

Analysis of the Synergistic Mechanism of Products and Marketing under the Trend of Personalized Consumption: A Case Study of Pop Mart

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Abstract. The current consumer market is undergoing a structural transformation from "mass supply" to "niche customization", and personalized and emotional consumption has become the mainstream trend. This article takes Pop Mart, a representative enterprise in the collectible toy industry, as a case study to explore how companies can achieve effective synergy between product management and marketing under the trend of personalized consumer demands. Research and analysis show that personalized demands pose systematic challenges to enterprises on both the product and marketing fronts: product management has to deal with issues such as unpredictable demands, high costs of small-batch production, and scattered resources. Marketing needs to address challenges such as identifying user groups, the complexity of content customization, and the integration of all channels. To address these challenges, Pop Mart has established a data sharing platform, created a cross-departmental process loop, and implemented project-based resource integration, thus forming an operation mechanism that deeply coordinates products with the market. Based on this, this article proposes suggestions for collaborative optimization from three dimensions: organizational structure, technological empowerment, and talent cultivation. This research not only provides a reference for the continuous development of Pop Mart but also offers a feasible path for other enterprises.

Keywords: Personalized Consumption, Product Management, Marketing, Collaborative Strategy, Pop Mart.

1. Introduction

Currently, the consumer market is undergoing a profound transformation from "mass supply" to "personalized satisfaction". The emerging consumer group centered on Generation Z, having grown up in an era of abundant material resources and information explosion in the digital age, has developed a distinct set of values emphasizing uniqueness, flexibility, and self-satisfaction under the influence of social culture and family environment. Their consumption behavior is no longer traditional utilitarianism, but rather a form of spiritual and cultural consumption, aiming to achieve identity construction, emotional release and integration into social circles through consumption. The consumption of trendy toys represented by blind boxes is a typical reflection of this trend.

The core appeal of blind boxes lies in their precise hit on the complex psychological mechanisms of Generation Z. On the one hand, their "random surprise" gameplay successfully transforms curiosity, herd mentality and the pursuit of novel forms into direct consumption motivation. The intense excitement and thrill that consumers experience when opening blind boxes can easily lead to emotional dependence and repetitive purchasing behavior, making "the process of opening blind boxes itself" a high-value emotional experience. It can thus be seen that the demands driving contemporary consumption are a highly emotional, dynamic and internally contradictory collection. Enterprises are no longer confronted with stable and predictable mass markets, but rather with "traffic" that is an ever-changing aggregation and dissipation of countless individualized and segmented preferences. As a pioneer and leader in China's trendy toy industry, Pop Mart has precisely positioned itself within this wave of consumption transformation through its meticulous Intellectual Property (IP) operation and unique blind box business model. Therefore, the challenges it has encountered and the explorations it has made during its development process provide an extremely

valuable research model for observing and understanding the management practices of enterprises in the era of personalized consumption. This essentially requires the internal product development department and marketing department to break down the traditional functional barriers and establish a new type of relationship that is deeply integrated and agilely collaborative.

Most existing academic research focuses on the consumer psychology of blind box marketing, the commercial value of a single IP, or the macro development strategies of enterprises. From the perspective of internal enterprise management, systematic research on how the two core functions of product management and marketing should collaborate to address the systemic challenges brought about by the aforementioned personalized demands is still insufficient (Liu et al,2021).

Based on this, this study aims to take Pop Mart as a case to deeply dissect the specific challenges brought by the trend of personalized consumer demands to enterprises in both product management (demand insight, cost control, resource allocation) and marketing (user insight, content customization, channel integration).Based on this, this study will distill and analyze the practical strategies that Pop Mart has explored to achieve efficient cross-departmental collaboration, and ultimately construct a universal collaborative framework and put forward optimization suggestions. This research not only helps enrich the theory of enterprise operation and management in the context of personalized consumption but also provides a set of practical action references for numerous consumer brands facing similar predicaments on how to transform consumers' ever-changing emotions into sustainable commercial value.

2. The challenge of personalized consumption demand trends to enterprise product management and marketing

2.1. Challenges to Product Management

It is difficult to grasp the demands of users. The essence of the blind box economy is "emotional consumption" and "random surprises", which makes consumers' preferences highly dynamic and irrational .Research indicates that the primary motivations driving consumers to purchase blind boxes include complex emotional factors such as collecting, gambling mentality, and social needs, which are far beyond the reach of traditional market research methods to accurately capture (Chen, 2021).

The IP operation practice of Pop Mart provides strong evidence for this. Taking its former core IP Molly as an example, according to the company's financial report, its revenue contribution rate has significantly declined from 14.2% in 2020 to 5.1% in 2023.Meanwhile, new IPs such as DIMOO and SKULLPANDA have rapidly risen to prominence and become key revenue drivers. The rapid "blood transfusion" process of the revenue structure of this core IP is fundamentally due to the extreme instability of the objects onto which users project their emotions. In the collectible toy market, consumers' enthusiasm comes and goes quickly. The dynamic and fragmented nature of their demands poses a severe test to enterprises' forward-looking and predictive capabilities.

The contradiction between product development and cost control. To continuously meet the diverse demands of different consumers and keep refreshing their sense of novelty, Pop Mart needs to adopt a product development model of "small batches, multiple releases, and rapid iterations". This model is contrary to the fundamental logic of the traditional toy manufacturing industry. Frequent updates of IP series mean that molds need to be constantly re-made and production lines reconfigured, while small-batch purchases will lead to higher unit costs. According to publicly available information, in 2023, Pop Mart maintained an extremely high frequency of new product launches, introducing multiple new series on average every month. This "short shelf life" operational strategy, although effectively maintaining market heat and fan stickiness, has also led to a significant increase in development and production costs.

As Li et al. (2023) pointed out in their study on the marketing strategies and sustainable development of Pop Mart, during its rapid product iteration process, Pop Mart is constantly under pressure in terms of supply chain management and cost control and must seek a balance between the

construction of an agile supply chain and the optimization of production costs. This is an inherent challenge of its business model. (Li et al,2023).

The predicament of resource dispersion under rapid product iteration. To cope with consumers' "fickle nature", Pop Mart must maintain an extremely high frequency of product iteration. This is not only reflected in the introduction of new IPs, but also in the rapid series expansion of existing IPs (such as multiple theme series of Molly) and frequent cross-border collaborations (such as partnerships with Honor of Kings and Jay Chou). This "casting a wide net" product strategy, while attempting to capture all potential hotspots, will also lead to a serious dispersion of R&D, design and marketing resources. Its financial report data shows that its revenue is highly dependent on a few top IPs, but the company still needs to invest basic development and marketing resources in a large number of mid-to-lower tier IPs. This has led to a large number of IPs being launched, but due to insufficient resource investment, they have failed to grow into new blockbusters and have not effectively expanded the company's core IP matrix. Instead, they may have diluted the overall brand recognition.

This predicament profoundly reveals the dilemma of Pop Mart. On the one hand, its success and sustainable development largely depend on its ability to respond quickly to the market and frequently introduce new products. On the other hand, as Sun et al 's research warns, indiscriminate investment of resources is inefficient (Sun et al,2023). Therefore, enterprises must establish precise mechanisms to identify and prioritize the allocation of resources to IPs with the greatest market potential. Striking a balance between "speed" and "precision" remains an ongoing challenge in product management.

2.2. Challenges in Marketing

Vague user profiling and inaccurate insights. In the era of personalized consumption, the target group of Pop Mart is not a unified whole but is scattered across different circles such as the second dimension, collectible toys, and fashionable dressing. Fans of Labubu, who are into the "cute" style, and those who follow SKULLPANDA, the "cool and trendy" type, have significant differences in their aesthetic preferences and consumption motivations. Zhang & Phakdeephrot (2023) confirmed that the effectiveness of blind box marketing is highly dependent on the diverse psychological motivations of consumers, which has rendered the traditional broad-based user segmentation methods based on age and gender ineffective. Enterprises must now shift towards precise circle positioning based on interests and values. (Zhang and Phakdeephrot ,2023)

However, the prerequisite for precise positioning is a precise understanding of the users' true feelings, which is precisely the compounded challenge that Pop Mart is facing. A vast amount of user feedback, such as discussions on Weibo, teasing remarks on Xiaohongshu, and professional reviews on Bilibili, are scattered across various platforms, forming countless "information islands". Although Ariella et al. (2025) emphasized the significance of such electronic word-of-mouth for brands, these unstructured data are extremely difficult to be systematically collected, analyzed and transformed into effective optimization measures (Ariella et al.,2025).

The "live-streaming incident" at the end of 2024 was a concentrated outbreak of the aforementioned challenges. During the live stream, an employee casually remarked that the product was "a bit expensive" but "someone always buys it", which seemed offhand comment quickly spread and led to a decline in the company's market value. On the surface, it appears to be a public relations crisis, but the deep-seated root cause lies in the marketing system's failure to accurately perceive and respond to users' genuine emotions: The company failed to effectively identify the widespread dissatisfaction with the high pricing from fragmented feedback, and the internal information barriers prevented front-line staff from sensing the psychological bottom line of users in various circles, ultimately triggering a devastating backlash in terms of word-of-mouth (Qian & Lin, 2024) . This case demonstrates that in a segmented market, any scattered feedback that is not properly handled may converge into a huge public opinion crisis.

The diverse sales channels make management complex. Pop Mart has established a wide full-channel network, including offline stores, robot stores, e-commerce platforms such as Tmall and

JD.com, WeChat mini-programs, and cooperative retail stores. This extensive layout, while maximizing the reach to consumers with different shopping habits, also brings about complex challenges in channel integration and management. There are often differences among various channels in terms of inventory information, release schedules, and member benefits. For instance, the arrival time of new products on online mini-programs and in physical stores may not be synchronized, and the inventory allocation of popular styles on different platforms often raises consumers' concerns about purchase fairness. Any disruption in any link may directly damage the brand's reputation and consumer loyalty.

Therefore, for Pop Mart, the "diversity" and "breadth" of its distribution channels are no longer merely competitive advantages. How to achieve a qualitative transformation from "omnichannel layout" to "omnichannel integration" is a long-term and arduous core challenge that its marketing and operation management are confronted with.

3. Synergy between Product Management and Marketing under the Trend of Personalized Consumer Demand

3.1. Data Interconnection and Process Coordination

The key to addressing personalized demands lies in promoting a deep integration of product management and marketing, which have been separate until now. Firstly, by establishing a unified data platform, the company broke down the "data walls" among departments, achieving real-time sharing and integration of demand, product and feedback data. For instance, when the marketing department detects a rising popularity of a certain IP (such as a specific Labubu design) through social media monitoring, this demand signal can be immediately synchronized to the product department, which can then quickly assess and launch a "limited edition series" in combination with supply chain data. The sales and user feedback data after going public are immediately fed back to verify decisions and guide iterative optimization. Kupas Seni's (2025) research indicates that this kind of collaboration based on unified data insights is the foundation for maintaining brand personality consistency. Kupas Seni (2025). Meanwhile, both Liu et al. and Sun et al. have emphasized that this close and forward-looking process collaboration mechanism is the key to its continuous transformation of creativity into market resonance and the maximization of IP value (Liu et al., 2021; Sun et al., 2023).

3.2. Resource Integration: Pooling Strengths to Accomplish Major Tasks

In response to the operational complexity brought about by personalized demands, Pop Mart has adopted a project-based resource integration model for the operation of key IPs or major projects. To achieve specific strategic goals, such as the launch of a major product series, the rigid departmental structure is temporarily broken. Personnel are drawn from departments such as product, marketing, design, and supply chain to form cross-functional project teams with independent decision-making power and budgets. This mechanism ensures that the most high-quality human, financial and technological resources can be concentrated and allocated towards the directions with the greatest market potential, achieving the goal of "concentrating resources to accomplish major tasks".

In major projects such as the "Molly 15th Anniversary Series", Pop Mart implements this model by establishing cross-functional projects with dedicated budgets and decision-making powers. This highly coordinated model of resource integration is an important support for the efficient operation of its business model. Li et al. pointed out in their research on the marketing strategy of Pop Mart that its success is inseparable from its efficient integration and allocation of internal and external resources to support the rapid IP commercialization cycle.(li et al,2023)Meanwhile, Zhang's (2025) research on the strategy of hunger marketing also indirectly confirms that the market enthusiasm triggered by the release of limited editions necessarily relies on the ultimate coordination of rhythm and resource guarantee among product, supply chain and marketing ends (Zhang, 2025; Hong, 2025).

4. Optimization Suggestions

4.1. Organizational Adjustment

To solidify the collaborative mechanism, enterprises need to promote the transformation of their organizational structure towards an "IP-centered" model. The core suggestions include establishing a permanent "IP Operations Team" and assigning cross-functional teams to each core IP, fully responsible for their long-term development and commercial performance, to achieve the transformation from project collaboration to regular operation. At the same time, a full-time "coordinator" is appointed to coordinate resources and resolve conflicts at the middle management level to ensure smooth processes. Finally, regular cross-departmental communication and training should be promoted, such as joint seminars or short-term job rotations, to break down cognitive barriers and establish a common language.

This structural adjustment aims to achieve a focus on resources and decision-making. Sun et al.'s research clearly indicates that the maximization of IP value cannot be achieved without a corresponding refined organizational guarantee (Sun et al., 2023). Therefore, the shift from a functional structure to a more agile IP matrix model is a necessary foundation for enterprises like Pop Mart to systematize their collaborative capabilities and support the implementation of their multi-IP platform strategy (Rao & Idris, 2025).

4.2. Technology Empowerment: Enhancing Efficiency with Digital Tools

To achieve more efficient internal collaboration, enterprises should attach importance to the systematic deployment of digital tools. Specifically, the collaborative platform can be built in steps: initially, general office software such as DingTalk and Lark can be utilized to achieve task collaboration and information synchronization. As business complexity increases, professional systems that can integrate product development, user management and marketing data are gradually introduced, enabling the product and marketing departments to work based on the same data source. Meanwhile, enterprises can flexibly adopt third-party digital services, quickly respond to niche demands, and use data tools that can analyze social media trends in real time to build market agility at a lower cost.

The core of this technological approach lies in transforming cross-departmental collaboration from relying on manual communication to a standardized process supported by systems. Ariella et al. (2025) demonstrated that effectively leveraging digital tools such as social media for market insights and interaction can significantly enhance brand value and user stickiness (Ariella et al., 2025). Therefore, the continuous construction and integration of digital systems from consumer insights to internal operations are necessary investments for enterprises like Pop Mart to adapt to personalized consumption and achieve sustainable development.

4.3. Talent Cultivation

The ultimate implementation of synergy depends on the capabilities of employees. Enterprises need to cultivate talents in a targeted manner. Internally, employees should be encouraged and supported to participate in cross-departmental projects, enabling them to understand both product development and market operations in practical work and grow into all-round talents who can grasp the overall picture of the business. When conducting external recruitment, new positions such as "Product Marketing" can be established, giving priority to candidates who possess both product thinking and market insight, to bring fresh perspectives on problem-solving to the team.

Li et al.'s research also indicates that the continuous development of Pop Mart cannot be separated from its emphasis on and cultivation of talents, especially those with multiple business capabilities (Li et al., 2023). Therefore, consciously cultivating and attracting such versatile talents is the key to ensuring that the collaborative capabilities of enterprises can continue to play a role.

5. Conclusions

This study takes Pop Mart as an example to analyze the management challenges and collaborative strategies that enterprises face under the trend of personalized consumption.

Research has found that consumers' pursuit of uniqueness and emotional value has led to difficulties for Pop Mart in terms of product demand being hard to predict, high costs of small-batch production, and scattered resources; on the marketing side, it has encountered challenges such as user segmentation, complex content customization, and difficulties in channel integration. The key to addressing these challenges lies in achieving efficient collaboration between the product and marketing departments. Pop Mart has established an agile collaborative system through data sharing, process integration and project-based management: that is, it breaks down information barriers with data, ensures synchronized rhythms through common operation processes, and concentrates resources to create core products by forming cross-departmental project teams. This enables it to transform the rapidly changing external market demands into consistent and efficient internal action responses.

Based on this, this article puts forward optimization suggestions from three aspects: organization, technology and talent: establish cross-functional teams centered on IP, deploy digital collaboration tools, and cultivate compound talents with dual perspectives of products and markets. These suggestions provide practical references for Pop Mart and enterprises facing similar problems.

In conclusion, in the era of personalized consumption, breaking down departmental barriers and building a deeply integrated collaborative mechanism have become an important foundation for the sustainable development of enterprises. Future research could further explore the applicability and evolution paths of collaborative models in different industry contexts.

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