

Research on the Strategy of Time Fengjun Entertainment to Maintain the Loyalty of Fans in the Era of Fan Economy

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Abstract. In the era of the fan economy, more fans will bring more benefits to the idol and company. However, only high-loyalty fans can provide benefits. The entertainment company uses good strategies to maintain fans' loyalty are vital. Few people analyze these strategies so this paper can fill the gap. To analyze this topic, use three methods: focus groups, case study and comparative analysis, and take the Time Fengjun Entertainment example. Firstly, pointing out why this paper chose this topic and whether this topic is worth studying or not. Also, the background information about Time Funjun Entertainment and why this paper chooses this company to analyze. Next, focus on the company about how to maintain fans' loyalty, which strategies the company may use, and which effects or benefits will bring to the company if used. And at the same time, analyzing if using these strategies, which problems or negative influences on the idol and company. Thirdly, giving some solutions to the company about how to solve the problem and, in the end, conclude. These strategies can maintain the high loyalty of fans and let the fans whose loyalty becomes lower rise again.

Keywords: Strategy; Time Fengjun Entertainment; Loyalty of Fans; Fan Economy.

1. Introduction

1.1 Research background

With the development of technology and people's income, more people have become star-chasers. They will more be willing to spend their money on their favorite idol, so the fans' economy gradually becomes an economic pattern [1]. In this economic pattern, fans play a big role. An entertainment company may use novel ways such as signing a new idol or changing the brand image to attract new people and let them become fans. However, people may be attracted by the ways mentioned above. They may become fans, but just the people who show occasional interest in the idol. If the company wants this fan to benefit the idol and company, it will be tough, even impossible. These passersby fans are meaningless. In other words, these types of fans have low loyalty. If other entertainment companies bring out more novel and charming idols, they will rush to other entertainment companies. Therefore, to entertainment companies, more fans mean more benefits. It is vital for each entertainment company not only to try to attract more new fans but also to maintain the fans they already have. The entertainment company needs to transfer passersby friends into hardcore fans or fervent fans. Hardcore fans or fervent fans are the same type of fans with very high loyalty. This type of fan usually is fascinated with the idols they pick. If the idol has a concert, this type of fan will buy tickets to see the idol; if the idol has some rumors, this type of fan will help the idol refute rumors; if the idol needs a hint, this type of fan will broadcast and introduce their idol actively.

All in all, this type of fan can benefit the company, and these benefits are long-lasting due to the fans' high loyalty. The entertainment company uses nice strategies to maintain fans' loyalty, so it will have a stronger fan base to attract more new fans. And also, a good relationship between idols and fans can bring the least negative effects to the company. This paper uses Time Fengjun Entertainment as an object of study to research the strategies of maintaining fans' loyalty because Time Fengjun Entertainment was set up for a long time and has enough fan base. Here is the introduction to the company. Time Fengjun Entertainment is a collection of the organization to large-scale theatrical performances, actor training, artist agent, personal art training, and enterprise culture image planning to integrate professional cultural institutions. This company is the whole of China in the first three

entertainment companies. In China, too many are hardcore fans of two idol groups, TFboys and TNT. These two groups both belong to Time Fengjun Entertainment. Hence, this company may have useful strategies to maintain the fans' loyalty.

1.2 Literature review

Wang analyzed South Korea SM entertainment to fans loyalty strategy research and Weibo marketing under the meaning of building and managing loyalty fans [2-3]. The new observation of the idol fans community found that the fans' loyalty is related to the entertainment business model, marketing ways, and the idol's ability or appearance character [4]. These researches give this paper some inspiration. The entertainment companies try to know what things or aspects the fans want to see or hear, plus creating a dedicated emotional link between idol and fans' empathy so that the entertainment companies can maintain the fans' loyalty. Entertainment companies try to keep treatment with fans as long as they can. Then, they can control the loyalty of fans. The entertainment companies dig the fans' interests out and then follow these interests to "forge the idol." It is to label the idols even though these labels are different from the idol's true personality.

1.3 Research framework

Most research has already studied the entertainment companies' business model, fans of consumer psychology, or own idol effects. Still, very few types of research studied the strategy of entertainment companies to maintain the fans' loyalty in the ear of fans' economy. In contrast, this paper aims to study how the entertainment company maintains the fans' loyalty and use which strategy. In this paper, as the Time Fengjun Entertainment example. Firstly, pointing out why this paper chose this topic and whether this topic is worth studying or not. Also, the background information about Time Funjun Entertainment and why this paper chooses this company to analyze. Next, focus on the company about how to maintain fans' loyalty, which strategies the company may use, and which effects or benefits will bring to the company if used. And at the same time, analyzing if using these strategies, which problems or negative influences on the idol and company. Thirdly, giving some solutions to the company about how to solve the problem and, in the end, conclude.

2. Methods

2.1 Focus group

Refers to the institute to determine all the observation objects (overall) on the number of observation object samples, according to the overall characteristics of the sample information from a research method, also is a kind of method of media researchers often use. This paper classifies the fans into different groups according to their ages and focuses on each group. Then ask some questions about why or what things let people become higher and higher loyalty to the idol to each group. Summed up the cause of the highest occurrence of each group. Finding out some reasons about fans want to still as this idol's fan and become higher and higher loyal. For example, the idol's nice stage performance or idol's vlog about sharing their life to fans so the entertainment companies can act according to these reasons analyzed by focus group then get more benefits.

2.2 Case study

A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates the contemporary phenomenon in its special real-life context. As the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not broadly apparent, investigators develop the research with sequences of multiple sources of evidence. In other words, a case study is a particular way of observing any natural phenomenon in a data set. As opposed to other methods, the case study has to deal with various real-life contexts which are uncertain and may probably develop out of control. In addition, compared to the quantitative analysis, which develops the research at the macro level based on the frequency of the observed phenomena, the case study

observes the data and develops at the micro level. In this paper, through picking idol's most popular and representative aspects, such as stage performances or tv shows, as a case, then analyze this case's labels or other things. Then conclude these parts and highlight them in the future. Therefore, entertainment companies can maintain the fans' loyalty according to this method.

2.3 Comparative analysis

The comparative analysis method is an analysis method that compares two or more things or objects to find out the similarities and differences between them. This paper will provide two directions to compare. The first comparison is the feedback on fans' loyalty before and after the same strategy, judging whether this strategy can strengthen the fans' loyalty or not. The second is that compare Time Fengjun Entertainment with SM Entertainment and then analyze each strategy by each company so we can get information about which strategy can have the strongest effects on increasing the fans' loyalty. Hence, entertainment companies can find which strategy is useful or useless and then can choose to strengthen or give up which strategy in the future.

3. Results

3.1 Positive impact of the maintaining fans loyalty strategies

3.1.1 Cultivate personal time, stage singing and dancing ability is strong

Time Fengjun Entertainment signs trainees every year. These trainees stepped into the company, they received a lot of rigorous training, including singing, dancing, performance, and stage management. Through all aspects and longtime training, these trainees can become all-round and strong strengthen artists after they debut. Not every trainee in this company can debut and become an officially signed artists. Time Fengjun Entertainment has an elimination system. Since the trainee's step into the company, they have an exam every month. If the performance is not good in the exam, they cannot stay in the company, which means they are fired. In the last round of exams, they can have the formal stage performance then the trainees at the top of the rank can debut. All in all, whatever company signs how many trainees each year, only up to seven trainees can debut. From the first day as the trainees to the day they can debut, this training period is at least 3 years. The trainees who can debuts, which means they already have strong stage performance ability in all aspects, so as they have stage performance, they will get a lot of fans. And thanks to hard training in the trainee era, every stage can give the audience the best watching experience. Owing to their strong ability, the loyalty of their fans will become higher and higher.

3.1.2 Cultivated idols

The Time Fengjun Entertainment sing the trainees since they are eight years old. Their growth developments have some similarities with fans so that the fans can produce resonance with them easily. Fans can use their every development, from trainees to idols, as the propositus. At the same time, fans' loyalty also increases during this period. Most of the cultivated idols' fans are the same age as them. They both have the same problems and challenges, and like the senior high school entrance or national college entrance examination, they are experiencing a similar situation. And the other parts of cultivated idols' dances are older than them. According to these idols, they can re-find and re-experience their teenage time, which has already gone on for many years. Due to the resonation and empathy, fans' loyalty to their growth process becomes higher and higher [5].

3.1.3 Family sports meet and concert

Time Fengjun Entertainment tries to create a feeling of family. Every year recruiting trainees is counted as a generation. Now Time Fengjun Entertainment has four generations. The company will scheme activities like family sports meetings or concerts each year (except a special situation like covid 19). In the sports meet, every generation participates in random allocation. In the concerts, the members of the different generations can work together on the stage. All these activities want to

spread the feeling about family to the fans. This strategy also can increase the fans' loyalty. If the people are second-generation fans, they will watch these activities. They may notice other numbers in the third or first generations in the activities. Then they will become these members' fans. The company, through this way, with the high popularity of generations, then let more people know the other generations or members or groups which have not high popularity. The original high loyalty fans groups continue to the new generation. Mixing the different generations' fans tighter increases fans' loyalty [6].

3.1.4 Release a lot of materials on the Internet

Time Fengjun Entertainment will release a lot of each generation's materials on the Internet to share the idols' everyday training, under the stage of life or on shooting sets. These materials can let the fans know the idols they picked, private and true characters. If the company does not release these materials, fans can only see their idol on stage, on TV, or Internet. They will think their idol stands high above the masses, and they have a long distance with the idol. As time passes, fans will more likely think their idol is perfect because, without the materials, fans can only see the idols' glamorous aspects. Time Fengjun Entertainment release the materials to show the idols' different aspects from the stage, such as they will have the same problem as fans meet in life or some weakness. After watching the materials, fans can see the true aspects of idols, and they will feel that although idols seem perfect on stage, they are still normal people. The relationship and gap between fans and idols will become closer. The loyalty of fans will increase at the same time.

3.1.5 The TF fans club

Time Fengjun Entertainment created an application called the TF fans club. In this app, each generation has special photos or videos. And also, the only official place to sell the idol the goods such as postcards, the idol's hand-writing letters, and so on. However, if fans want to buy these products, the premise is must spend money to become VIPs. Fans who are not VIP of the TF fans club have no privileges such as idols' new photos or voice chatting, which only the VIP can see or hear. This strategy will let fans compare with the higher than they will rob to cast money to the company because the more money fans give to the company, the more privileges fans will get. With fans offering more and more money to the company, their loyalty increases simultaneously because of the competition between the fans. No one wants to let their cost become silent.

3.2 Negative impact of these strategies

3.2.1 Partial young fans groups

Both artists and trainees in Time Fengjun Entertainment were all born after 1999. Plus, they are all forming type idols. As a result, they have more attraction to the same-age fans, even the fans who are younger than them. The young fans' groups consist of minors and young adults. They are not financially independent or have low financially independent, and they also need to study, so spending money and energy on following idols is difficult for them. Although the forming type of idols can attract many fans by empathizing with them, these fans cannot provide too many benefits. Therefore, decreeing the part of fans' loyalty [7].

3.2.2 More and more sasaeng fan

The sasaeng fan is simply an overly obsessed, stalking fan of idols who are not considered true fans. They stalk their idols and invade their privacy. Time Fengjun Entertainment's idols are young and handsome, so many fans become infatuated and mania. Then, these fans start to invade idols' privacy, such as peeping, stalking, and other extreme ways. Most importantly, sasaeng fans do not think they do these things wrong. In contrast, they are proud of their actions [8]. Although the company has already released many materials on the Internet to share idols' life with fans in normal ways, the sasaeng fans are still unsatisfied. The sasaeng fans have a serious impact on the idols' life, so the company has to reduce the interaction activities between idols and fans. The normal fans feel unfair, and their loyalty will decrease simultaneously.

4. Discussion

4.1 Decrease the price

Now, idol-related products in Time Fengjun Entertainment are almost experienced (price investigation). The Time Fengjun club's rule is that if the fans want to buy the related products, they must buy the VIP and have the right to buy them. Most of their fans have the low financial ability. Although their idols fancy them, they still do not choose to spend money on their idols. Time Fengjun Entertainment can appropriately reduce the price of peripheral products. For example, cancel the rule that only the VIP can buy the related products or decreasing each product's price. Many fans, especially students or young adults, need to save money, even decreasing their life standards to buy these products. And the leaders of Time Fengjun Entertainment want to maintain the company's normal operation, and they cannot give up the group of young fans. In that case, the price of the related products can decrease to the degree that most fans can accept, so fans will become more willing to spend money to buy these products. Although this solution seems to make less money per product than before, it can attract more fans to buy. In the long run, Time Fengjun Entertainment can make much more money because some fans who cannot afford these products can buy them now. At the same time, increasing this group's fans' ability.

4.2 Check for internal hazards and private schedule

The idols in Time Fengjun Entertainment always suffer harassment from sasaeng fans. More seriously, it not only affects the idols' normal work and life but also negatively influences the normal fans. Because of sasaeng fan, Time Fengjun Entertainment have to cancel and reduce many interaction activities between idols and fans. As a result, Time Fengjun Entertainment must protect idols [9]. Sasaeng fans want to get all the private information about the idol at all costs, such as they spend a lot of money to buy the information or tail the idols. In Time Fengjun Entertainment, most idols are young, so employers will invite many things to take care of their daily life. As a result, sasaeng fans always give too much money to the staff who may know the idols' information. Some staff have weak willpower and will accept sasaeng fans' money and then leak their privacy. To solve this problem, when coming new stuff, the HR in Time Fengjun Entertainment can let them sign a confidentiality agreement and set a pretty high penalty due to breach of contract. Even though some staff still want to leak the privacy to the sasaeng, they dare not to tell because of the high penalty. Plus, Time Fengjun Entertainment is sometimes a public idol's journey. During that time, sasaeng fans will attend the activity places in advance. After the activity, idols go to the hotel or other places, and the sasaeng fan will stalk them. As a result, Time Fengjun Entertainment may reduce the propaganda about the idols' activities' detail location and time. Hence, sasaeng fans do not have enough time to prepare for their actions, and idols will get less influence. Then idols can interact with normal fans so they will feel fair and increase their loyalty.

4.3 More stage performance

These years, fewer idols' stage performances in China [10]. Many people become the idol's fans owing to the stage performance. In the past, stage performance after stage performance let an idol can obtain too many high loyal fans. In other words, idols depend on on-stage performance. The idols in Time Fengjun Entertainment all debut through the company internal stage performance competitions, which means they have too many high-loyalty fans who like their stage performance. Once they have fewer and fewer chances to show themselves on the stage, their fans who like their stage performance will become lower and have lower loyalty. Time Fengjun Entertainment may set more internal stage performances to solve this problem. Not only for trainees to debut. The idols who have already debuted can also participate in the stage performance. This way, it can maintain the fans' loyalty and let more people know about the idols in Time Fengjun Entertainment.

4.4 More job offers outside the company

The idols in Time Fengjun Entertainment put most of their attention on the company's internal job offers, but the job offers for the internal company are usually boring and monotonous. Some outside job offers like a variety show or big budget movies and tv shows are much more interesting and attractive than the internal company. However, the leaders in Time Fengjun Entertainment sometimes do not want idols to accept too many outside job offers. The idols in the company can show part of them to fans, and for a long time, even high loyalty fans will feel tired. If idols can get more outside job offers, they will face more challenges. At the same time, they can bring different aspects to fans. The new aspects of idols will surprise fans, and fans' loyalty will re-increasing.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Key fundings

Time Fengjun Entertainment uses some strategies to maintain the fans loyalty, such as cultivating personal time, cultivating idols, making the family definition, and releasing many video materials and fans club. These strategies play a big role in maintaining fans' loyalty, but they also bring some negative effects at the same time, such as young fans groups or sasaeng fans, which will decrease fans' loyalty. Therefore, to solve these problems and reincrease the fans' loyalty, some solutions include decreasing the price, checking for internal hazards and private schedules, more stage performance, and job offers outside the company.

5.2 Research significance

This paper focuses on analyzing how the entertainment company maintains fans' loyalty. And use Time Fengjun Entertainment as an example owing to their strong fan basion. In the fan's economy era, fans are essential to the entertainment company. If the entertainment company wants to profit maximization, maintaining the idols' fans always belonging to high loyalty is the best way. This paper enumerates some strategies for maintaining fans' loyalty to Time Fengjun Entertainment and the solutions to the problems they may meet. These strategies and solutions can benefit the idols and Time Fengjun Entertainment. Although how maintaining the fans' loyalty is important, few people have researched this topic so this paper can fill in the blanks.

5.3 Limitations

This paper does not apply strategies and solutions to Time Fengjun Entertainment. These are theoretical. If these strategies are applied in the company, they need to adjust according to its situation. This paper uses Time Fengjun Entertainment as a research target, so these strategies cannot suit every entertainment company. If other entertainment companies also want to maintain fans' loyalty, they can only for reference. In future studies, Time Fengjun Entertainment can try to use these strategies and see the results. At the same time, explain the investigation level and summarize the methods applicable to each entertainment company.

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