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Research on the Practice Path of Digital Marketing from the Perspective of Consumer Behavior Changes

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Abstract: The continuous iteration of digital technology and the popularization of technologies such as 5G and artificial intelligence have driven structural changes in consumer behavior, and traditional marketing models are no longer suitable for the decision-making logic of the new consumer era. Based on the public data of China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC), iResearch Consulting and other authoritative organizations, this paper systematically analyzes the characteristics and driving forces of consumer behavior change in the digital context, focusing on content adaptation, channel collaboration, experience optimization and data compliance dimensions, building a digital marketing practice path that conforms to the law of behavior change, and verifying the feasibility of the path with real business cases in multiple industries. Research has found that the socialization, rationalization, and personalization of consumer behavior have forced digital marketing to shift from "traffic harvesting" to "value resonance". This study can provide ideas for solving the pain points of high customer acquisition costs and low conversion efficiency in enterprises, and help promote the high-quality development of the digital marketing industry.

Keywords: Consumer behavior changes, digital marketing, practical paths, precision marketing, value resonance.

1. Introduction

The improvement of digital infrastructure, coupled with the deep application of cloud computing and big data technology, has fundamentally reshaped the entire process scenarios of consumer information dissemination and commodity trading. According to the 54th Statistical Report on China's Internet Development released by CNNIC, as of June 2024, the number of Internet users in China has reached 1.09967 billion, and the Internet penetration rate has increased to 78.0%; According to data from the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, as of December 2024, the total number of 5G base stations in China reached 4.33 million. In this context, consumer behavior has undergone a significant transformation: Generation Z spends an average of 4.2 hours per day immersed in social media and generally relies on user-generated content (UGC) to establish brand trust; The millennial generation is more concerned about the dual value of data privacy and brand reputation; According to Pymnts Intelligence's 2024 survey data, 18% of consumers worldwide use voice technology for shopping at least once a week. The proportion of intelligent consultation-based consumption in China continues to increase, and traditional active search-based consumption is gradually transforming; Nearly 90% of consumers continue to pay attention to new product releases, while forming a stable habit of chasing new products, they pay more attention to price rationality and real user evaluations. As the core carrier connecting brands and consumers, digital marketing is facing unprecedented pressure to transition from channel-driven to user-driven. Currently, there are common pain points in enterprises such as mismatched marketing strategies and consumer behavior, and high customer acquisition costs [1]. According to reports on the e-commerce industry in 2024, many merchants on mainstream e-commerce platforms are facing a natural traffic decline, with some top sellers in the home furnishing category experiencing a 37% decline in Q4 natural traffic compared to the same period in 2023. The survival pressure of small and medium-sized merchants is more prominent. Therefore, exploring a suitable digital marketing practice path based on the changing laws of consumer behavior has become a key proposition to break through the bottleneck of industry development, and has important theoretical and practical significance.

2. The Characterization and Driving Factors of Consumer Behavior Changes Under the Digital Background

Under the wave of digitization, digital technology has deeply penetrated the entire consumption scenes, and consumer behavior presents three core changing characteristics. Firstly, information acquisition is socialized, and the distribution of channels tends to be diversified and dispersed. Users no longer passively receive brand push information, but actively obtain consumption references through social circle sharing and interaction. CNNIC's 54th Statistical Report on the Development of the Internet in China shows that by June 2024, the number of short video users in China has reached 1.05 billion, accounting for 95.5% of the total Internet users. Short videos and virtual communities have become core information contacts. A home furnishing e-commerce brand has successfully increased its product exposure by 38% with the help of social platform UGC content marketing [2]. Secondly, the rationalization of decision-making paths and trust building rely on scenario-based experiences. Consumers no longer blindly follow the brand's one-way promotion, but instead verify the actual value of the product through multidimensional comparison. Market research data shows that price rationality, functional innovation, and genuine consumer evaluation constitute the "iron triangle" of contemporary consumer purchasing decisions. 33% of consumers will actively observe market feedback before making purchasing decisions, and the influence of key opinion leader (KOL) real experience evaluation far exceeds traditional hard advertising. Thirdly, personalized consumer demand and continuous upgrading of

experience demands have shifted from meeting basic functional needs to emotional fit and scene adaptation at the spiritual level. Industry research shows that immersive experiences such as AR virtual makeup testing and spatial shopping can increase brand conversion rates by an average of 41%, which fully confirms the core value of experiential consumption [3]. The core driving forces behind the above-mentioned behavioral changes can be summarized into three categories: at the level of technological iteration, AI big models, 5G and other technologies have broken down traditional information barriers, providing underlying support for the intelligent and personalized upgrading of consumer scenarios, and making it possible to accurately match supply and demand; At the level of intergenerational replacement, Generation Z has gradually become the main consumer force, and its community-based and self-pleasing consumption concept has profoundly reshaped the market pattern; At the policy and regulatory level, the implementation of the Personal Information Protection Law has promoted consumer behavior from "passive acceptance of marketing" to "active authorization and interaction", and data compliance has become a fundamental prerequisite for building trust in brands.

3. The Challenges and Adaptation Requirements of Consumer Behavior Changes for Digital Marketing

The structural changes in consumer behavior have led to multiple development challenges for traditional digital marketing models. Firstly, traffic acquisition is facing difficulties. After the peak of traffic dividends, extensive advertising is difficult to reach the target customer group, further squeezing the traffic survival space of small and medium-sized brands. The input-output ratio of traditional SEO optimization continues to decline, and the ranking of core keywords of top brands fluctuates sharply. The 2024 e-commerce industry report shows that the cost of acquiring customers for mainstream e-commerce has increased by 35% year-on-year. Secondly, the difficulty of building trust has increased. Salesforce's 2024 survey shows that Generation Z has significant anxiety about personal data, but at the same time, they are more willing to use AI to understand data to assist decision-making. Overmarketing and data abuse have become the main causes of brand trust decline. Once a brand experiences data leakage, it is easy to trigger collective resistance from users, and the cycle of repairing trust far exceeds the past [4]. Thirdly, there are shortcomings in the experience supply. Most enterprises still use standardized marketing content, which cannot reach the pain points of personalized user needs, resulting in a low user interaction rate for a long time, making it difficult to meet the core needs of Generation Z for personalized and immersive experiences [5]. Based on these challenges, digital marketing needs to meet three major adaptation criteria: precision criterion, relying on data insights to achieve precise matching of "user needs-content supply", and realizing the marketing transformation from "casting a wide net" to "precise drip irrigation". An emerging clothing brand has achieved a conversion rate of 8.2% in intelligent consulting channels through scene-precise matching strategies, far exceeding the conversion rate of 1.2% in traditional search channels; Compliance criterion, utilizing privacy computing and other technologies to achieve "data availability but invisibility", establishing a dual legal and ethical defense line for the sustainable development of digital marketing. According to the "China Privacy Computing Industry Research Report (2024)" by iResearch Consulting, the application market size of privacy computing in financial risk control scenarios in China has reached 4.78 billion yuan in 2024, and is expected to exceed 7.5 billion yuan by 2025, with an average annual compound growth rate (CAGR) of over 38%, becoming the core support of compliance marketing; The experiential criterion of building interactive and perceivable marketing scenarios, transforming users from marketing audiences to participating subjects, and the large-scale application of technologies such as virtual humans and digital twins has become an inevitable trend in the industry.

4. Construction of Digital Marketing Practice Path Guided by Consumer Behavior Change

Combining the characteristics of consumer behavior changes and marketing adaptation criteria, based on the marketing concept of "user needs as the core", four core digital marketing practice paths can be constructed. Path 1: Structured content reconstruction, integrating with the information distribution logic of the AI era. Breaking away from the rigid thinking of traditional keyword ranking, getting rid of the limitations of single text content, integrating multimodal forms such as short videos, graphic and textual evaluations, and user interviews, building a structured content system of "core selling points+scene adaptation+user testimony", adapting to more than 25 mainstream AI platform algorithms, and achieving accurate content delivery in intelligent distribution scenarios. After a small-stature clothing brand implemented this path, the recommendation rate of mainstream intelligent assistants increased significantly from 22% to 75%, with a natural traffic growth of 40%. Path 2: Omnichannel Collaboration for Full-Chain Marketing Closed Loop. With "social seeding-intelligent consultation-scene experience-private domain retention" as the core link, we aim to break down the barriers between online and offline traffic, achieve two-way linkage between public domain drainage and private domain sedimentation, and integrate multiple channels such as short video platforms, virtual communities, and offline AR experience stores. A certain car brand successfully reduced potential customer lead costs by 58% through the linkage of metaverse racing games and offline test drive activities [6]. Path 3: Precise experience innovation, deepening emotional value connection. In response to the diverse needs of different generations of consumer groups, differentiated experience plans are customized for different groups through user segmentation operation strategies. Generation Z focuses on circle-based interactive experiences, while millennials pay more attention to privacy protection experiences. L'Oreal achieves seamless integration between online experience and offline conversion through AR virtual makeup testing combined with exclusive services from private-domain beauty consultants, resulting in a 32% increase in repeat purchase rate. Path 4: Driven by data compliance, build a solid foundation for trust marketing. By adopting compliance technologies such as federated learning and differential privacy, data value is tapped within a compliance framework, balancing the dual goals of user privacy protection and marketing efficiency improvement. A

certain e-commerce platform collaborates with brand partners to build a federated learning model, achieving a cross-brand user recognition accuracy of 89% while ensuring user data security [7].

5. Case Verification and Effectiveness Evaluation of Practical Path

Select three real cases from different industries, covering the two types of non-standard and semi-standard products, to verify the feasibility and effectiveness of the above practical path, ensuring that the research conclusions are both universal and industry-specific. Case 1: In the field of clothing e-commerce, an emerging small-stature fashion brand adopts a "structured content+AI adaptation" path to accurately anchor the fashion pain points of the small-stature group below 150cm, focusing on the high-frequency consumption scenario of "height-enhancing outfits", creating multimodal structured content, with a data monitoring period of 90 consecutive days, excluding holiday promotion interference. Monitoring data shows that after optimization, the proportion of transactions through intelligent consulting channels has increased from 12% to 35% [8], the customer acquisition cost has been reduced by 70% compared to bidding advertising, and the repurchase rate has increased by 32% within three months, fully confirming the commercial feasibility of the content reconstruction path. Case 2: In the field of home retail, a certain smart home brand has implemented the path of "omnichannel collaboration+AR experience", developed AR space planning tools, provided customized home appliance placement solutions for different types of spaces, and matched them with localized scene adaptation content, covering stores from first-tier to new third-tier cities, achieving full coverage of regional scenes. After the tool was launched, the average stay time of the store was extended to 27 minutes, and the natural traffic increased by 38%. In the scenario of "recommending small-sized home appliances", the top recommendation of intelligent assistants accounted for 89%. Case 3: In the field of beauty, a certain domestic beauty brand adopts the path of "privacy computing+private domain experience", processes user data through differential privacy algorithms, and launches personalized skin evaluation services. At the same time, it promises that the data will only be used for personal service optimization and will not be leaked. After the service was launched, the user data authorization rate increased by 65%, and the conversion rate of private domain users reached 15.3%, far exceeding the industry average level, effectively verifying the practical value of trust marketing under compliance guidance. The comprehensive evaluation of the effect shows that a digital marketing path that adapts to changes in consumer behavior can help brands increase traffic acquisition efficiency by 35%–45%, reduce conversion costs by more than 50%, and the effect improvement of non-standard categories such as clothing and beauty is higher than that of standardized categories, with extensive industry promotion value [9].

6. Optimization Guarantee Mechanism for Digital Marketing Practice

To ensure the effective implementation of digital marketing practices, it is necessary to establish three optimization guarantee mechanisms and form a collaborative support system from the dimensions of data, technology, and organization [10]. Firstly, dynamic data insight mechanism. Relying on the full-chain monitoring system of user behavior, real-time tracking of key link data such as social media interaction, intelligent consultation, and purchase conversion, clarifying the compliance boundaries of data collection, eliminating invalid and redundant data, focusing on core indicators of user behavior (such as interaction duration, conversion nodes, and reasons for churn), updating user profiles every quarter, and ensuring that marketing content is synchronized with consumer demand. It is recommended that enterprises connect to authoritative data monitoring platforms such as CNNIC and iResearch Consulting, integrate industry macro data with their own user data, and improve insight accuracy. Secondly, the mechanism of technological iteration adaptation. Establish a special R&D fund for marketing technology, prioritize the layout of low-cost and high-adaptability technology application scenarios, avoid blindly pursuing technological concepts [11], closely follow the commercial applications of cutting-edge technologies such as AIGC and metaverse, jointly build marketing technology joint laboratories with technology enterprises, and establish a phased evaluation mechanism for technology application effects to timely eliminate tools with poor adaptability. According to data from the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, as of December 31, 2024, 302 generative artificial intelligence services have been filed with the Cyberspace Administration of China. These compliance tools provide a secure framework for enterprise technology implementation, and enterprises need to actively connect with compliance technology tools to improve marketing efficiency. Thirdly, the mechanism for upgrading organizational capabilities. Establish a cross-departmental marketing team, covering core positions such as data analysts, AI operators, and user experience designers, to break down data barriers and communication barriers between departments, promote collaboration and linkage among marketing, technology, legal, and other departments, conduct specialized training on consumer behavior insights, and enhance the team's ability to respond quickly to behavioral changes. Simultaneously establishing a scientific marketing effectiveness evaluation system, with traffic conversion rate, user trust, and repurchase rate as core indicators, forming a closed-loop management model of "insight-execution-evaluation-optimization".

7. Conclusion

In the context of digitalization, the socialization, rationalization, and personalized changes in consumer behavior have not only reshaped the consumer decision-making chain, but also achieved a deep reconstruction of the business logic from brand awareness to loyalty cultivation, promoting the transformation of marketing models from traditional "traffic harvesting" to "value resonance and precise fit". This study suggests that digital marketing practices that adapt to changes in consumer behavior need to be integrated with the information distribution logic of the AI era through structured content reconstruction. By leveraging omnichannel collaboration to cover the entire consumption chain, and relying on precise experience innovation to deepen the emotional connection between brands and consumers, trust marketing is built on the basis of data compliance. At the same time, dynamic data insights, technological iteration adaptation, and organizational capacity upgrading are three major guarantee mechanisms. Different industries can flexibly adjust their path focus based on their own category characteristics (such as non-standard and standard products).

Multiple industry case studies have shown that this practice path can effectively improve the efficiency of brand traffic acquisition and reduce conversion costs. The effect gains of non-standard categories such as clothing and beauty are particularly significant, providing practical and feasible solutions for enterprises to solve marketing difficulties. This study has certain limitations, as the case covers a limited industry scope and does not include variables such as regional consumption differences and consumption ability stratification. In the future, the research scope can be expanded to include more sub-variables to explore differentiated marketing paths in different fields. With the continuous iteration of digital technology, consumer behavior will present more complex evolutionary characteristics. Subsequent research can focus on cutting-edge directions such as AI-native marketing and metaverse business closed-loop, and explore human-machine collaborative marketing models in combination with technological trends, further enriching the theoretical and practical system of digital marketing.

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