



By Matthew Crouch

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## E-commerce and provenance go hand in hand

Marketing expert Matthew Crouch underlines the importance of brand storytelling in the online world

The power of brand storytelling in tying different innovations together is unquestionable. What's interesting is the emerging evidence of this from global e-commerce shifts and trends. It is important that we stop and think about the psychology and expectations of an e-commerce consumer and where else this will offer opportunity and challenges for our current processes and messages. So let's paint a picture.

One of Australia's key export markets for food products is China (A\$5.3bn)<sup>1</sup>. In 2018, more than 54 per cent of all food products purchased by Chinese consumers were purchased online<sup>2</sup>. In 2017, 30 per cent of all food products purchased online by Chinese consumers were from Australia or New Zealand<sup>3</sup>. Chinese consumers are some of the world's most active mobile device users, spending an average of almost 4.5 hours per day on mobile phones or tablets<sup>4</sup>.

From previous experience working with many of the largest and most innovative e-commerce businesses in China, they are working hard to hold up their end of the bargain in delivering content to their e-tail consumers via apps and online communities. But are Australian producers and exporters holding up theirs?

But what does this mean for branding? It means we need marketing content strategies that reflect a daily and mobile-centric information consumption trend. It means that the provenance story we tell needs to be data-led. It means consumers want to ask whatever they want, whenever they want, about our supply chain. And, realistically, it means that the answers to most of their questions need to be delivered instantly, dynamically and automatically. Consider this scenario:

A young mother in Shanghai is browsing the shopping app for her preferred fresh produce store whilst waiting to pick her daughter up from school. The app notifies her of a new Australian mandarin brand for her to trial. As a part of the promotion, she is offered a string of content to watch, read or bookmark for later. So what does this content look like?

• **Our Story** – time and date stamped footage of the orchard in Australia, it

e-commerce customers around the world can connect seamlessly.

This convergence of information consumption via smartphone and the growth of fresh e-tail means we must rethink the way we engage consumers with our brand. It is not a matter of producing all the content they want right now.



Photo: Shutterstock p.p1 {margin: 0.0px 0.0px 0.0px 0.0px; line-height: 10.5px; font: 6.0px Ronnia} span.s1 {letter-spacing: -0.1px}

includes interviews with orchardist John, picker Gemma and warehouse manager Chris.

• **Our Journey** – an animation of the fruit's journey to store, where each step is date stamped showing details of the journey from field to rail, port to port and road to store.

• **Our Community** – links to the brand's own WeChat community to ask others what they think, it also connects to the brand's website and other social channels (inc Whatsapp).

Simply put, we can do all these things right now. However, what is really missing is the automation and connectivity between them. In my mind, the bridging of the gap sits primarily in two camps – how the provenance content becomes data-led and accessible to overseas e-commerce apps, and how it is then pushed to consumers and used to drive conversions, growth and brand loyalty.

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3. <https://www.mintel.com/press-centre/retail-press-centre/opportunities-for-australia-and-new-zealand-among-chinese>

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What we need is a technology solution that not only captures supply chain data (I read about the myriad of trials underway in this space) but one that makes its integration into branding and marketing content packets automated. We then need to build applications with api-style connectivity in mind so

It is about producing and sharing all the content they could want in the future.

#### References

1. <https://austorganic.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Efic-Building-Australias-food-and-beverage-exports-eBook-002.pdf>

4. <https://www.comscore.com/Insights/Blog/Mobile-Matures-as-the-Cross-Platform-Era-Emerge>