

How Classic and Well-known Anime IPs Drive the Development of Peripheral Industries: A Case Study of Bandai Namco's Marketing of Mobile Suit Gundam

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Abstract. With the development of the socio-economic conditions, people's demand for spiritual needs is also increasing the cultural industry plays an increasingly important role in modern society. Anime and games, as integral components of the cultural industry, have a wide audience (especially among young people) and market demand. Simultaneously, consumer spending related to anime intellectual properties (IPs) has entered a high-growth phase. Anime IPs, as a vital part of the anime industry, possess unique appeal and influence. Anime game IPs, as distinctive cultural symbols, represent not only characters or stories but also brands with a large fan base and significant commercial potential. The purpose of this article is to explore how classic and well-known anime IPs drive the development of peripheral industries. Taking Bandai Namco's marketing of Mobile Suit Gundam as an example, by analyzing its successful marketing strategies and the development of peripheral industries, the aim is to reveal how anime IPs maximize their value through innovative peripheral products, marketing promotions, and collaborations with other industries. This study also aims to provide insights and inspiration for the operation of other anime IPs.

Keywords: Mobile Suit Gundam; industry integration; anime IP.

1. Industry Development Background

1.1. The Development Status of China's Anime IP Industry

In recent years, China's animation industry has shown a rapid development trend. With the popularization of the Internet and the advancement of digital technology, anime, as an emerging cultural form, has been loved and pursued by a large number of young people. At the same time, related consumption centered around anime IP has also entered a period of high growth [1].

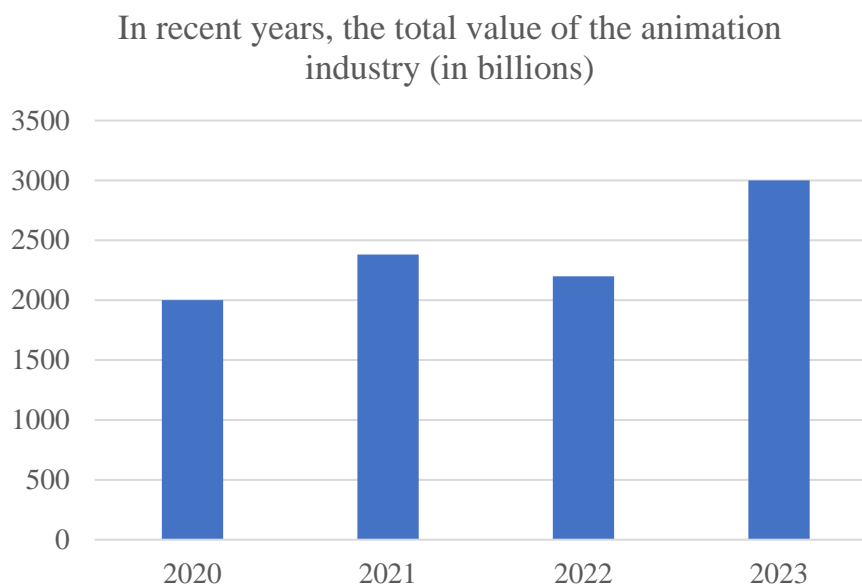


Fig. 1 Total value of China's anime industry (2020-2023)

Figure 1 represents the bar chart of the total value of the anime industry in recent years. It can be observed that China's anime industry has already developed to a relatively large scale and continues to exhibit an upward trend. Anime IPs, as an integral component of the anime industry, possess unique appeal and influence. Surveys have revealed that over 30% of leading industries have introduced their own anime IPs. Furthermore, 90% of companies have reported significantly higher sales performance in IP-authorized products compared to non-IP-authorized ones [2].

1.2. Industry Integration

In 1963, American scholar Rosenberg first proposed the concept of industrial integration, pointing out that technological innovation blurs the boundaries of industries and promotes industrial integration [3]. In recent years, China has also constantly put forward a variety of policies to combine multiple industries and develop together, such as "Internet plus", "rural primary, secondary and tertiary industries integration".

Anime IP, as a unique cultural symbol, is not only a representative of a character or story, but also a brand with a huge fan base and commercial potential. If animation IP can be combined with other industries, it can bring huge economic benefits. Firstly, the success of anime IPs can drive the sales and consumption of peripheral products. Fans usually have a strong emotional identification and desire to purchase their favorite anime IP, and they are willing to purchase peripheral products related to the IP, such as peripheral products, derivatives, comics, novels, etc[4]. The sales of these peripheral products not only bring economic benefits to related enterprises, but also provide fans with more consumption choices related to their favorite IPs. Secondly, the success of anime IPs can drive the development of related industries. With the popularity of anime IPs, the related industry chain has also been expanded and improved, involving multiple fields such as anime production, game development, film and television production, and advertising marketing. The development of these industries not only creates employment opportunities, but also drives the prosperity of related industries. In addition, the success of anime IPs can also attract more investment and cooperation opportunities. Investors and companies often value the commercial value and market potential of anime IPs, and are willing to provide them with financial support and cooperation opportunities. These investments and collaborations not only promote the further development of anime and gaming IPs, but also provide opportunities for innovation and expansion in related industries.

However, China's anime IP industry is not doing well in this regard. China does not lack excellent anime IPs, but people can only see them on the big screen. Without the screen, there are few opportunities to come into contact with them. Therefore, this article will explore the marketing and development of Bandai Namco's IP for Mobile Suit Gundam, and the achievements it has made, in order to explore the direction of combining China's animation IP industry with other related industries [5].

2. "Mobile Suit Gundam" and Bandai Namco

2.1. Mobile Suit Gundam

Mobile Suit Gundam is a famous Japanese robot animation series that premiered in 1979. This work is loved by a large audience for its profound plot, complex character relationships, and excellent robot design. The success of Mobile Suit Gundam lies not only in its own excellence, but also in its influence on the later animation and gaming industry. The success of this IP provided an opportunity for later game developers and manufacturers to learn from and innovate [6].

2.2. Bandai Namco

Bandai Namco is a renowned Japanese entertainment company known for its extensive experience and resources in the anime and gaming industry. The company's collaboration with "Mobile Suit Gundam" began in the 1980s, and since then, they have released a series of games and merchandise centered around the "Mobile Suit Gundam" franchise [7].

2.3. The Necessity of Using Bandai Namco's Marketing Approach to the "Mobile Suit Gundam" IP as an Example

The necessity of using Bandai Namco's marketing approach to the "Mobile Suit Gundam" IP as an example lies in showcasing a successful case study that demonstrates how a renowned and iconic anime IP can effectively drive the development of the surrounding industry. "Mobile Suit Gundam" is a classic Japanese mecha anime series with a wide fan base and significant influence. As the copyright holder and marketer of this IP, Bandai Namco has successfully transformed "Mobile Suit Gundam" into a diversified brand through years of management and marketing strategies, achieving tremendous commercial success in the surrounding industry. By examining Bandai Namco's marketing approach to the "Mobile Suit Gundam" IP, one can delve into the analysis and study of their practices and strategies in brand promotion, licensing partnerships, product development, event planning, and more. This will help understand how renowned anime IPs can attract more fans through innovative marketing methods, expand brand influence, and further drive the development of the surrounding industry. Additionally, studying the success case of Bandai Namco can provide valuable insights and inspiration for the marketing of other popular anime IPs, fostering the overall growth of the industry.

3. Bandai Namco's Marketing of the Gundam IP

Bandai Namco has conducted various marketing campaigns for the Mobile Suit Gundam series, covering multiple industries such as anime, gaming, toys, and models. Below, we will introduce their marketing strategies for Mobile Suit Gundam in various industries from several aspects.

3.1. Toys and Model Marketing

The toys and models of the Mobile Suit Gundam series are one of the important peripheral products of this IP and one of the key marketing targets of Bandai Namco. Toys and models are the foundation of Bandai, and they understand very well what benefits a popular IP can bring to their industry. In fact, Gundam was not Bandai's first time using popular IPs. From the end of World War II to the late 1950s, Bandai completed its transformation from a textile factory to a toy manufacturer. At that time, they did not have the idea of "producing peripherals with IP as the core". It was not until 1963 that "Iron Arm Astro Wood" became popular in Japan, and Bandai's boss saw a business opportunity from it. He immediately launched an official peripheral model and it sold well. Afterwards, Bandai, who tasted the sweetness, went further and further on the path of "producing peripherals with IP as the core". Later, they successively launched popular cartoons or tokusatsu films such as "Kamen Rider" and "Magic God Z" that were broadcasted on television as prototypes, launched related peripheral toys, and earned a lot of profits. However, Gundam pushed this concept of "combining popular IPs with mods" to its peak. Since the launch of the first "RX-78-2" Gundam model by Bandai in 1980, it has sparked a Gundam craze worldwide. Afterwards, Bandai took advantage of the situation and launched various specifications and styles of mobile warrior Gundam models, meeting the needs of fans for collection and display, continuing this Gundam craze to this day. In addition, they have also launched toys related to Mobile Suit Gundam, such as shapeshifting toys, role-playing props, etc., allowing fans to experience the world of Mobile Suit Gundam more immersively [8].

3.2. Game Marketing

As another emerging cultural industry, Bandai Namco clearly recognizes the value that the Gundam IP can create in this field. Bandai Namco utilized the Mobile Suit Gundam IP as the core and developed a large number of related game works around it. These games include action games, role-playing games, strategy games, and other different types, covering multiple gaming platforms such as home gaming consoles, mobile devices, and computers [9].

3.3. Cross-promotion and Collaborative Marketing

Cross border cooperative marketing: In order to further expand the influence and popularity of Mobile Suit Gundam, Bandai Namco actively engages in cross-border cooperation with other brands and enterprises. They collaborated with fashion brands to launch joint clothing and accessories for Mobile Suit Gundam, collaborated with food and beverage chains to launch food and beverage products with the theme of Mobile Suit Gundam, and even collaborated with theme parks to create a theme park for Mobile Suit Gundam [10].

3.4. Analysis

It is not difficult to see from Bandai Namco 's marketing and development of the Gaoda IP that Bandai Namco 's most basic strategy is to leverage the influence of well-known IPs, or rather the attractiveness to the target audience, as the core, and then combine it with other industries to achieve a 1+1>2 effect. By expanding in other fields, Bandai Namco achieved two goals at once: firstly, the launch of Gundam Games met the gaming needs of fans and strengthened the stickiness between fans and the work; 2、 Through the production of the game, more players who had not previously been exposed to Gundam IP were attracted to join the world of Mobile Suit Gundam, further expanding their fan base.

For Gundam itself, by combining with other industries, it can not only attract another wave of fans for its long-standing IP with over 40 years of history, but also innovate and maintain the vitality of the IP through the process of combining with other industries. For other industries, by combining with the IP of Gundam, it can bring itself a potential lack of attractiveness to consumers, especially for some old established industries. The biggest problem for many old established industries nowadays is their lack of vitality and inability to attract consumers' attention. However, combining with Gundam or other well-known IPs perfectly fills this gap, Not only can it attract IP fans to pay attention to itself in the short term, but it can also use external forces to stimulate the industry itself and promote metabolism, thereby revitalizing itself.

4. Conclusion

Overall, Bandai Namco's strategy of combining the Gundam IP with other industries has proven to be mutually beneficial. It allows them to leverage the existing fan base while attracting new audiences, and it provides an opportunity for other industries to enhance their appeal and revitalize their offerings. This approach demonstrates the power of strategic collaborations and the potential for cross-industry synergy in maximizing the value and impact of intellectual properties.

Since the beginning of the reform and opening-up policy, China's economy has experienced rapid development, and the spiritual and cultural demands of the people have been increasing. Consumption in the cultural and spiritual realm has been growing, but the cultural industry in China seems to have lagged behind the pace of development. Many traditional industries are on the verge of decline, and finding a way out is urgent. Combining with well-known anime IPs is a good approach.

In addition to introducing existing anime IPs into industries, it may also be possible to create new anime IPs with the existing cultural industry as the core. This is a strategy that combines with the anime industry. After the new IP gains a certain level of popularity, it can be combined with the old industry, forming a positive feedback loop.

Moreover, the model of the anime IP industry driving the development of other industries is not limited to the anime industry alone. In the 21st century, new industries are emerging constantly, such as artificial intelligence technology and virtual reality technology. These technologies possess fresh vitality and promising prospects. By combining these technologies with other industries, more possibilities can be created for their development.

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