

Nostalgia Marketing: Brand Renewal of "Old Firms" Based on Consumer Emotional Reconstruction——Take the Great White Rabbit Milk Candy as an Example

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Abstract. Nostalgia marketing is one way to revitalize old brands. Most nostalgia marketing is based on recreating the consumer's past to stimulate nostalgia. However, how to capture the emotional needs of consumers in today's society and use modern means of nostalgia marketing is still to be explored. Therefore, by recreating the case of the White Rabbit Creamy Candy, this study explores the motives that influence consumers' nostalgic consumption and proposes a marketing strategy to revitalize the old brand. The study suggests that nostalgia marketing captures the characteristics of the ear to innovative brands and products. The core breakthrough point is to insight into the psychological needs of consumers and the motivation of consumer nostalgia consumption, and then to provide the emotional value behind the product and the emotional fulfillment. The old brands need to ensure product quality and adhere to the brand connotations. At the same time, brands should focus on the psychological needs of consumers in modern society, so as to dig deep into the emotional value of the brands. In modern society, brands should also have the characteristics of the times, in order to extend the brand's vitality.

Keywords: Nostalgia Marketing, White Rabbit Creamy Candy, crossover, co-branding.

1. Introduction

In 2008, as the impact of the financial crisis deepened, consumers began to seek psychological solace and escapism to relieve the reality of their stress. Nostalgia has become a common mass phenomenon, along with a wave of nostalgic consumption. For more than a decade, old brands have begun marketing nostalgia in a quest to be refreshed in a new era. Pechoin sets the advertisement in 1990s Shanghai, recreates classic scenes from the era to convey the brand's concept of working against time. Homework Help links up with the classic animation "Big Head Son and Little Head Father" to continue the classic and give a sense of companionship to the use scene of Homework Help products. Research has shown that nostalgia marketing by brands is effective in promoting consumer goodwill, purchase intent, loyalty, attachment and love for the brand [1]. Therefore, nostalgia marketing has become one of the most important strategies to reshape the vitality of old brands in contemporary society.

Nowadays, most marketing research and practice takes consumers' past experiences as an entry point to stimulate nostalgia through marketing, but often neglects why consumers feel nostalgic in today's society, how to seize consumers' psychological needs to carry out brand marketing and strengthen the connection with consumer. However, the exploration of these issues has important implications for the development of brand nostalgia marketing strategies.

This study focuses on how brands are marketing nostalgia based on the emotional reconfiguration of the modern consumer. The research method is case study, and the White Rabbit Creamy Candy is chosen as the research case. The research idea is to start from the phenomenon of nostalgic consumption to find the motivation of consumers' nostalgic consumption, aiming to discover the psychological state of consumers' nostalgic consumption. At the same time, the research learn from the White Rabbit Creamy Candy in the new era of the old brand revitalization practices, and then summarize the method of revitalization, from the product, price, channel and promotion. The aim is

to provide a reference for old brands to accurately position consumer needs, implement accurate nostalgic marketing strategies, and realize the renewal of old brands in today's society.

2. Literature Review: Related Definitions of "Nostalgia"

2.1. Definition of Nostalgia

Most studies adopt the explanation of American scholars Holbrook and Schindler, which suggests that nostalgia is a preference for things that existed in the past, and that this preference is more prevalent when a person is young [2]. Jin Xiaotong, Zhang Guijuan argue that nostalgia is the expression of fondness for events that occurred in the past, that are related to the self, and that are important because they involve close others or significant points in time [3]. From that, this research distills three attributes of nostalgia, namely, self-relevance, past tense, and feelings of preference.

2.2. Definition of Nostalgia Products

Havlena and Holak developed the concept of "nostalgic products" in their study of the impact of nostalgia on consumer behavior. That is, products that can trigger consumers' memories of past things related to them and inspire nostalgic feelings, which mostly appear in the youth of consumer (early youth, adolescence, childhood and even before birth) [4]. Ying Zhang points out that nostalgic products that containing spiritual and continuing values, as well as memories of people's past can evoke nostalgic feelings in consumers [5]. This paper argues that nostalgic products are things that existed in consumers' experience in the past, which can stimulate consumers' nostalgic feelings and awaken consumers' nostalgic emotions, possess certain emotional value, and have the nature of the times and reminiscence.

2.3. Motivation for Nostalgic Consumption

Nostalgic consumption is a consumer behavior in modern society that is driven by nostalgic feelings and thus a preference for buying brands from the past. Due to the rapid development of economy, society and culture, "Generation Y" (the generation born in 1978-1988) in the contemporary society prefers nostalgic consumption. They have more trust in the brands they used when they were young, and want to feel secure by buying their products. Stephan et al. suggest that a person is more likely to have nostalgic feelings and prefer nostalgic products or brands when experiencing negative events, because they want to ease negative emotions and regulate themselves through fond memories of the past [6]. Sheng Bi et al. found that real-life stress also has an effect on nostalgic feelings as well. Individuals develop a need to enhance their sense of control in order to alleviate anxiety [7]. Because nostalgia can produce positive self-evaluations and enhanced perceptions of social support, individuals will prefer nostalgic consumption [7]. Zhang, Y et al. argue that individual identity, social identity and collective identity all mediate the relationship between collective nostalgia and nation brand awareness [8]. As the emotional level of society increases, the positive effect of social and collective identity on national brand awareness increases [8].

3. Marketing Case Reduction and Analysis of White Rabbit Creamy Candy

3.1. Brand Introduction

White Rabbit Creamy Candy is a China national brand produced in 1959. Its trademark image of a jumping white rabbit is highly recognizable and penetrates into the hearts of consumers (especially those in the 80's and 90's). For decades, White Rabbit Creamy Candy has been recognized by consumers for its excellent quality and unique taste. However, with the emergence of new brands in the market and the increase in the variety of snacks, the White Rabbit Creamy Candy is also facing the problem of brand aging. Therefore, White Rabbit Creamy Candy carries out brand extension, creates diversified product experiences, and carries out cross-border co-branding with major brands.

The multi-dimensional marketing means of rejuvenation of the old brand not only stimulates the nostalgic feelings of the original consumers and stimulates nostalgic consumption, but also establishes a young image among the young consumers, which is meaningful to enhance the goodwill of the young consumer groups towards the brand, realizes the brand rejuvenation, extends the vitality of the brand, and expands its influence.

3.2. Marketing Approach of Cross-border Co-branding

Cross-border co-branding is an important marketing tool for White Rabbit Creamy Candy to extend its product category, attract consumers' attention and realize brand renewal. Alder pointed out that the alliance of two or more brands can help to realize the sharing of resources and complementary advantages between brands and improve market competitiveness [9]. The White Rabbit Creamy Candy cooperated with Bright Daily to launch creative products such as White Rabbit Creamy Candy Flavored Milk and Creamy Candy Ice Cream. It also launched a co-branded flash mob with the theme of "Happiness without Boundaries", whose scenario-based marketing awakened consumers' nostalgic feelings and triggered many consumers to visit the site. In the "olfactory market", the White Rabbit Creamy Candy also made innovative attempts. For example, in 2022, the 60-year-old the White Rabbit Creamy Candy co-branded with the 10-year-old Scent Library, seized the "Children's Day" for festive marketing, and launched the White Rabbit Creamy Candy-scented perfume, body lotion, body cream and hand cream. The practice not only in the product category to meet the diversified needs of consumers, but also seized the "Children's Day" holiday to evoke the childhood memories of many consumers, bringing consumers a beautiful and innocent feeling, in the olfactory level to deepen the brand's sensory imprint. In 2023, the White Rabbit Creamy Candy co-branded with SKII to launch a New Year's limited-edition Facial Treatment Essence. The bottle meticulously reproduces the packaging of the White Rabbit Creamy Candy, awakening consumers' childhood memories both visually and in terms of taste. The cross-border co-branding of the White Rabbit Creamy Candy helps to broaden the boundaries of consumer perception, allowing them to perceive the product as novel, surprising and interesting. The novelty it creates helps to change the feeling that the brand is static. The joint marketing of the old brand and the new brand not only solves the problem of consumer disconnection, but also helps to establish the brand image of the White Rabbit Creamy Candy in the young consumer group, expand the acceptance and influence in the young group, and realize the brand rejuvenation.

3.3. IP Image to Ease Emotions

IP is the abbreviation of "Intellectual Property". It exists in various forms, and the rabbit IP of the White Rabbit Creamy Candy belongs to content IP. Content marketing, the creation of brand-related content that emphasizes interaction with consumers, thereby influencing consumer attitudes toward products and increasing brand loyalty, was first introduced by Rick Doyle in 1996. IP content marketing leverages the brand's original content to effectively boost the fan effect and enhance consumers' emotional identification with the brand [10]. Aiming at the consumer's motivation of getting a sense of security and relieving negative emotions from nostalgic products, Great White Rabbit has created a jumping and cute rabbit IP image, which heals the consumers. At the same time, the brand takes "create happiness, share happiness" as the starting point of content, bringing consumers unlimited fun. The childlike and interesting product image not only brings consumers back to their carefree childhood, but also eases their anxiety and relieves their stress, which in turn boosts audience buildup and generates emotional recognition of the brand.

3.4. Deeply Popular Image of the National Wave

Enhanced with the development of emotional consumption, many consumers gradually rise the focus to the emotional level of the product. Consumers are more in pursuit of their own emotional resonance with the product. Social and collective identity also have a positive effect on the development of national brands. While innovating its products, the White Rabbit Creamy Candy has

always adhered to the survival philosophy of "genuine goods, fair trade" to create the image of the national trend of creamy candy. On the night of the New Year's Eve of the Rabbit in the Chinese Lunar Calendar, a flash mob was organized with the theme "Happy White Rabbit". At the same time, the Oriental Pearl Radio and TV Tower lighted up the city with the classic red, white and blue colors of the White Rabbit Creamy Candy. The old story of the old brand not only contains heavy cultural deposits, but also conveys a brand culture to consumers. As soon as consumers see the relevant brand elements, they can think of the warm and happy brand culture of the White Rabbit Creamy Candy. Such marketing tactics are conducive to enhancing consumers' identification with the brand and promoting the development of the national brand.

3.5. Multi-channel Marketing Communication to Expand Brand Influence

In the Internet era of new media development, the White Rabbit Creamy Candy also follows the trend of the times to publicize its brand and products on major platforms. In terms of topic releases, the White Rabbit Creamy Candy co-branded with the Odor Library and released a challenge on TikTok with the theme of "Let's be childish", gaining 1.06 billion popularities. Also, it organized a flash mob with more than 100,000 participants. In terms of user interaction, the White Rabbit Creamy Candy often publishes topic interaction and challenge activities on the official account of RED, which establishes a friendly and lovely brand image. On Microblog, the brand has created a 3D image with cute shapes and interesting interactions to cure consumers, and this anthropomorphic marketing has also brought it closer to consumers. The pro-people image of the White Rabbit Creamy Candy and the grounded interaction facilitate the linking of the consumer's memory with the present, and establish a deep connection between the brand and the consumer.

4. Nostalgia Marketing Strategy Based on Consumer Emotional Reconstruction--Values, Principles, and Paths

Based on the reduction and analysis of the case of the White Rabbit Creamy Candy, this study summarizes the critical path of nostalgia marketing. Nostalgia marketing, "old" is the market risk faced by the old brand, nostalgia means that the past has "aged". If traditional forms and values are no longer compatible with contemporary concepts, the old brand will not be able to have a strong emotional connection with consumers and might be at risk of being withdrawn from the market. However, if the brand just focuses on pursuing the trend, and dilutes the emotional value and brand characteristics, then it might also lose the innocence of "nostalgia". Therefore, nostalgia marketing is only a way of marketing. The focus of this practice is not on "nostalgia", but on how to seize the characteristics of the times for innovation. The core breakthrough point of the old brand refreshment is to start from the needs of consumers, insight into the motivation of consumer nostalgia consumption, and provide the emotional value behind the product. Also, the brand should dig deep into the emotional value of the brand, and constantly realize the brand regeneration and connotation again deep excavation, in order to give the characteristics of the times, brand vitality, and extend the brand's vitality.

4.1. Guarantee Product Quality and Preserve the Flavor of Memory

Although nostalgia marketing is a way for old brands to survive and thrive in the new era, brand promotion is still based on taste and quality control. Therefore, the old brand should still ensure the quality of products and retain the flavor in the memory of consumers, in order to win the market again.

4.2. Focusing on Consumers' Emotional Needs, Digging Deep into the Brand's Emotional Value

Nostalgia is a consumer sentiment that represents nostalgia for the past. Consumers in long-term high-pressure environments are more inclined to spend on nostalgia. They miss the carefree life of their childhood, hoping to find solace in it to ease their anxiety. Therefore, brands should have a deep

insight into the emotional needs of consumers and give them a sense of security. At the same time, the brand should maintain the initial purity, based on the core concept of the brand to dig deep into the emotional value of the brand, and establish the brand image of heavy feelings, temperature and responsibility. At the same time, the brand should build the characteristics of the times, in order to extend the brand's vitality and derive the memory of generation after generation.

4.3. Rationalization of Product Prices and Flexible Product Promotions

Prices of old brand products should be adapted to the consumption level of the target consumers. Also, brands can run promotions at specific stages to bring products back to childhood prices. For example, brands can carry out promotional activities on Children's Day to awaken consumers' childhood memories.

4.4. Multi-channel Branding to Trigger Consumer Nostalgia

Old brands should be revitalized by making full use of modern media for brand promotion. For example, using RED, microblog, TikTok or other social platforms to promote the brand, stimulate consumers' memories of the past, in order to strengthen the interaction and connection with consumers, and achieve emotional resonance with consumers. First, brands interacting with users through the platform to form UGC content is conducive to mobilizing consumers' subjective initiative, forming collective memories and triggering emotional connection and social resonance. Second, offline flash stores, roadshows and other scenario-based marketing activities are conducive to awakening consumer nostalgia, creating a spatial memory recall. In addition, cross-border co-branding is also one of the effective ways to revitalize old brands, which is conducive to keeping up with the trend of the times, realizing brand innovation, enhancing the novelty of products, and satisfying the curiosity of young consumers. For example, the Creamy Candy perfume co-branded by White Rabbit Creamy Candy and Scent Library, the ice-cream co-branded by Chiccream and Huzhou Laojiao, and the coconut cloud latte co-branded by Ruixing and Coconut Tree. Older brands' cross-discipline product and marketing campaigns are good for spreading the brand's message more widely, as well as bringing each other's traffic into their own areas and attracting the attention of more young consumers. Only by fully utilizing multi-channel marketing can old brands rebuild their vitality and retain old users effectively. At the same time, modern means of attracting the attention of new users contribute to the longevity of the brand.

5. Conclusion

By studying the nostalgic marketing strategy of the White Rabbit Creamy Candy, this paper summarizes the highlights of its nostalgic marketing and puts forward suggestions for the old brand to be refreshed in the new era from four aspects: product, price, channel and promotion. Overall, to revitalize an old brand in the new era, it is necessary to gain insight into the psychology of consumer nostalgia in today's society, seize the motivation that causes consumer nostalgia, and make full use of the brand's unique nostalgic attributes compared to other brands to create differentiation. At the same time, the brand should use modern Internet marketing tools to improve brand exposure and bring it closer to consumers. Finally, this paper has not yet made a comprehensive study of why different age groups of consumers have different motivations for nostalgic consumption, which can be further refined in the future in the study of the above groups. It is also hoped that more practical innovations can be made for brand nostalgia marketing in order to facilitate further research on this topic.

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