

A Study on the Operational Model of the Real Economy of MIXI Ice Cream&Tea from the Perspective of IP

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Abstract. In recent years, MIXI ice cream & tea has developed rapidly in China, and one of the important reasons for its success is the success of IP creation. This study will adopt the method of case analysis to study the operational model of the real economy of MIXI ice cream & tea from the perspective of IP. The main focus will be on how to create an IP in MIXI ice cream & tea and how to use creating an IP for promotion. This study will focus on how MIXI ice cream & tea utilize IP to drive the real economy and summarize the advantages of its operation model. At the same time, it also studied the many shortcomings of MIXI ice cream & tea and proposed corresponding solutions. However, there is a lack of overall data analysis, and the survey is not comprehensive enough. We hope to conduct in-depth research in the future.

Keywords: MIXI Ice Cream & Tea, IP, Operation Model.

1. Introduction

1.1. Research Background

The price in the mid-range tea market is often between 10-20 yuan, while the price in the low-end market is often below 10 yuan, while high-end milk tea brands are above 20 yuan. According to a survey, in 2020, the retail sales of high-end on-site tea drinks in China accounted for 19.7% of the total on-site tea drinks in China, and the market is still mainly dominated by mid-to-end tea drinks [1]. With a brand strategy of small profits and high sales, MIXI ice cream & tea has found consumer demand in the sinking market and has rapidly expanded in recent years, occupying the main share of the low-end market. In 2014, MIXI ice cream & tea only opened 1000 stores, but by 2020, it had already opened 10,000. After completing the financing in 2021, the valuation of MIXI ice cream & tea reached 20 billion [2]. As one of the top tea beverage brands, MIXI ice cream & tea has created a new IP image through its excellent IP communication strategy, greatly enhancing brand awareness and influence through interaction with consumers. Therefore, this paper will take MIXI ice cream & tea as an example to explore how to build an operational model in the process of IP creation and dissemination and, based on this, propose suggestions for the operation model of tea beverage brands.

1.2. Literature Review

In the context of consumer upgrading, tea brand promotion not only promotes the functions of tea but also pursues the emotional and cultural values of the brand. Due to the continuous involvement of consumers in the brand communication process through their own consumption experience, tea, and beverage brand communication nowadays places more emphasis on effective interaction with consumers. In this sense, differential brand communication in the digital era is like a cultural ceremony where brands and consumers jointly build and create. The dissemination process of tea beverage brands is a process of people sharing and exchanging experiences and meanings through audio-visual symbols, attempting to spread the brand's values and concepts through brand building. At the same time, brand promotion can also be carried out through multiple channels and forms to consumers with different preferences to understand consumers' needs for the product. At the same time, if the brand wants to occupy a place in the hearts of consumers, it must build and spread a unique brand culture, create emotional channels between the brand and consumers, and enhance consumers' stickiness to the brand [3]. As a large chain milk tea shop, MIXI ice cream & tea has been

operating very successfully in China in recent years, with the most impressive being its IP - Snow King and a brainwashing song. The core of the success of MIXI ice cream & tea is its low price, with young consumers represented by college students being the main consumers of MIXI ice cream & tea. At the same time, MIXI ice cream & tea continue to market magical-themed songs, inspiring netizens to create secondary works, producing derivative videos, and further expanding their influence [4]. The success of the IP image of MIXI ice cream & tea also benefits from the development of its public welfare undertakings. During the rainstorm, MIXI ice cream & tea donated huge sums of money for flood control and post-disaster reconstruction, which had a great influence. In addition, in public welfare undertakings such as poverty alleviation teaching assistants and caring exam assistance, Snow King is allowed to hold flowers and wear a doctoral hat to wish his students the gold medal. These activities demonstrate the corporate values of “taking from society, nurturing society, and dedicating oneself to public welfare”. The brand capital image behind them is greatly weakened, replaced by increased exposure and market share [5]. The product concept of MIXI ice cream & tea is high quality and affordable, integrating from production to brand operation. According to a survey, the main users of MIXI ice cream & tea are young people aged 16-25 in small towns, with more women than men. Social media easily influence them and enjoy fresh things. They have a high frequency of consumption in tea, but their low unit price is characterized by impulsive consumption.

Most articles mainly focus on the dissemination mode and development strategies of MIXI ice cream & tea, while a few articles study the shortcomings of MIXI ice cream & tea’s development. In these studies, the advantages and disadvantages of MIXI ice cream & tea can be understood, and operational models can be summarized and suggestions made.

1.3. Research Framework

This article will investigate the operation mode of MIXI ice cream & tea and collect relevant data to gain a deeper understanding of how MIXI ice cream & tea utilizes IP to drive the real economy and summarize its operational advantages that can be promoted.

2. Case Description

MIXI ice cream & tea was founded in 1997. After over 20 years of development, it has over 25000 stores nationwide, covering 31 provinces (cities, autonomous regions), and actively exploring overseas markets [6]. The most impressive feature of MIXI ice cream & tea is its IP Snow King and a brainwashing song, which brings it closer to consumers, expands its influence and enhances consumer stickiness. MIXI ice cream & tea has created a very personalized theme song with a strong sense of rhythm and a memorable MV, which has received a lot of exposure and dissemination on online media and has become a popular video on the internet, almost everyone has heard of. After creating the IP image of Snow King, MIXI ice cream & tea has endowed this IP image with a great independent personality. It frequently updates Snow King-related anime stories on Weibo and creates a series of short scenes and dialogues based on daily life, making users feel that Snow King seems to be a “human” with independent thinking, possessing emotional emotions, emotions, joys, sorrows, and joys. The core route of MIXI ice cream & tea is low price, with a large number of stores opened in both large and small cities, which can expand influence and earn franchise fees. MIXI ice cream & tea has also made a lot of investment in public welfare, increasing the company’s exposure and establishing a good social image. MIXI ice cream & tea has always maintained product innovation and continuously launched new products. MIXI ice cream & tea also engages in cross-border cooperation with many well-known brands to jointly create high-quality products and surrounding areas. In recent years, MIXI ice cream & tea has rapidly expanded its stores, occupying a large market share with low prices and widespread popularity. However, it has repeatedly exposed food safety issues, requiring strengthened supervision. The integrated marketing communication of MIXI ice cream & tea emphasizes customer-centered, starting from customer needs and integrating the entire

marketing activities of the enterprise. Emphasize consumer orientation and continuously tap into potential consumer needs. MIXI ice cream & tea has built a complete and rich supply chain system, connecting the entire chain from raw material supply to final sales. As an important communication element of MIXI ice cream & tea, Snow King implements integrated packaging design and advertising promotion strategies from stores to material systems, striving to strengthen consumers' awareness of Snow King, thus forming a strong brand memory symbol in users' hearts. Collaborating with all communication elements builds a brand image, establishes a long-term intimate relationship between the brand and consumers, and helps enterprises continue to gain consumer value.

3. Analysis on the Problem

3.1. Competitiveness

There are many problems in the development of MIXI ice cream & tea. The main products of MIXI ice cream & tea are milk tea and ice cream, with severe homogenization and lack of uniqueness, resulting in low product competitiveness. MIXI ice cream & tea has always focused on rapid expansion at low prices, lacking cultural heritage in tea drinking, and lacking in creating the product itself.

3.2. Marketing

In terms of price marketing, there is a lack of highlights and promotional activities. Many other tea brands will promote on fixed dates to attract consumers. MIXI ice cream & tea has not formed a digital marketing management system, and marketing activities lack attractiveness.

3.3. Food Safety

The tea industry has rapidly expanded the number of stores through franchises and chains, and brand standardization management and quality control are crucial. Under the low-priced expansion strategy, the profit space of the franchise stores in MIXI ice cream & tea has been squeezed, resulting in some franchise stores taking risks to reduce costs, leading to food safety issues and having a huge negative impact on the brand of MIXI ice cream & tea. MIXI ice cream & tea franchise store uses expired green tea powder, and many coffee powders are approaching their expiration date. At the same time, inspectors have also found that some staff members do not have health certificates, and personal belongings are not distinguished, which has sparked heated discussions [7]. This type of food safety issue is not the first time, and every occurrence will decrease consumer trust in the MIXI ice cream & tea brand. Therefore, it is important to strengthen the management of its stores.

3.4. Cultural Value

For MIXI ice cream & tea, the main reason for its popularity is its entertainment. Its entertainment function plays a major role in the brand promotion process. The entertainment function helps quickly capture consumers' attention, mobilizing their purchasing intention and promoting product value. Behind this entertainment phenomenon, it reflects the pressure and anxiety the public urgently needs to release daily. The public relies on the internet to escape reality, which is not conducive to disseminating other cultural values in the long run. Excessive commercialization will only curb the development of mainstream ideology and make the public ignore other positive social issues and public affairs. In the long run, the cultural value of a company is the core of sustainable development. Without sufficient cultural value, the public will quickly forget a brand, and the public will not be able to rely on it.

3.5. Communication

The direct communication channels with consumers are very narrow and cannot solve their problems in a timely manner. Lack of keen insight into consumer needs.

3.6. Single Style

A cute tone mainly characterizes the Snow King IP image of MIXI ice cream & tea, and the promotion and surrounding product styles are mostly cute and lively, with a relatively single style. Other tea and beverage brands have previously promoted that, as a symbiotic entity in the universe, it emerged in the vortex galaxy of the universe, between the economic beauty of life and the virtual world. It is committed to exploring every beautiful space in the universe, sending a sincere invitation to every explorer on Earth who yearns for novelty, and creating a beautiful metaverse story. During the birthday season, a “live broadcast+blind box+digital collection” matrix was established to integrate hot spots, hot spots, and functions into the inventory and sell out in one second on the Alipay applet to achieve accumulation [8]. However, the Snow King IP image of MIXI ice cream & tea still lacks an up-to-date character background, which cannot create a trendy gaming experience for consumers. A single brand IP image will lead to a homogenized development trend in the later stage, and setting too similar personas can make people feel dull and boring. The symbolic dissemination of its brand also inevitably tends towards homogenization. It should be reflected in the homogenization of content and visual homogeneity. The homogenization of content is due to the fact that after the popularity of Snow King’s IP, the content produced by major social media platforms is relatively similar. Although some netizens have also created secondary content for it, the style of the shooting content is similar. Visual homogenization refers to using IP image symbols, which tend to be cute and quirky, while other styles of images are rare, which are important parts that can affect the public’s perception.

4. Suggestions

4.1. Solution about Competitiveness

Improve tea processing technology, continuously enhance product taste, and develop innovative products with themes, co-branding, and health concepts. The tea industry has entered the 3.0 era, and consumers focus on not only the product’s taste but also the naturalization and health of raw materials, as well as the product’s taste and novelty of the product forms [9].

4.2. Solution about Marketing

The lack of an online marketing strategy can strengthen the building of the official account, regularly launch online promotional activities, and increase the attention of the masses to the city. Strengthen the digital management of consumer membership information, gradually improve the underlying user and member labels, and transmit consumer information data and consumption opinions to the operation management platform for operation scenario management such as point system, rating system, and stored value system [10]. Deepen the connection between enterprises and consumers through the operation management platform, and optimize the consumer’s shopping experience. Regular online promotional activities can be carried out, such as fixed date price reductions, frequent distribution of coupons to customers on the mini-program of MIXI ice cream & tea, and online promotion of MIXI ice cream & tea with consumption links for consumers to click and increase purchase volume. Cooperate with Alipay to provide joint benefits to consumers on holidays. Offline channels are the realistic construction of real IP scenarios, aiming to not only sell products but also create a gathering place that integrates experience, entertainment, and communication. In addition to fully utilizing offline storefront bars, sign posters, televisions, Snow King dolls, and other exposure and promotional products, flash events can also be carried out in first- and second-tier cities to extend offline advertising to densely populated areas such as subway stations and office buildings.

4.3. Solution about Food safety

In the face of food safety, enterprises must strengthen industry self-discipline and internal management, improve supervision and reward and punishment mechanisms, and supervise and review their franchise stores to prevent fraud. Franchise stores must strictly adhere to the shelf life of raw materials, screen the fruits used daily, and display them in the storefront display cabinet. At the same time, it is required that the environment inside the store be clean and tidy, with regular inspections and daily supervision. When training employees, it is necessary to have an enthusiastic attitude and strictly control the operation process of beverage production. At the same time, it is necessary to check the health certificates of employees constantly. Personnel who cannot prove their own safety will not be included in the employee group, and every drink must be safe and delicious. Reward excellent employees and improve management systems. By grasping food safety and maintaining the bottom line of brand trust, enterprises can achieve better and faster development in an increasingly strict food safety environment.

4.4. Solution about Cultural Value

China has a history of five thousand years of tea drinking. The tea-drinking industry has innovated on the basis of tea. MIXI ice cream & tea should integrate Chinese traditional culture into the brand image, tea-drinking products, packaging design, and operation philosophy, create China-Chic tea drinks, pass on the brand culture, derive outstanding multinational style peripheral products, and precipitate its own cultural heritage and value to achieve long-term development. Combining local characteristics to develop products, create a unique store image and brand-new flavors, and provide consumers with a brand-new experience to increase the repurchase rate.

4.5. Solution about Communication

User feedback is the direct driving force for the progress of brand products and services. The opinions and suggestions put forward by users on different platforms towards the brand should be taken seriously and actively responded to. For example, some netizens on Weibo complained about the impact of the advertising of the store in MIXI ice cream & tea on the lives of residential buildings. On the one hand, there was a problem with the timing of the advertising, and on the other hand, the music was too repetitive, which caused consumers' aversion. Another example is that someone on TikTok has launched an inexplicable challenge. They went to the stores in MIXI ice cream & tea to sing the theme song in order to get a free ticket. Customers can get a free glass of lemonade or ice cream as long as they sing the theme song. However, it is officially confirmed that this is just a small number of stores to attract customers. Not all stores participated in this activity, leading many netizens to misunderstand that offline store went home empty-handed.

4.6. Solution about Single style

With the increasing popularity of trendy games in the Chinese market, the public's aesthetic of trendy games is constantly improving, and their requirements are also gradually increasing. IP has symbolic and role-based prefixes, widely disseminated through personalized packaging and multimedia. After gaining high visibility, various derivatives are launched, forming the upstream and downstream IP industry chain. IP also needs to follow the trend of the times, such as the national style formed in traditional culture, the metaverse style of intelligent virtual characters formed in the high-tech era, etc. When collaborating with brands, create a temporary existing IP image style, bring more surprises to fans, and create the continuous influence of IP. Artificial intelligence technology has made the expansion of human media a reality, promoting significant changes in user recommendations, advertising placement, intelligent comments, and other aspects. It can accurately push unique products to target users in the process of brand marketing and communication. Digital display technology has now been widely applied in producing communication content, allowing virtual IP characters to cross-media and reach consumers directly. Utilize intelligent technology to anticipate consumer needs and integrate data analysis with enhanced display technology.

5. Conclusion

5.1. Key Findings

There are many problems with the operation and IP utilization of MIXI ice cream & tea, such as food safety issues, low product quality, and a single IP image. MIXI ice cream & tea need to strengthen product supervision and systematize the supervision system. To improve product quality, the success of a brand ultimately depends on product quality. Create a diversified IP image and collaborate with major brands to continuously innovate. Online promotion is not enough, and it is necessary to strengthen the combination of online promotion and offline promotion. Enrich the value of corporate culture by incorporating traditional tea culture. Enrich product categories and collaborate with other brands for innovative production. The IP Snow King of MIXI ice cream & tea has been created very successfully and cutely, which can bring consumers closer and increase their stickiness. It needs to continue to be enriched in the future. The direct communication channels with consumers are very narrow and cannot solve their problems in a timely manner. Lack of keen insight into consumer needs. By increasing convenient channels for communication with customers, listening to their suggestions in a timely manner, actively serving them, and timely understanding market trends and achieving better development.

5.2. Research Significance

This article summarizes the advantages and disadvantages of the operation and IP of MIXI ice cream & tea and puts forward suggestions. The author studied using IP to expand its influence and drive the real economy in MIXI ice cream & tea.

5.3. Limitations

The data investigation in this paper is limited, lacking data analysis, and the research is not comprehensive and sufficient. The author hopes to have the opportunity to conduct in-depth research based on specific data analysis in the future. Also hopes to conduct on-site research in the enterprise of MIXI ice cream & tea.

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