

The ABC guide for curating a large-scale Europe-China business conference in today's China from an overseas base

A for Attitude	Make clear why you conduct a conference in China, articulate your purpose including the key metric you hope to generate, e.g. mutual understanding and trust
B for Bold	Curate at arm's length and seek respectful dialectics to enable more robust opinion building, eventually leading to more trust and business follow-up
C for Cross-cultural	This communication is a cross-cultural act, work hard to minimize misunderstandings, simple terms like market, governance, security can mean very different things
D for Didactic	Communicating complex and multi-factor developments in China is a didactic challenge, written and verbal framings by host and moderators minimize misunderstandings
E for Endorsement	Displaying due behavior as conference host and a guest in China is crucial, local government endorsement in the form of greetings or welcome speech matters
F for Food	Chinese food, this unique breadth and depth of flavors, textures and optics - make it a conscious part of the program
G for Gender	Curate for conscious gender balance - Chinese business environment is full of female Chinese leaders and entrepreneurs, showcase them
H for Humanize	Talking about geopolitics, policy and macroeconomics in China makes sense given the continental size, try to humanize their drivers, impacts and hopes
I for Institution	Be very clear which institution is the host of the conference, patiently introduce it and mention its earlier track record in China - this matters in China
J for Jetlag	If significant number of conference attendees fly in, optimize your program to better help overcome jetlag, least by providing best possible coffee or tea
K for Kaleidoscopic	Discussing China is - epistemically - very multidimensional and kaleidoscopic, think hard about what dimensions of contemporary China to portray
L for Last-minute	3-4 weeks before the actual event, competition for sought-after speakers and resources kicks-in, be ready to multi-task and stay flexible
M for Mandarin	Clarify early if simultaneous translation is needed, resort to project translated English text to be pragmatic, recognize English efforts if not natural to speaker
N for NGO	Research and inquire about all local registration and approval requirements with local police, local security and bureau of civil affairs, to ensure full legal compliance
O for Outdoor	Weave in outdoor walking activities to allow for physical activation and enchantment by simple discoveries of daily life, even in a megacity like Shenzhen
P for Partners	Work with local partners when you organize a conference - for the team work fun, the amplified impact, the local touch and all the invaluable guidance you get
Q for Quality	Conference and event management in China is obsessed with quality and details, also given competitiveness of the environment, embrace it for your product
R for Rules	Use Chatham Rules, explain them clearly and remind them frequently - especially also Chinese participants will treasure them, for more genuine exchange
S for Sensitivity	Factor in the political sensitivity of discussing certain topics in China, also the interrelationship with the speakers' background and role, framings and session titles matter
T for Timing	In China's resource competitive environment, conference timing needs to consider top-level political events such as CIIE or Bo'ao, as they absorb resources at vast scale
U for USP	Think hard about how to form the conference's USP, framing, content concept, location, partners, and formats all matter to be able to draw leading Chinese speakers
V for Visa	Assist your traveling in conference participants empathetically in the visa process, also by providing an effective invitation letter that facilitates the process
W for WeChat	Create WeChat groups to connect participants including international guests, to dynamically communicate changes in logistics and enable post-event engagements
X for Xiexie	Cultural etiquette - lead by example in showing cultural empathy and respect, everyone feels more comfortable and the discussions become more open
Y for Yearly	Visit your local partners 3-4 months before holding the conference, esp. if you want to run it yearly - this is how you keep everyone engaged for the cause
Z for Zoom	Zoom connects distant people, but nothing replaces for in-person dialogue in a trusted environment with open-mind, probing questions and motivated speakers