

China's Live Commerce Goes Global: Strategic Implications for the U.S. Beauty and Fashion Industry from an Award-Winning TikTok Live Practitioner's Cross-Border Expansion

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Abstract

In recent years, Chinese live commerce has shifted from growth driven largely by traffic dividends to a model that places greater emphasis on refined operations. This transition has developed several potentially transferable capabilities, including the integration of content-driven live selling and shelf-based e-commerce, data-informed product selection, and flexible supply chain response. The U.S. TikTok e-commerce market provides new opportunities for cross-border sellers, particularly in beauty and fashion, where products are highly visual and well suited to live demonstration and impulse-driven purchasing. Using the cross-border practices of New Start Plus Agency as a case study, this paper examines differences between Chinese and U.S. live commerce in traffic acquisition, consumer behavior, content presentation, conversion, and fulfillment. It argues that the Chinese live-commerce model cannot be transferred directly to the U.S. market. Its operational capabilities need to be adapted through localized product selection, culturally appropriate content, and more responsive supply chain coordination. The paper also examines the organizational requirements for scaling operations from two to six live studios. The analysis provides practical insights into how Chinese live-commerce capabilities can be adapted, rather than simply replicated, in the U.S. beauty and fashion market.

Keywords: live commerce, cross-border trade, TikTok E-commerce

1. Introduction

With its content-driven, real-time interactive sales model, Chinese live commerce has profoundly altered the operational logic of the retail industry. As the market scale reaches trillions of yuan, leading enterprises have begun looking overseas to find new growth opportunities. The rapid development of US TikTok e-commerce has opened a digital gateway

to the North American consumer market for Chinese cross-border sellers. The content ecosystem combining short videos with livestreaming, the algorithm-driven traffic distribution mechanism, and a competitive landscape still in its nurturing stage provide a natural breeding ground for the migration of Chinese live commerce experience. Since its inception, New Start Plus Agency has focused on

beauty and fashion categories—such as wigs, hair bundles, false eyelashes, and women’s bags—targeting the North American female consumer market. It has progressively established a comprehensive operational system covering team management, livestreaming workflows, ad placement, and short-video content marketing. Currently, the livestreaming channel GMV has surpassed \$10 million, with a total transaction volume of \$30 million across all TikTok shops on the platform. Based on the cross-border practices of New Start Plus Agency, this paper systematically researches the key strategies for migrating China’s live commerce model to the US beauty and fashion industry.

2. Comparative Analysis of Chinese and US Live Commerce Strategies

2.1 Differences in Traffic Ecosystems and Content Distribution Logic

The Chinese live commerce traffic ecosystem is dominated by three major platforms: Douyin, Kuaishou, and Taobao Live, each with distinct traffic distribution mechanisms. Douyin relies heavily on content recommendation algorithms, meaning live studio traffic depends largely on short-video traffic redirection and real-time interaction metrics. Conversely, the US TikTok e-commerce ecosystem uses short videos as its traffic entry point, as live commerce is still in the stage of user education. The platform’s algorithm heavily weights content recommendation; the correlation between follower counts and live studio traffic is weaker than in China, allowing high-quality content from small-and-medium accounts to gain massive exposure. Additionally, users trust creator recommendations and user reviews much more than brand-hosted livestreams, meaning brand trust takes longer to build. During its US operations, New Start Plus Agency discovered that short-video content carries significantly more weight in driving traffic and conversion than on domestic platforms. A substantial portion of the live studio audience is redirected from short videos, making continuous investment in content quality and posting frequency vital to maintaining stable traffic.

2.2 Differences in User Consumer Behavior and Conversion Paths

Chinese live commerce users have developed mature habits of content-based product seeding and live shopping. Real-time interaction and limited-time promotions in live studios strongly

catalyze purchasing decisions. In contrast, US TikTok e-commerce users’ consumer behavior is closer to discovery-based shopping driven by content; they develop a desire to learn about and purchase a product after being captivated by short-video content, rather than entering a live studio with a clear purchasing goal. Regarding the conversion path, Chinese users have a relatively short decision-making chain from viewing content to placing an order. Limited-time discounts and scarcity signals (“inventory running out”) are highly persuasive for hesitant users. US users, however, have longer decision-making chains, demanding more information about product quality and real-world efficacy. They are generally less receptive to aggressive, hard-sell promotional livestreaming styles. Consequently, New Start Plus Agency adjusted its verbal strategy in live studios by softening promotions, extending product detail demonstrations, and explaining usage scenarios in-depth, which successfully boosted user retention and interaction rates.

2.3 Differences in Supply Chain Response and Fulfillment Capabilities

Chinese live commerce is backed by a mature domestic supply chain. The small-buffer, quick-response model dramatically shortens the cycle from design to shipment for trending products, and the return process is relatively simple. For cross-border live commerce, the supply chain is far more complex. Products traveling from domestic factories to US consumers must undergo cross-border logistics, destination customs clearance, and last-mile delivery, typically requiring several days or more. Beauty and fashion products like wigs and eyelashes have high requirements for delivery speed and packaging integrity. New Start Plus Agency optimized logistical efficiency by combining overseas warehousing prep with direct shipping from China. Hot-selling and evergreen items are stocked in advance in US warehouses, while new and test items are fulfilled directly from China. Consequently, delivery times for orders shipped from overseas warehouses have been reduced to within a few days, steadily narrowing the fulfillment gap compared to local sellers.

3. GMV Growth Paths for the Beauty and Fashion Category

3.1 Category Selection Logic and Hero Product Portfolio Strategies

The core competitiveness of the beauty and

fashion category in live commerce lies in its visual impact and capacity to trigger impulse buying. New Start Plus Agency selected high-frequency, high-margin products like wigs, hair bundles, false eyelashes, and women's bags. Wigs and hair bundles are marketed for their style variety and ease of wear; false eyelashes differentiate through natural simulated effects and reusability; and women's bags enter the market with a focus on stylish design and cost-effectiveness.

The portfolio strategy employs a hero products driving auxiliary products model. Hero products, characterized by high cost-effectiveness and high conversion rates, handle primary traffic conversion in the live studio. Auxiliary products, featuring high profit margins and differentiated designs, work to increase the Average Order Value (AOV) and overall profit margins. New Start Plus Agency's experience demonstrates that the ratio of hero-to-auxiliary products in the live studio's product structure plays a critical role in balancing single-session GMV and gross margins.

New Start Plus Agency established a product matrix covering different price points and styles for each core category: wigs are segmented into rich product combinations based on material, length, color, and hairstyle; false eyelashes are structured into tiered product lines based on volume, curl, band type, and application scenarios. This robust matrix allows live studios to flexibly pivot their marketing focus across different sales nodes and target demographics. To filter hero products, the company established a three-stage selection process: short-video testing, live studio promotion, and data review. The short-video testing stage evaluates user interest based on views, completion rates, and engagement across multiple product demonstration videos. The live studio promotion stage validates hero potential using actual sales conversion data. The data review stage scores individual products comprehensively on click-through-rate (CTR), payment conversion rate, and return rate to determine whether they join the long-term hero list.

3.2 Dual-Wheel Traffic Acquisition: Short Videos and Livestreaming

In the US TikTok e-commerce ecosystem, short-video content serves the dual purpose of building brand awareness and pooling traffic. New Start Plus Agency assembled a professional production team to create authentic, lifestyle-

oriented short videos tailored to the aesthetic tastes and content habits of US female users. Wigs are marketed for their real-person try-ons and hairstyle transformation comparisons; false eyelashes focus on before-and-after makeup differences and application tutorials. The visual style uses natural lighting and minimal beauty filters, avoiding professional studio setups to match US users' preference for authenticity.

Within the live studio traffic mix, the proportion of traffic redirected from short videos has risen steadily, making the hit rate of short videos a decisive factor for overall live traffic. Rather than a simple chronological sequence, short videos and livestreams are dynamically linked throughout the entire broadcast cycle. Pre-live teaser short videos showcase core hero products and limited-time benefits to prompt users to reserve the livestream or set reminders. In-live product explanations and highlight moments are clipped in real-time and published immediately, pushing live-broadcast signals to potential users' recommendation feeds. Post-live highlight reels are polished and redistributed to build a follower base for the next session. New Start Plus Agency's content team categorizes videos into unboxing reviews, tutorials, side-by-side comparisons, and user feedback, using a diverse content mix to sustain user interest and freshness.

3.3 User Operations and Retention Frameworks

Due to the high-repurchase nature of beauty and fashion products, user operations and customer retention systems are essential drivers of sustained GMV growth. New Start Plus Agency prioritizes membership systems in its TikTok Shop operations, incentivizing long-term store relationships through follow-to-discount coupons and loyalty points. Fan retention in the live studio focuses on the host's personal charisma and expertise, with hosts answering product usage questions and offering style pairing tips live.

Private-domain retention is key to extending Customer Lifetime Value (LTV). Email marketing and social media groups are used to share new product arrivals and exclusive discounts, guiding loyal customers back to the live studio and shop. New Start Plus Agency established a user segmentation system based on purchase frequency and monetary value, dividing users into four tiers: new customers, active customers, dormant customers, and churned customers. New customers are automatically sent post-

purchase care emails containing tutorials and styling tips after their first order. Active customers receive regular invitations for early-access product trials and exclusive member discount codes. Dormant customers are automatically sent “welcome back” coupons and seasonal best-seller recommendations after a period of inactivity. Churned customers are targeted with high-value hero items and steep, limited-time discounts to attempt reactivation.

4. Scale Expansion Planning for Live Studios

4.1 Path and Rhythm of Expanding from 2 to 6 Live Studios

New Start Plus Agency currently operates 2 live studios, focusing on “wigs & hair bundles” and “false eyelashes & women’s bags,” respectively. Each has established stable host teams and operational workflows. The expansion from 2 to 6 studios is structured around category expansion and time-slot coverage.

New studios will cover untapped niches such as hair accessories, nail supplies, and men’s wigs. Time-slot coverage will expand to include morning and late-night slots, targeting various time zones and lifestyle routines to maximize studio space utilization and daily broadcast hours.

The expansion rhythm is phased: Phase I adds two new category studios (hair accessories and nail supplies) to reuse existing operations teams and supply chain resources, lowering initial trial-and-error costs. Phase II selects the two top-performing categories based on performance data to create a primary-secondary co-operating studio layout, and launches an independent studio for men’s wigs. Decisions to advance to the next phase are gated by whether key metrics—such as average single-session GMV, gross margin, and team maturity—reach pre-set expansion thresholds.

4.2 Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and Talent Replication

Scaling up live studios requires highly standardized operational workflows and talent replication capabilities. New Start Plus Agency broke down each livestreaming session into four phases: pre-live selection and content teasers, in-live host script and floor control coordination, and post-live data review and after-sales handling. Each phase has detailed checklists and quality standards.

The host training system uses a tiered

development model. New hosts start as co-hosts or floor managers to master product knowledge and script techniques before broadcasting independently, while senior hosts act as mentors and develop training courses. Implementing standard procedures and training systems shortened the setup time for new live studios from months to weeks.

Checklists detail tasks, execution order, quality benchmarks, and deadlines. For example, the pre-live selection checklist specifies the minimum number of products to upload and the required ratio of hero-to-auxiliary items. The floor manager’s manual outlines exact triggers and workflows for releasing coupons and adjusting inventory. The host training system uses clear promotion criteria: hosts must meet specific performance baselines in single-session GMV, user retention, and engagement rates before applying for promotion to host in higher-tier live studios.

4.3 Multi-Studio Collaborative Ad Campaigns and Traffic Allocation

Operating multiple live studios in parallel requires an efficient ad deployment and traffic allocation mechanism. New Start Plus Agency utilizes a unified ad account architecture to collaboratively manage campaigns across multiple studios, tailoring strategies to each studio’s category positioning and target audience.

A collaborative cross-redirection effect exists among studios; hosts recommend related products from sister studios based on real-time viewer inquiries, achieving cross-conversion. The unified account pools ad budgets, allowing the media buying team to dynamically adjust budget allocations based on real-time conversions and traffic competition. High-converting studios receive instant budget tilts, preventing the efficiency losses associated with rigid, fixed budgets.

Additionally, a cross-recommendation system tracks user category preferences and purchase histories. When a user buys from one category studio, the system gauges their potential interest in related categories and pushes tailored recommendations, steadily boosting traffic and conversion rates for sister studios. This collaborative traffic allocation mechanism lowers customer acquisition costs (CAC) for individual studios while maximizing overall user LTV.

5. Strategic Support Systems for Cross-Border Expansion

5.1 Cross-Border Supply Chain and Overseas Warehousing Layouts

Fulfillment efficiency in cross-border live commerce is a critical factor influencing user experience and retention rates. New Start Plus Agency utilizes a strategy of overseas warehouse pre-stocking paired with flexible domestic replenishment. High-selling, evergreen items are pre-stocked in US warehouses for local delivery, while new and test items are shipped directly from China.

Overseas warehouse selection balances shipping times, warehousing costs, and return processing efficiency, integrating return handling directly into the warehouse management system. On the domestic supply chain side, long-term partnerships with core suppliers were established to compress the R&D and production cycles for new products.

The overseas inventory management system is synchronized with real-time live sales data. If a hot-selling product's sales exceed forecasts during a broadcast, the system automatically triggers an inventory alert and issues an emergency replenishment order to the domestic supply chain. Returned products are categorized at the overseas warehouse following quality inspections: undamaged items with intact packaging are restocked immediately; items with damaged packaging but intact products are repackaged for resale; and used or damaged products are redirected to discount channels or liquidated.

Domestic suppliers collaborate by pre-purchasing raw materials. Core suppliers prepare common raw materials in advance based on quarterly forecasts provided by New Start Plus Agency, shortening the cycle from prototyping to mass production and reducing response times for standard replenishment orders from weeks to days.

5.2 Cross-Cultural Team Building and Localized Operations

Localized operations in the US market require a cross-cultural team structure. New Start Plus Agency adopted a two-tier organizational structure consisting of Chinese core backbones and US local talents. Chinese backbones transfer proven operational methodologies to the US team, while US local talents handle culturally sensitive tasks such as content creation, live hosting, and customer service.

The Chinese and US teams share unified data dashboards and conduct weekly review meetings. Standardized SOPs and video training courses allow new US employees to quickly master standard operational procedures. Chinese core backbones travel to the US regularly for on-site guidance and training, while key US members visit the Chinese headquarters to participate in intensive training and witness domestic livestreaming workflows firsthand.

Recruiting for the localized host team prioritizes diversity in race and hair types to meet product demonstration needs. By hiring models and creators from varied racial backgrounds and hair types, the company ensures that live product demonstrations accurately address the real-world scenarios of diverse US consumer groups.

5.3 Data-Driven Decision Systems and Strategic Iterations

A robust data decision system serves as the foundational infrastructure for scaled live commerce operations. New Start Plus Agency built an end-to-end data monitoring system capturing short-video metrics, live performance data, product sales, and user behavior, automatically compiling these metrics into multi-dimensional daily reports.

Data analysis continuously refines operational workflows: product data guides selection adjustments, while user behavior data shapes content creation. This growing data-driven capability marks the MCN's transition from experience-driven management to systematic, scientific operations.

The data framework translates subjective operational intuition into quantifiable, traceable, and replicable decision rules. For example, a senior operator's product intuition is broken down into feature tags and data thresholds for high-converting products, enabling new employees to make preliminary selection decisions. The data dashboard features tiered permissions and customized views: the founder level focuses on high-level trends like all-category GMV, gross margins, and cash flow; the category manager level focuses on operational funnels and inventory turnover; the host and floor level focuses on real-time engagement and minute-by-minute transaction curves.

6. Conclusion

The cross-border migration of the Chinese live commerce model to the US beauty and fashion

industry is essentially a strategic practice of localizing proven domestic methodologies within a cross-cultural business environment. While Chinese and US live commerce differ in traffic ecosystems, user behaviors, and supply chain efficiencies, Chinese enterprises have accumulated highly transferable underlying capabilities in content operations, data-driven decision-making, and team management.

The practices of New Start Plus Agency demonstrate that targeting high-margin, high-repurchase categories like beauty and fashion, building a dual-wheel traffic acquisition system driven by short videos and livestreams, establishing standardized SOPs and talent replication systems, and deploying overseas warehousing are highly effective strategic paths for cross-border live commerce to scale. In the context of rapidly developing global digital trade, the cross-border expansion of Chinese live commerce companies offers a valuable practical blueprint for digital innovation in international trade.

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