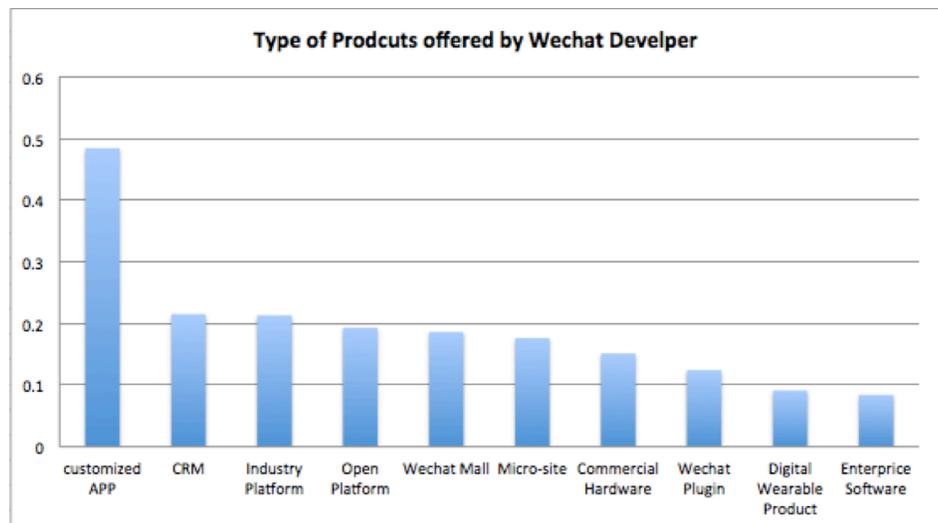
## 2) WeChat for Business: How direct, one-on-one engagement drives sales

In addition to hosting personal accounts, WeChat offers businesses the option of creating a page for their brand. The app also offers a developer's kit, which can help companies fully customize the look and feel of their brand's presence on the platform. In this way, businesses looking to communicate directly with target clients can tailor their WeChat accounts to align with their branding and goals. Consumers following their favourite companies on WeChat are able to gain insight into their favourite products and frequently receive perks like discounts or free trials from the companies that they follow— incentives that contribute to longer-term brand trust and increased sales. We'll take a closer look at some of these incentives in the case studies below.

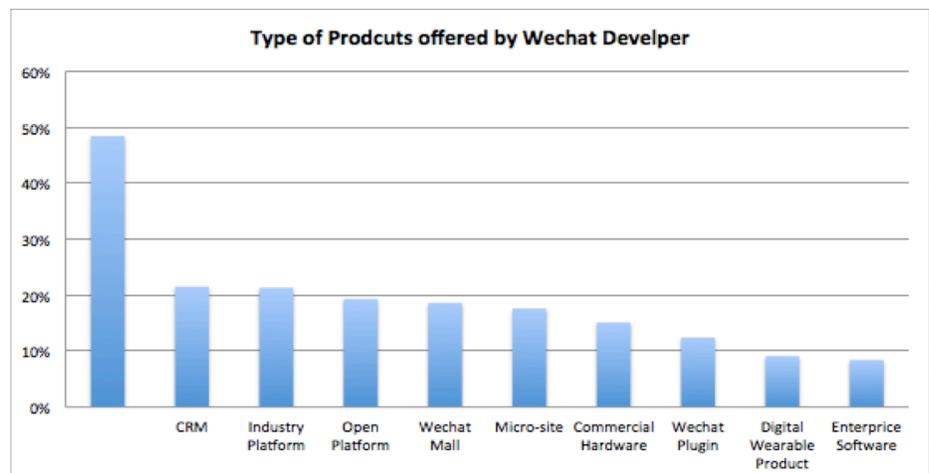
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*“Unlike the public nature of micro-blogging platforms like Twitter, Facebook and Weibo, WeChat enables much more one-on-one communication that is targeted to individual users.”*

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Source: The White Book Of WeChat Official Account Ecology (2014) by WeMedia



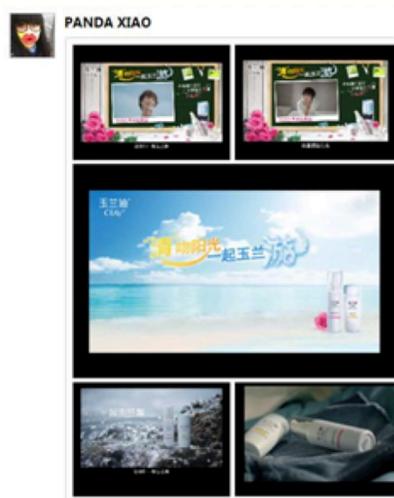
Source: The White Book Of WeChat Official Account Ecology (2014) by WeMedia

## Case Study: Olay Official Account

Olay Skincare is a great example of a business that has built and operates a *WeChat for Business* account successfully. Olay has several strategies to build brand awareness and consumer trust on WeChat.

One of the ways the company builds relationships with its users is by automatically sending users a welcome message when they add the company, building the user's personal connection with the brand.

Another incentive that Olay offers its WeChat users is a free membership to Olay. As members, WeChat users can connect their mobile number with their account and receive automatic “invites” - messages from Olay to do skin tests and order new products. Olay also ran a lucky draw campaign to encourage customers to share pictures of their product, an initiative that brought the company a massive amount of high quality user-generated content that helped promote its products.



Many other international brands— like La Roche-Posay, Benefit and Pond's—use WeChat to successfully promote their products, build good relations with their users, and interact with Chinese customers.

### 3) Effective Online and Offline Promotion

#### Case Study: Nature's Bounty WeChat Official Account

WeChat is not only a great online marketing tool—it can help build offline sales and initiatives as well. Nature's Bounty, an American brand of nutritional supplements, joined forces with Wedding Expo to convert their online fans into offline customers. During the Expo, the followers of Nature's Bounty's Official WeChat Account were able to receive sample packages of Nature's Bounty in its retail stores by simply showing staff a WeChat message, and many returned as paying customers.



Follow us on WeChat

Now that WeChat has released its newest version of WeChat 6.0, with new and improved functions like the possibility of sharing video in *Moments* and mobile wallets, it's more powerful than ever. WeChat is one of the most cost effective tools to help entrepreneurs, small businesses and corporations build and maintain strong relationships with their customers, and can also play a valuable role in increasing brand awareness and converting online fans into offline customers.



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