

Don Schultz: Integrated Marketing Communication Theory and the Internationalization Path of Chinese Enterprises

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Abstract. This paper explores the Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) theory of the world-renowned marketing master Don Schultz and its implications for Chinese enterprises. By analyzing Dr. Schultz's lecture and interview content in Beijing, this paper summarizes his views on marketing concepts and, in conjunction with the characteristics of the Chinese market, proposes a series of suggestions on how Chinese enterprises can achieve internationalization goals through Integrated Marketing Communication.

Keywords: integrated marketing communication, internationalization, Chinese market, marketing strategy, corporate culture

1. Introduction

In today's era of globalization, the market environment faced by enterprises is becoming increasingly complex and variable, and traditional marketing strategies are no longer sufficient to meet the rapidly changing market demands. [1] Against this backdrop, the Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) theory proposed by the world-renowned marketing master Don Schultz has become an important guide for corporate marketing. Known as one of the "80 most influential people in the world in the 20th century in terms of sales and marketing," Schultz's theories have been widely recognized and applied globally. His theory emphasizes the unity and consistency of marketing activities, advocating for the coordinated conveyance of brand messages through various channels and means to achieve effective communication with consumers. In early 2002, Dr. Schultz was invited by McKnight Enterprise Consulting Co., Ltd. To conduct a three-day training tour in China. During this time, he shared his unique insights on marketing concepts and provided valuable suggestions for the future development of Chinese enterprises. Based on Schultz's speeches and interviews in China, this paper deeply analyzes his marketing philosophy and its implications for Chinese enterprises, providing valuable references for those Chinese enterprises that are seeking an international path.

2. Don Schultz's Marketing Philosophy Core Ideas of IMC

2.1. The Essence of IMC

The essence of IMC lies in effectively communicating with consumers across various media channels through unified messages and consistent brand experiences. This theory emphasizes the integrity and synergy of marketing activities, aiming to ensure that all forms of communication, channels, and messages work in harmony to form a cohesive whole, thereby achieving the best marketing results. Schultz believes that successful IMC not only enhances brand awareness and customer loyalty but also increases a company's profitability by reducing marketing costs and improving marketing efficiency. In this process, companies need to make full use of existing technologies and tools, such as data analysis and social media, to implement personalized and customized marketing strategies to better meet the needs and expectations of consumers.

2.2. Marketing Rationalization

Schultz emphasizes the transformation of marketing from decision-making based on intuition and experience to decision-making based on data and analysis. This concept highlights the support of marketing decisions through tools such as market research data and consumer behavior analysis, ensuring that every aspect of marketing activity has a scientific basis. [2] Moreover, the rationalization of marketing also encompasses the importance of performance evaluation, by setting clear goals and metrics to measure the effectiveness of marketing activities, ensuring that marketing resources are effectively utilized and yield actual returns. This process encourages continuous learning and improvement, using feedback mechanisms to adjust marketing strategies to adapt to market changes and development, thereby enhancing the overall efficiency and effectiveness of marketing activities.

2.3. The Role of Marketing Professionals

Marketing professionals play a crucial role in today's rapidly changing market environment. They need to possess flexibility and curiosity, always maintaining a willingness to learn and adapt to the ever-evolving market demands and technological advancements.[3] Successful marketers not only actively support customers, earning their trust and loyalty, but also have strategic foresight to identify the essence and trends in a complex and variable market environment. Additionally, they should value communication and interaction with customers, establishing long-term cooperative relationships by respecting their needs and expectations. In summary, marketing professionals are not only outstanding members within an organization but also key drivers in propelling the enterprise forward.

3. The Characteristics and Challenges of the Chinese Market

3.1. The Internationalization Trend of Chinese Enterprises

Chinese enterprises, while rapidly developing, are moving towards becoming global multinational corporations. In this process, they face the dual challenges of integrating into the international market while maintaining Chinese characteristics. To compete on the international stage, Chinese enterprises not only need to learn and draw on international advanced experience and management models but also must retain and promote their unique cultural characteristics to distinguish themselves from other competitors. This requires enterprises to find a balance in the process of internationalization, which can meet international standards while reflecting Chinese elements.

3.2. Localization of Marketing Concepts

As multinational companies enter the Chinese market one after another, they adopt localized marketing strategies to better attract Chinese consumers. This trend encourages Chinese enterprises to consider how to combine local cultural advantages when going to the international market to achieve the localization of marketing strategies. This means that Chinese enterprises not only need to learn the common practices of the international market in the process of internationalization but also need to deeply understand the needs and preferences of the local market, combine the two, and formulate marketing strategies that can meet international standards and reflect Chinese cultural characteristics.

4. The Application of Integrated Marketing Communications in China

Taking "China Mobile" as an example, this section illustrates how technological advancements and management innovation have supported the growth of enterprises. In the case of China Mobile, the company utilized advanced mobile communication technology and refined customer service to quickly respond to market demands, successfully transitioning from a government-linked enterprise to a market-oriented entity.

The company fully leveraged advanced mobile communication technology and refined customer service to quickly respond to market demands, successfully transitioning from a government-linked enterprise to a market-oriented entity. Through technological innovations such as the introduction of intelligent network management systems, big data analysis platforms, and mobile internet applications, China Mobile not only improved service quality but also significantly enhanced operational efficiency. Additionally, by implementing a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, China Mobile was able to better understand customer needs and preferences, providing personalized service solutions.

In response to the need for rebranding the "Made in China" image, China Mobile has taken a series of measures to enhance brand image and service quality. On one hand, the company focuses on continuous innovation in technology and services to win consumer trust with high-quality products and services. On the other hand, China Mobile adopts market segmentation strategies, launching customized products and services tailored to the characteristics of different consumer groups to meet

diverse market demands. For example, package plans aimed at young users place greater emphasis on data usage and social functions, while for business users, more professional communication solutions and service support are provided.

China Mobile also employs market segmentation strategies, using more precise marketing strategies to attract specific consumer groups. This includes using modern information technology methods such as big data analysis to gain a deep understanding of consumer preferences and behavior patterns, thereby formulating more effective marketing plans. For instance, by analyzing user behavior data, China Mobile can accurately identify the interests of potential customers and then push personalized promotional messages and service recommendations, enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty.

In summary, China Mobile has successfully rebranded its image and enhanced its market competitiveness through technological innovation and refined management, as well as market segmentation strategies and data-driven marketing plans. This case demonstrates that the application of Integrated Marketing Communications in China not only helps to improve the brand image and service quality of enterprises but also assists in more effectively attracting and retaining target customer groups. For other Chinese enterprises, learning from the experience of China Mobile and adopting comprehensive marketing strategies will be key to achieving internationalization goals.

5. Future Prospects

5.1. Cultivating High-Level Marketing Talents

The importance of cultivating high-level marketing talents with practical experience is emphasized. Chinese educational institutions and enterprises can help future marketing talents accumulate practical experience and a global perspective by providing internship opportunities, international cooperation projects, and other means.

5.2. Balancing Humanity, Aggressiveness, and Curiosity

Marketing professionals need to find a balance between humanity, aggressiveness, and curiosity to establish long-term customer relationships. This requires marketers to not only focus on business objectives but also to value emotional connections with customers and social responsibility.

5.3. The Importance of Information Management

The significance of information management and market segmentation in formulating effective marketing strategies is highlighted. Enterprises should invest in data analysis capabilities, using CRM systems and social media platforms to collect valuable data, in order to better understand consumer needs and conduct customized marketing.

6. Conclusion

Don Schultz's Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) theory provides Chinese enterprises with a systematic approach to achieve success on their path to internationalization. By adopting this theory, Chinese enterprises can not only better understand and meet customer needs but also establish a unique brand image in the global market.

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