Weibo Features and Functionality: A Short Guide:

What is Weibo?

✈️ Weibo is the Chinese version of Twitter and Facebook. It is dissimilar to either, but rather a hybrid of both, with many unique features.
✈️ Weibo had 503 million registered users by the end of 2012, with 46.2 million daily active users.

Profile Page:

✈️ Your Weibo profile page can be customised in a variety of both free and paid ways, depending on the level of individuality you would like to achieve. To change your wallpaper, click on the page turn down to the top right of the cover picture, or select "Template Settings" from the settings menu. You can choose a template set, a template (background wallpaper only) or a cover picture. There are over 60 templates
to choose from, all catagorised under 5 sections - Newest Promotion, Classic, Fashion, School, Events. The fourth tab is to customize your cover or template set. You can upload an image to act as your background wallpaper, or customize the cover photo of your page. Furthermore, you can control the font and block colours of your page here, too. Some features are reserved for when you reach a higher member level, however (member level is determined by the amount you blog).

- You should upload a profile picture to act as your avatar on your Weibo profile.
- Enter a short tagline / description of your company, this should not exceed 140 characters.

The Weibo home page includes a multitude of features, including:

- a real-time feed of the tweets of companies, people and celebrities you follow
- a status update box, in which you can publish new Weibos
- Figures denoting the number of people you are following, your number of followers and how many Weibos you have published to date (RHS)
- A menu with various options, linking to the home page, the Sina News Blog, Favourites, Mentions, Groups to which you belong, and the interaction centre (games, Celebrity hall of fame, hot topics, etc.) (LHS)
‘Weibos’

➻ A lotment of 140 characters per update, this is worth a lot more in characters than letters, as Chinese characters represent words and syllables. Weibos tend to be longer and more descriptive than Tweets, thus is the Weibo culture.

➻ Weibos are used to publish brand messages, interact with customers talking about the brand and communicate directly with individuals and influencers on behalf of the brand.

➻ Be aware, that everything on Sina Weibo is censored, and Users should keep in mind that anything deemed politically sensitive can be deleted or censored by Weibo. Various incidents have resulted in both short and long term blocking of certain keywords. On June 4th, 2013, the keywords “Big Yellow Duck”, “Today” and “Tonight” were blocked because of a photoshopped version of Tank Man, Tienamen Square, in which the tanks were replaced with rubber ducks. Ferrari felt the repercussions of the word “Ferrari” being blocked in the period that followed a car crash in Beijing, which falsely reported the involvement of a Ferrari in March 2012. Read more on this here and here. For a list of blacklisted words on Chinese Internet Platforms, go here.

➻ When publishing Weibos, you can choose to include images from a huge variety of inline photos and videos, emoticons, and music. This function is very popular amongst the Chinese, with most Weibos being accompanied by a related Sina or Third Party image.
To forward / repost / ‘retweet’ a post, click on the ‘Forward’ button on the bottom RHS of the post and a repost box will pop up, you can then enter a 140 character comment and choose whether to post the comment to the author of the original author of the Weibo post too.

Reposts are a great way to interact with followers of the brand. When someone says something nice about the brand in a Weibo, repost it to show them that you are listening. Reposting your followers will make followers feel that you appreciate their feedback and establish stronger customer relationships.
Notifications:

- Notifications include comments, mentions, new fans, news updates, reposts, private messages, app notifications, etc.
- To check for notifications at any stage, click on the envelop icon at the top RHS, the third icon from the right.
- A little red dot will appear when you have new notifications, until you click on them, and notifications will come up in real-time as they occur too, and float underneath this box.

@me:

- To see a list of all the comments in which you have been mentioned, click on the @me item from the above menu.
- Similarly, to mention someone in a post @ (their name), for example if I wish to mention Starbucks I will type @starbucks, autofill will have suggested the person by halfway through and you can click on the suggestion to select the person you want to mention.

#topic#

- The # symbol is called a ‘hashtag’ and is used to mark keywords or topics in a Weibo. It was created as a way to categorize messages.
The Weibo hashtag function differs from that of Twitter, in that you have to include a hashtag # both before and after the topic, for example if I want to mention something related to MSL China, I will type #MSL China#

- Hashtags help people find tweets around certain topics and events.
- By creating a hashtag topic, this automatically makes the topic link to search results for all Weibos containing that hashtag.
- Hashtags are used by brands to spread trends and memes and to be able to aggregate conversations around brand topics into a single search stream.

**Comments**

- Unlike Twitter, Weibo offers users the option to comment on others’ posts.
- Comments appear as a threaded comment list, so all the comments on any given post are listed together, making it easy to keep track of related conversations.
Search

- You can search Weibo to find conversations about your brand and topics around your brand. This is a great way to jump into relevant conversations that you would have otherwise missed and interact with clients.
- You can search in the box that always remains in the top bar, or enter the Weibo search function for more advanced options, like searching for people, pictures, Weibos, companies, etc.

Micro Topics:

- Micro Topics is Weibo’s platform for displaying any posts that are related to a certain topic.
- The ‘Weihuati’ (微话题) page makes it easier for users to view and discuss a particular topic.
- To access this page, click on the ‘Hot’ tab in the top bar, next to ‘Home’.
- Initially a list of hot topics will appear, you can browse or search for a particular topic.
- In the menu on the right, you can choose from popular topics, such as groups, films, tv shows, cuisine, sport, science, travel, etc.
Types of Weibo Accounts:

**Verified account:**
- Useful for celebrities/well-known persons, can verify that yours is the official account

**VIP Membership account:**
- Divided into 6 levels, starting at 10RMB a month,
- The more you log in, the more your level progresses.
- Benefits include status boost, additional functions, mobile and security features (eg voice postings by phone)

‘Daren’, experts, account:
- Interest-based system
- Insists on the real identity of users being displayed
- Helps users find followers with interests in common (similar to Facebook)

**Enterprise account:**
- Weibo upgrade version for enterprise accounts.
- 300 thousand existing Enterprises accounts.
- Enterprise accounts can be customised and can incorporate graphics also
Top five most followed Enterprise Weibo categories include: online shopping, entertainment, consumer electronics, catering food and clothing.

Users use Enterprises’ Weibo pages to research promotions, entertainment, learn more about an enterprise, directly communicate with an enterprise, gain customer service attention.

Enterprise accounts should be used to strengthen customer relations and interact with consumers, as well as promote the company and improve brand awareness.

The upgraded Enterprise Weibo 2.0 is equipped with more advanced data analytic tools and enables companies to install customised Apps for brand promotion.

There is a map included in the navigation bar, so clients can locate the company with ease.

A sliding banner option allows for promotions.

Be sure to link the page to your company’s website and include contact details.
Weibo data centre:

- To download Apps and plug-ins to keep track of your Weibo analytics, visit www.data.weibo.com.
- With an enterprise account, you need only click on the tab in the side bar, labelled 'information centre' (数据中心), the second tab down on the portal page.)
Using Weibo analytics, you can track over 60 forms of data, including your company account's number of unique visitors, post reaches, number of reposts, greatest period of activity within a day.

You can analyse your fans, where they are from, their age, your most popular tags amongst your fans, etc.
Being on Weibo couldn’t be easier:

›› Download the smartphone app for iPhone / iPad [here](#), for Android [here](#) *(this one will translate posts into English too!)*

›› Download the desktop app [here](#)

Get inspired:

›› Read an English presentation about maximising your Brand Power with Weibo [here](#)

›› Read about the top 10 Brand posts on Weibo in 2012 [here](#), including Nike and BMW

›› Read a comparison of Twitter and Weibo [here](#)

›› Read more about Weibo Enterprise accounts and most popular brand topics [here](#)

›› 46.5% of Weibo users read user comments about products and services; 29.7% look for promotional offers on company accounts; 26.7% share their product experiences; and 19% interact with companies, read more facts [here](#) and start promoting your brand today!

›› Read about how Coca Cola cooperated with Sina Weibo to promote its customised bottles using Weibo Wallet, resulting in online sales of 300 bottles per minute within the first 4 days of campaign launch [here](#), not to mention the social media coverage that was gained from happy customers posting pictures of their custom-made bottles.

›› Check out a slideshow about how to get started on Enterprise Weibo [here](#)

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**The 4 C's of Weibo account management, as suggested by Sina:**

- **Content:** provide relevant, valuable content on time
- **Connections:** Follow people and connect with them
- **Conversations:** Start conversations with customers, interact
- **Community:** Encourage clients to share and interact with you

›› Start today! Join the huge no. of popular brands who have showed they have full control of Weibo Marketing!