

Case Name

JellyCat——“Ugly become widely known” reverse marketing – Gao Boyou

Theory

Brand positioning theory; Marketing segmentation theory

Keywords

Market segmentation, Emotional value, Reverse marketing

Background Information

JellyCat is a doll company founded in the UK in 1999. It adheres to designing "comforting toys" specifically for babies and has won the title of "the softest comforting toy in the world." However, despite its success in other markets, JellyCat faces challenges in the Chinese market. Due to its non-local brand identity and high pricing, JellyCat has yet to be widely recognized in the Chinese maternal and infant market.

Marketing Strategy

1. New market segmentation

Since entering the Chinese market in 2013, JellyCat has not established sufficient brand awareness and loyalty among Chinese consumers. At the same time, the high price has also become an obstacle for the brand to move forward in the Chinese maternal and infant market.

Since the maternal and infant market is not feasible, we must find people with more consumption power to continue to consume. Therefore, the brand lays out the individual pleasing and healing track, opens up a brand marketing strategy for physical and mental companionship and spiritual comfort for young people with consumption power, and enters a new track in the current young consumer market.

2. Reverse marketing of "Ugly as Beauty"

JellyCat has a phenomenal "Ugly Things Award" on Xiaohongshu. "Ugly as Beauty" reverse marketing method can quickly attract consumers' attention and unconsciously strengthen users' awareness of the brand, further narrowing the distance between the brand and users.

The reverse marketing of "Ugly as Beauty" has the following two characteristics:

- Ugly things have two primary social attributes of "acceptance" and "truth" because "ugly" things have a more substantial range of dissemination and curiosity; young people are more willing to share with close people.
- Reverse marketing starts from understanding the psychological state of consumers. In an era of internal circulation and profound mental exhaustion among young people, JellyCat uses "absurdly ugly and cute" dolls to fit in with and understand consumers. When more people share "Furry Penguin," "Little Frog with Nostrils," "Purple Eggplant," and other ugly representatives of JellyCat on Xiaohongshu, and when consumers say that JellyCat dolls "can always act like I'm crazy," JellyCat's products have perfectly fit the emotions of consumers. Emotions have been transformed into consumer desires. Consumers are holding on to a specific JellyCat

toy and their wallets. The imagination consumers give to products also enables the brand to maintain stickiness and repurchase rate with consumers.

3. Scenario-based marketing of "ugly and cute" items

In terms of publicity, with the help of JellyCat, users will let the dolls accompany them in various life scenes such as work and travel. The brand also took the opportunity to create a product manual, giving the dolls a humanized story background, stimulating users to create secondary works based on the dolls' humanized background, and even creating JellyCat restaurants overseas, cooperating with Waldorf Astoria Xiamen for JellyCat afternoon tea, etc., providing a novel shopping experience and brand freshness, further deepening user viscosity.

Outcomes

The concept of "ugly and cute" has strengthened users' perception of JellyCat, established a strong brand IP and product features, and allowed high-priced JellyCat dolls to circulate in the Chinese market. According to sales data from the China Toy Association, from January to November 2023, 9 of the top 10 best-selling products in Tmall's plush and fabric toy sales were from Disney, and the only other brand on the list was JellyCat, which ranked third.

Implications & Challenges

Although reverse marketing has its unique charm and effect, it also has risks. If the marketing is not in place, the "ugly as beauty" marketing may become a mockery of the brand or even a negative evaluation, damaging the product image and its position in users' hearts. At the same time, the phenomenal popularity has a time limit, and the continuous marketing and maintenance after the popularity is what brand companies should pay attention to.

案例名称

JellyCat——“丑到出圈”的反向营销 - 高博悠

理论依据

品牌定位理论；市场细分理论

关键词

市场细分；情绪价值；反向营销

背景资料

JellyCat 是 1999 年创立在英国的一家玩偶公司，坚持专门为婴儿设计“安抚玩具”的理念，还获得过“世界上最柔软的安抚玩具”称号。然而，尽管 JellyCat 在其他市场上取得了成功，但在中国市场却面临着挑战。由于其非本土品牌身份和定价较高的特点，JellyCat 尚未在中国母婴市场获得广泛认可。

营销策略

1. 全新市场细分

自 2013 年进入中国市场以来，JellyCat 品牌并未在中国消费者中建立起足够的品牌知名度和忠诚度。同时，高昂的价格也成为该品牌在中国母婴市场中前行的阻碍。

既然母婴市场行不通，就要去寻找更具消费力的人群，让有消费能力的人去消费、持续消费。因此品牌布局个体取悦与治愈赛道，开启了针对具有消费能力的现在年轻人的身心陪伴和精神抚慰的品牌营销策略，进入当下年轻消费者市场新赛道。

2. “以丑为美”的反向营销

JellyCat 在小红书上有着现象级的“丑东西大赏”。这种「以丑出圈」的反向营销方式不仅能够快速吸引消费者的目光，更在不知不觉中强化了用户对于品牌的认知，进一步拉近了品牌与用户之间的距离。

“以丑为美”的反向营销有下述 2 个特点：

- 丑物具有“接纳”和“真实”两大社交属性，因为“丑”的东西自带更强烈的传播范围和猎奇心理；年轻人更愿意和亲近的人分享；
- 从理解消费者的心理状态开始反向营销。在内卷大潮和年轻人精神内耗严重的时代，通过“无厘头的丑萌可爱”玩偶去贴合和理解消费者，当更多的人在小红书上分享“炸毛企鹅”、“鼻孔小青蛙”、“紫茄子茄总”等 JellyCat 的丑出圈代表时，当消费者表达 JellyCat 的玩偶“总能演我发疯的状态”的时候，JellyCat 的产品已经完美的切中了消费者的情绪，情绪转化成了消费欲望，消费者被拿捏住的不只是 JellyCat 的某一款玩具，而是自己的钱包。消费者赋予产品的想象力也使得品牌维持住了与消费者的粘性与复购率；

3. “丑萌”物品的场景化营销

4. 在宣传上，借助 JellyCat 用户会让玩偶还会陪着出入在工作、旅行等各式生活场景，品牌也借机创造了产品手册，赋予玩偶人设化故事背景，刺激用户基于玩偶人设背景再进行二次创作，甚至在海外打造 JellyCat 餐厅，与厦门华尔道夫合作 JellyCat 下午茶等，提供了新颖的购物体验 and 品牌新鲜感，进一步加深用户粘性。

成果

“丑萌”概念强化了用户对 JellyCat 的认知，建立了品牌强有力的 IP 和产品特点，让高价格的 JellyCat 玩偶在中国市场流通。根据中国玩具协会销售数据统计，2023 年 1-11 月，天猫毛绒布艺类玩具销售

挑战与反思

反向营销虽然有其独特的魅力和效果，但也存在风险，“以丑为美”的营销，如果营销不到位，可能会变为对品牌的嘲讽恶搞甚至是负面评价，损害产品形象及在用户心中的地位。同时，现象级热度是有期限的，热度之后的持续营销和维持更是品牌企业值得关注的内容。