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CASE STUDY · MARLUC SYNOPSIS

Luckin Coffee Lucky AI ordering agent

IMPLEMENTED 2025 ONWARDS · RETAIL AND HOSPITALITY · CHINA · BAND D · CLAIMED ONLY

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A Chinese coffee chain often described as having the most stores in China launched an AI ordering agent that takes voice orders and payment inside the conversation, and reports AI-assisted store replenishment; no figures on use of the agent are published.

ABOUT THIS SYNOPSIS

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AT A GLANCE

AI used: Generative AI ordering agent using Doubao and DeepSeek models, with in-conversation payment; forecasting for store replenishment.

Implemented: 2025 onwards. Grade: band D, Task support, Claimed only.

Headline result, as reported: Store ordering time cut from 10 minutes to 4.8 and drink availability at 99.0% with smart replenishment, per China News Service; no usage figures published for the Lucky AI ordering agent

1 · The case

The facts, as reported by the 5 sources listed at the end. Where a source is silent, the field says "Not reported".

Organisation

Luckin Coffee Inc.. Chinese coffee chain with more than 35,000 stores, per China News Service, often labelled the coffee chain with the most stores in China, per China.com. Canvas block: 3. Customers and proposition. Also 4. Operations and process, 6. Data and technology.

Business challenge

The challenge. Before AI Pay, customers who ordered through an AI agent still had to jump to a payment page and confirm by hand, per Xinhua. Dao Insights describes a harshly competitive Chinese coffee market.

Who implemented it

Volcengine (ByteDance) (Model or cloud provider): Co-built Lucky AI and supplied the Doubao model.
DeepSeek (Model or cloud provider): Model used in Lucky AI, per Dao Insights.
Alipay (Ant Group) (Software vendor): AI Pay payment inside the agent.
Huawei (Industry partner): Hosts the agent in its Xiaoyi assistant with Huawei Pay.

Technology (SEAM pillar E)

SEAM types: T3 API integrations, T7 AI agents, T8 Predictive / ML models. Deployment: Not reported. Vendors and products: Volcengine (ByteDance), DeepSeek, Alipay, Huawei, Lucky AI, Doubao, DeepSeek, Alipay AI Pay, Smart ordering 2.0.

Where it was built in: Ordering agent in the Luckin app, WeChat and Alipay mini-programs and Huawei's Xiaoyi assistant, with payment through Alipay or Huawei Pay; replenishment forecasting in stores.

What changed

Before: customers tapped through menus to order and pay; store staff placed stock orders by hand. After: customers can order and pay by voice in several apps, and store ordering is forecast-led, cutting each stock order from 10 minutes to 4.8, by the company's account relayed by China News Service. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

What it cost

Not reported.

What it saved

Store ordering time per order from 10 minutes to 4.8 minutes and drink availability of 99.0%, per China News Service. Sales or cost effects of Lucky AI: Not reported. [1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

Governance and control

Payment inside the agent requires identity verification before money moves, per Xinhua. Accountable owner, testing of answers and handling of customer data: Not reported.

S2 · Accountable owner · Claimed
Pu Yu, product director at Luckin's technology centre, spoke for the launch; an accountable owner for the agent is not reported. [1]

A1 · Safe use · Not reported
Not reported.

A2 · Human in the loop · Claimed
The customer confirms the order by saying 'place order' and passes identity verification before payment, per Xinhua. [1]

A3 · Monitoring and assurance · Not reported
Not reported.

A4 · Vendor AI · Not reported
The agent runs on Volcengine with Doubao and DeepSeek models and connects to Alipay, WeChat, Qwen and Huawei; vendor terms and controls are not reported. [2] [5]

A5 · Agent controls · Claimed
The agent can place and pay for orders only after the customer's spoken instruction and identity verification, per Xinhua. [1]

A6 · Standards and regulation · Not reported
Not reported.

What worked, what did not, what is unproven

WORKED

– Ordering and payment completed inside the conversation, across Luckin's own channels and partner assistants.

– Shorter stock ordering time in stores, by the company's account.

DID NOT

– Not reported.

UNPROVEN

– How many orders go through Lucky AI and whether it changes basket size or repeat visits.

– Whether the move is, in Dao Insights' words, "a marketing stunt or a genuine pivot to a tech-centric strategy".

Timeline

May 2025 Luckin and Volcengine launch Lucky AI 1.0, using Doubao and DeepSeek models, for voice ordering in the app and WeChat mini-program [2]

Sept 2025 Alipay launches 'AI Pay' first on Lucky AI: customers order and pay by voice without leaving the conversation [1]

Feb 2026 Lucky AI agent available through Huawei's Xiaoyi assistant on HarmonyOS, with Huawei Pay [3]

Jul 2026 At WAIC 2026, Luckin presents AI across ordering, supply chain and store operations, including smart ordering 2.0 [4]

2 · Grade and SEAM assessment

MarLuc's opinion, made on the evidence above. How cases are graded: marluc.co.uk/case-studies/how-we-rate

Level of change and impact

Claimed: Not applicable. Grade: D, Task support. Proof: Claimed only. Level of change: Task support.

Task support (Level 1, band D). A new ordering channel and help for store ordering; no change in the business shown in figures.

The SEAM view and lessons learnt

The agent sits at the join between Luckin and several platforms it does not own: Alipay, WeChat, Qwen and Huawei. That widens reach but spreads control of the customer conversation. The store replenishment figures are the more concrete result, and they come from the company's own account.

1. Publish usage and conversion figures for any customer-facing agent.
2. Require identity checks before an agent can take payment.
3. Agree data and service terms with each platform that hosts your agent.

Evidence

Score 0 of 4. Self-reported: launch details and store figures come from Luckin and Alipay statements relayed by Xinhua, China News Service and trade press.

Evaluation method. Self-reported company figures: store ordering time and availability; no usage figures for the agent.

Sources disagree. Dao Insights (May 2025) says the agent ran in the Luckin app and WeChat mini-program; Xinhua (September 2025) describes the Alipay mini-program and Luckin app. Both may be true at different dates.

Status. Ongoing: Lucky AI live across Luckin and partner channels, per China.com, July 2026.

3 · Original sources

Read these in full. To challenge a fact or a grade, use the contact form at marluc.co.uk or the link on https://marluc.co.uk/case-studies/luckin-coffee-lucky-ai-ordering

[1] Xinhua: Alipay launches 'AI Pay', ordering and paying by voice inside an agent (Chinese, September 2025)
https://www.news.cn/tech/20250911/d2b40fe724684cdabcd0997bb742ad17/c.html

[2] Dao Insights: Luckin deploys DeepSeek and Doubao for its AI entity (May 2025)
https://daoinsights.com/news/luckin-deploys-deepseek-and-doubao-for-its-ai-entity/

[3] Sina News: Luckin Coffee Lucky AI agent arrives on HarmonyOS (Chinese, February 2026)
https://news.sina.com.cn/sx/2026-02-12/detail-inhmpyyc9726639.shtml

[4] China News Service: How Luckin's end-to-end digital intelligence answers the 'AI+' question (Chinese, July 2026)
https://www.chinanews.com.cn/cj/2026/07-17/10661699.shtml

[5] China.com: From 30,000 stores to an AI ecosystem: how Luckin is using AI (Chinese, July 2026)
https://m.tech.china.com/digi/articles/20260718/202607181920364.html

Luckin Coffee Inc. website: https://www.lkcoffee.com

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