

# "Snow King" Counterattack: Mixue Ice Cream & Tea Brand Marketing Upgrade Strategy

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**Abstract.** According to relevant research, by 2023, the annual sales of China's milk tea market will exceed 300 billion yuan, showing the huge potential of the milk tea industry. With the expansion of the scale of the milk tea market, the competition is becoming increasingly fierce. Well-known brands such as Hey Tea, Nai Xue's tea have occupied an important share in the market. Faced with the challenge of new tea brands, Mixue Ice Cream & Tea has made a variety of attempts to rejuvenate brands from three aspects: brand positioning, brand symbol and brand communication, and explored the direction of national tea brand construction in the Internet era. The theme of this research is how Mixue Ice Cream & Tea has successfully gone from an old brand that no one knows to a new milk tea brand sales champion. The research results show that the experience marketing of Mixue Ice Cream & Tea is inseparable from the brand's customer choice. The brand can only win the possibility of sustainable development if it grasps the heart of the new consumer force Generation Z. This report takes Mixue Ice Cream & Tea as the research object and uses case analysis to discuss its specific performance in positioning and communication to win the favor of consumers. So it can provide some inspiration and reference for the marketing and communication of similar brands.

**Keywords:** Mixue Ice Cream & Tea, generation Z, brand image, marketing.

## 1. Introduction

CBNDData's "2019 China Internet Consumption Ecology Big Data Report" points out that the most potential emerging consumer groups in 2020 are: small-town people, millennial parents and Generation Z [1]. With the continuous growth of Generation Z (post-95 - post-00) groups, more and more consumption rights fall to their heads. Unlike previous consumer groups, Generation Z, with the rapid development of the Internet, is more willing to devote limited attention and funds to things that are fresh and interesting to themselves, and the pursuit of interest and personality has become an important group characteristic. They like personality development, love to socialize, like to create a circle of culture with interests, and even like to interact in the virtual Internet. Among the many video types, parody videos are particularly popular with this group. In this kind of video, based on the creation factors of spoof and fun, the funny content gives the audience an equal and open psychological suggestion to watch. At present, Generation Z has gradually become the main force of tea consumption in China, leading a new consumption model. Brands should accurately grasp the consumption habits and consumption preferences of Generation Z, so as to formulate corresponding marketing strategies. With the continuous development of consumption structure from low level to high level, consumers' demand for products has begun to change from functional to emotional and spiritual value [2]. In the new consumption era, the role of traditional marketing methods in brand communication is gradually weakening, and the importance of brand IP is becoming increasingly prominent, becoming an important part of enterprise competitiveness. The research method of this study was literature analysis. From the point of view of Mixue Ice Cream & Tea's release of the theme song, analyze the reasons for its 2021 fire [3]. The analysis part divides the marketing strategy after the upgrade of Mixue Ice Cream & Tea into three parts, which are: positioning analysis, IP image analysis and communication channel analysis.

## 2. Introduction of Mixue Ice Cream & Tea

Mixue Ice Cream & Tea is a chain institution specializing in fresh ice cream and tea drinks. It is a national chain brand specializing in fresh ice cream and tea drinks for young people. Founded by MIXUE Co., Ltd. in 1997. But it won't go viral until 2021. So far, the number of stores has reached more than 20,000, and the valuation is 60 billion yuan, which is 5 times the market value of the listed Nai Xue's tea [4]. Its marketing strategy is really worth learning.

On June 16 this year, Mixue Ice Cream & Tea was revealed to have quality safety problems. Mixue Ice Cream & Tea the first time out to apologize, however, a large number of users not only do not complain about the food safety problem of Mixue Ice Cream & Tea, but stand up for the crisis public relations of Mixue Ice Cream & Tea. They think Michelle's pricing is so cheap for the benefit of the people, and the prosecution is putting so much pressure on Mixue Ice Cream & Tea. They even asked the government to inspect more expensive restaurants. All in all, netizens simply ignored Mixue Ice Cream & Tea's mistakes. As a brand founded in 1997, Mixue Ice Cream & Tea waited until 2021 to suddenly become popular on the whole network. The reason why Mixue Ice Cream & Tea can effortlessly rely on users to help whitewash public relations, and its brand marketing upgrade strategy is inseparable from the relationship.

On June 5, 2021, Mixue Ice Cream & Tea chose the official account of Station B to release the theme song MV for the first time, the milk tea market tends to be saturated, Mixue Ice Cream & Tea this time to improve the brand sound volume, choose the form of sound transmission, with the American country folk song "Oh, Suzanne" melody as the background rhythm is light, with a sentence of soil lyrics, circular brainwashing, As soon as it was officially launched, it went viral all over the Internet. The main reason why brands are keen on sound marketing is that in the current market, pictures and words are no longer enough to impress consumers. Most Generation Z consumers are addicted to spoof videos, and sound has naturally become the best medium to reach users. Although the B station also got a good publicity effect, the theme song alone reached 20.95 million plays [5]. But the channel that really made Michelle's theme song hit the market was TikTok. As an APP with 600 million daily lives, TikTok's fission capacity and propagation speed are amazing. Its own IP, theme song and so on have formed a wide range of fan cognition, and the number of plays of related topics of "Mixue Ice Cream & Tea Theme song" on the TikTok platform has exceeded 1.3 billion times. The theme song of Mixue Ice Cream & Tea has been played more than 21 million times on bilibili platform, and related topics of Mixue Ice Cream & Tea have been read more than 580 million times on Weibo platform.

On June 19, 2022, the TikTok topic Mixue Ice Cream & Tea black" hit the hot list. The avatar of Mixue Ice Cream & Tea's official social media accounts has been changed to a black snow King, causing netizens to speculate whether the snow King has been tanned due to the summer heat. In response, the official account of the Mixue Ice Cream & Tea responded that the snow king went to the mulberry garden to pick mulberries and was suntanned. The new mulberry drinks of Mixue Ice Cream & Tea are listed.

On May 20, 2023, China's Valentine's Day, the Mixue Ice Cream & Tea official released the news that the IP image Snow King has a girlfriend. His girlfriend is Snow Sister, a female version of the snowman with a bow on her head, newly launched by Mixue Ice Cream & Tea. In addition, Mixue Ice Cream & Tea also released a new global theme song on June 16 this year, going international. June 30 and this year's most popular Game egg party co-released a new music video. Since the theme song hit the whole network in 2021, the marketing of Mixue Ice Cream & Tea can basically board the hot list of major platforms every time [6].

### 3. Marketing Strategy Analysis

#### 3.1. Positioning Policy

Low product prices and low costs are the key to the success of Mixue Ice Cream & Tea positioning. The unit price does not exceed 8 yuan of milk tea, 3 yuan of ice cream, and then cooperate with the preferential promotion activities in the store, so that the main consumer groups with high consumer demand but weak consumption power, to a certain extent, "ignore" the price, even primary school students can afford it. Mixue Ice Cream & Tea stores are mainly located in Henan, Hebei, Shandong, Sichuan and other provinces of the third and fourth lines and below the city, basically reached the point of "contracting". In these places, students and young people who have just entered the society are the target consumers of the brand [7]. Therefore, young people in Generation Z are the main consumer force of Mixue Ice Cream & Tea. Therefore, to the sinking market, the main cost-effective Mixue Ice Cream & Tea has more advantages than other tea brands. This is also why, in the past few years, few people have seen the figure of Mixue Ice Cream & Tea in the first and second tier cities. The "rural encircle the city" route adopted by Mixue Ice Cream & Tea avoids the fierce fighting of the network black tea drinking brand in the first and second tier cities, but also allows the brand's business scale to expand like a snowball. The business model that coincides with Pinduoduo is also the main reason why the public calls it "Pinduoduo" in the milk tea industry. After three years of suffering from the COVID-19 epidemic, many milk tea brands have closed down and raised prices. No matter how other brands raise prices, Mixue Ice Cream & Tea has still maintained the same price. The low prices have left consumers wondering whether Michelle Ice City can make money. When consumers see that Mixue Ice Cream & Tea is still a conscientious brand despite the blow of the novel coronavirus epidemic, it is easier to inspire their sympathy.

#### 3.2. IP Image

Finding a cultural prototype that the public is familiar with, creating a sense of familiarity, and letting consumers remember it at a glance is the key to the success of IP image. The snowman with ice cream in his hand is the new IP image of Mixue Ice Cream & Tea, which can be seen everywhere in store signs, product packaging, store doors, and other places. Its presence everywhere allows consumers to strongly associate the snow King with Mixue Ice Cream & Tea, forming memory symbols. At the same time, Snow King is also the Logo of the Ice Cream Music Festival, which combines young people's favorite music and entertainment with IP image and brand marketing to accelerate the spread of Snow King IP. To create an effective IP image, it must not be too complex. It should be familiar enough to remember at a glance. The "Snow King" image is the most typical example: two round snowball bodies, a pointed carrot nose, plus an ice cream stick, a crown. It is not difficult to find that this image retains the basic features of the snowman "round body, carrot pointed nose" - whether in the north and south, whether at home and abroad, the description of the snowman is so. On the basis of the snowman, with a scepter, crown and other symbols of the "king", the "snow king" was born, and became a memorable and characteristic IP image. Secondly, to create a personal IP, first lifelike to be widely popular. Many brands are doing "personalized IP", but it's easy to leave a place of self-euphoria and embarrassment. Let the "Snow King" IP personification, Mixue Ice Cream & Tea did these things: for example, in the case, the snow King has a girlfriend "snow sister", and Mixue Ice Cream & Tea often shares the daily love of Snow King Snow sister; For another example, let the snow king tan in the case, directly breaking people's traditional impression of the snowman. Let the IP image of the snow king replace the staff to personally pick mulberries in the orchard. There will be snow king into a "flow anchor", have their own "two micro shake", send a circle of friends, a new product on the recommendation, change the pattern of interaction with friends [8]. To create a personal IP, first of all, let the IP come alive, have their own personality, story, imagination and extension space. When there is the snow King IP, from the brand image to the MV production, and then to the offline promotion, almost all around the iconic symbol of the snow King, and even after the store proofing, you can also see the image of the "snow King" on the shutter. In

the Snow King Magic Shop, there are a series of peripheral products - canvas bags, mugs, throw pillows, dolls, key chains, blankets and so on. You see it everywhere. It deepens the memory.

### 3.3. Media Marketing Strategy

The marketing of the Mixue Ice Cream & Tea will find that in addition to the form of the theme song, the most important thing is the channel. When Generation Z becomes the main force of current consumption, businesses want to do a good job in marketing, the first step is to consider what is in the mind of the young generation, and how to do marketing in order to gain the favor of young people. In the face of consumer goods, Mixue Ice Cream & Tea as the main non-first-tier city drinks, with B station "MIXUE Sweet Honey" of the second creation of the spoof video, the fire across the whole network, and then become this year's phenomenon of the spread of the brand, perfect among the head of retail tea drinks [9]. Different from the post-70s and post-80s who need to learn to use the Internet, Generation Z has been seamlessly connected with the Internet world since birth and is completely "Internet natives". For Generation Z, Internet technology is invisible, existing in life like breathing, and accompanied by the popularity of the network, is ubiquitous marketing information. Brainwashing, listening to more always annoyed, really let this marketing circle, is like the production of ghost animal B station young people's whole life. You can't talk about what Gen z thinks without B station. As a video community APP, the most important user group of Station B is 18-24 years old, which is a completely young community. Why Station B is successful is not only to cater to the needs and high points of Generation Z for quadratic yuan, e-sports, deconstruction and parody, but also because they can communicate with "interest and good" in Station B. For example, King Yan will be silent when he sees it, and Meng Po will cry when she hears the "underworld version". Another example is the Chinese opera version adapted by netizens, from the clothing to the singing songs, all have internal flavor. There are also "Bear version", "DJ version" [10]. These videos for a time to let the B station spoof area completely collapsed. The sense of participation in the second creation is the secret weapon to please young people. This generation of young people, like to use creativity and brand communication [11]. In addition to "dropping" a drink, they want to feel more involved. For example, on Bilibili, people can see the "56 ethnic snow King" and "News broadcast Snow King" spontaneously created by netizens. A large part of the success of Snow King is also brought by the second creation, this interactive small play, so that the brand image is more three-dimensional. For some brands that want to "woo" young people, it is a good way to land at station B to "play" with young people. In young people's fancy play, "spoof" may be a choice worth considering [12].

## 4. Conclusion

Now, Mixue Ice Cream & Tea is far ahead of its peers by brainwashing consumers. This should be attributed to the close combination of precision targeting and marketing methods. Both the young generation z as the target customer perspective. Or caters to Generation z's second-generation hobby. Mixue Ice Cream & Tea has cleverly chosen bilibili and Tiktok as the communication channel. Faced with Generation Z, the main consumer force in the new era, Mixue Ice Cream & Tea focuses on guiding fans to create freely instead of directly pushing official creative content. Then look for quality fan content and build their brand's image in the process of promoting fan content. However, the brand of Mixue Ice Cream & Tea lacks innovation: the product line and brand image of MIXUE have not changed much over the years, and lack of freshness and attraction. However, it is far from enough for the brand to rely only on an IP image of the snow King to constantly derivative topics. Mixue Ice Cream & Tea can take more interactive ways with other brands to create topics to attract more consumers. After the COVID-19 pandemic, as people pay more attention to healthy eating, Mixue Ice Cream & Tea can increase the development and promotion of healthy drinks. It cannot be limited to ice cream and milk. Brands should choose more low-cost and healthy raw materials, such as vegetables and fruits. To attract more health-conscious consumers. In addition to focusing on offline stores, Mixue Ice Cream & Tea can expand its market size and improve profits by increasing online

sales and delivery services. Mixue Ice Cream & Tea can consider entering the market of European and American countries to attract more students overseas to achieve global development. However, this research does not apply to brands of expensive products. Mixue Ice Cream & Tea's brand upgrade strategy applies to all traditional brands with low prices. Today, with the rapid development of the Internet, traditional brands should pay more attention to building brand image and occupying the minds of consumers. The successful upgrading of Mixue Ice Cream & Tea's marketing strategy has helped other brands devise new solutions of their own. Especially when it comes to appealing to Gen Z consumers.

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