

User Experience Improvement Strategies of REDnote in Virtual Community Interaction

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Abstract: This research has analyzed how REDnote's virtual community interaction model attracts long-term and high-engagement users and what shortcomings need to be improved, so as to give both itself and other social platforms some improvement suggestions for surviving in the fierce market competition. In the preparation phase of this study, I first read some previous scholarly research articles related to the topic of this study, and then listed the ideas and conclusions of them. In the process of researching and writing the paper, I summarized the main ideas of previous scholarly research articles and used them as references and support for some dissertations in the research. That could be seen in the analysis, although REDnote has had tens of thousands of long-term and high-engagement users, it still needs to make optimization in its content audit, KOL collaboration, and function design to obtain them and attract more new users, thus bringing more economic benefit and maintaining its position in this field.

Keywords: Social media, virtual community interaction, online user experience, UGC platform, KOL collaboration.

1. Introduction

In recent years, with the rapid development of technology and the Internet, various social media have emerged and are deeply loved by lots of people. Social media has gradually become an indispensable thing in everyone's daily life, because it enables people to achieve a more convenient and interesting way of information exchange and communication in the digital community, which is different from the traditional way.

In a crowd of social media, REDnote stands out as one of the industry's leading. In 2013, REDnote was developed by Wenchao Mao and Fang Qu in Shanghai. It is a lifestyle platform for young people with the mission of "Inspire Lives, share and discover the wonderful world", allowing users to record life and share lifestyle through short videos, image-text, and some other forms of sharing lifestyle, and form interactions based on similar interests. In the past 11 years of great operation, REDnote has always maintained the value of "upward, into the user, open mind, pragmatic, and responsible" to realize the vision of "becoming the most trusted Internet company by users", and through a series of efforts, as of October 2019, the monthly active users of REDnote have exceeded 100 million, of which 70% are the post-90s generation, and continue to grow rapidly [1].

However, as the market becomes saturated and the market competition for social apps becomes considerably more fierce, developers should focus on innovation, product differentiation, and user

experience optimization to attract more new users and retain long-term and high-engagement users, and REDnote is the same. Therefore, this research article aims to analyze the methods that make REDnote attract long-term and high-engagement users in the form of community interaction, and give some improving suggestions. The previous studies of scholars mainly used some methodologies related to new media to discuss specific issues in this field, and just a few studies focused on analyzing a social platform, so I will summarize the ideas and conclusions about some previous research after reading their articles to conduct more specific and comprehensive research on REDnote. In my research, REDnote is analyzed as a successful case in the industry, which may not only provide some optimization advice for its development and operation to make it more perfect, but also give some inspiration to developers and managers of other platforms of the same type to understand the approaches about good operation of social apps and the things that need to pay more attention to make some adjustments and improvements.

2. The Strengths of Existing Community Interaction Forms

With 11 years of operation, REDnote has gradually become a successful social app with a large user base. During this period, REDnote's community interaction model has been constantly updated and improved, and now its existing community interaction model has attracted lots of long-term and high-engagement users.

2.1. Content in the Virtual Community of REDnote

Firstly, REDnote is a user-generated content (UGC) platform, and this enables its users to share their thoughts and experiences with others on the platform, and they can also obtain some different information from the content published by other users, so as to reach information interaction and create a diverse content community, attracting a large number of users to join. According to Elwood and Leszczynski cited in Glowczynski, this type of user interaction model makes people become both producers and consumers of digital content [2]. REDnote provides ordinary people with opportunities to express their ideas and show their talents, which allows them to share some inspirations that are nowhere to be said in their daily lives. The users can easily create REDnote accounts and post their original content according to their interests and experiences without using too many practical skills.

If these works are high-quality and recognized by many people, these users as content creators can gain wider attention and a sense of accomplishment, which encourages them to use REDnote more. Meanwhile, when the users read others' posts on REDnote, they can learn some new information and knowledge from others to improve related skills, like cooking, makeup, fitness, and so on, through practice. The content and topics are presented in a wide range of forms used by users, from texts and pictures to videos and audio, to meet the preferences and demands of different users. Also, the active participants prompt discussion, interaction, communication, knowledge transfer, and content creation [3], allowing other users can always refresh and browse different new content on REDnote, avoiding making them feel bored and lose interest in long-term continuous use of REDnote. This is because the cost of producing and delivering media content has been reduced through the rise of the Internet, while the advent of wireless Internet and smart devices has created an environment where users can browse media content anytime and anywhere [4]. In short, the active user can publish lots of posts that are close to life and interact with each other, so they can get a stronger sense of real experience, and show a closer social attribute.

Additionally, REDnote is also a social app that focuses on fashion, beauty, and life. This focused positioning has enabled REDnote to establish a high reputation and influence in these fields, and better get the trust of its users. Users are also more inclined to send their summarized beauty skills, fashion collocations, travel experiences, life tips, etc., which also meet most users' needs, allowing

them to learn more valuable information to improve their quality of life and beauty effectively. This is in line with the entertainment and life trend of the young generation of people in today's society, so it can attract more users to participate in the discussion, and also prompts REDnote to be more popular.

2.2. The Active KOLs in the Virtual Community of REDnote

Secondly, REDnote also adopts the Key Opinion Leader (KOL) strategy, which allows some individuals with high influence and a huge follower base to achieve information dissemination and indirect product promotion. This is because in the virtual world, people may listen to the suggestions and recommendations published on social platforms before purchasing products from specific brands, choosing movies, and seeking information about current fashion trends [5], and this has gradually turned REDnote into a mixed commercial and social platform, but its users still love to use it.

On the one hand, KOLs' content has substantial help to most ordinary users. In general, KOLs share their personal experiences and lifestyles to recommend some related products based on their tastes, actual reviews, and professional knowledge through regularly and continuously updating high-quality pictures and video works. The authentic and real-life content makes their followers feel close to them, and their in-depth knowledge of particular fields is enough to build a bond of trust between them and their followers. Moreover, KOLs interact frequently with their followers through comment sections, group chats, live streaming, etc., and sometimes they may ask the preferences and demands of their followers to answer questions and provide targeted help, thus establishing emotional connection and improving user experience. This type of social interaction culture allows users to get a sense of participation and community belonging, so as to attract more long-term and high-engagement users.

On the other hand, nowadays, the Internet and social e-commerce industry are developing rapidly, and becoming KOLs can achieve commercial realization and gain social vanity. When KOLs share their original content, there will be some product placements and product purchase links, and when their followers buy something, it will generate some profits for them. In this model, ordinary users who are also community members, play the role of consumers, who are attracted by social media influencers' unboxing comments, thus participating in consumption [6]. In other words, this amounts to the celebrity effect of getting other users to imitate the consumption. Also, as their follower base grows, they may cooperate with more brands to promote products, thereby earning high commissions and increasing each other's awareness. As Lan mentioned, "People also want to gain more resources as rewards in online interaction to help them develop in reality, such as recognition, fame, status, economic interests, and so on" [7]. Therefore, with the gradual strong business environment in REDnote, some users may come up with the idea of profiting from it, so they will use REDnote for a longer time and post more content to seize the chances to attempt to develop into KOLs.

2.3. The Novel Virtual Community Interaction Functions of REDnote

Thirdly, REDnote has a series of user interaction buttons, which allows users to better exchange their minds. In addition to the most basic and common features: likes, comments, favorites, shares, and messages, REDnote has added two novel forms of community interaction functions that are rare in other same-type mainstream apps in recent years.

The first is the voting function, which means that the users as creators can ask extended questions and set a series of options for other users as participants to choose and make subsequent discussions after posting their content, and this feature optimizes the ease of community interaction of REDnote. As participants, users can express their opinions more easily and conveniently, without complicated

steps or excessive time investment; and as creators, they can understand the attitudes and preferences of other users about their published content clearly, and conduct in-depth analyses and summaries.

The other one is the Find Partners function, which provides users with a place to find people who have common interests or goals to carry out activities or complete goals together, and this feature is also in line with the preferences of contemporary young people. In Wu and Outley's research on the relationships between campers and social media communities, they found that more than half of them like to do things with others in a digital environment [8]. Users just need to post their resumes (the brief self-introduction and requirements description) for looking for partners in the column of this function, and then others can choose the people they want to know to communicate with each other and gradually become partners, or even close friends. Beyond that, users can also create or join groups to find a bunch of partners. In the book of Benavides et al., they interviewed Paula, a Gen Z social media user, and she mentions that Facebook groups were a great help and support to her when she was selling some little stuff [9]. The community groups users joined have the power to give everyone in those groups get more social belonging and encouragement. Through the Find Partners function, users can quickly and accurately find the partners they need anytime and anywhere, regardless of location, time, and money. Then, in the process of doing something they like or need to accomplish together, they may become each other's motivation, and can also share resources, such as information, experiences, tools, and so on, to learn from each other's strong points to offset their weaknesses and inspire new ideas, so that achieving ultimate goals.

These two novel functions allowing users to obtain social energy and practical value are precisely rare in other mainstream UGC social apps but appear in REDnote, which makes the users more impressed by the innovation and practicality of it, and have a deeper trust for the operation and development of it.

3. The Weaknesses of Existing Community Interaction Forms and Its Improvement Plans

However, although REDnote's existing community interaction strategies have brought it a large number of long-term and high-engagement users, there are still some problems that may cause some users' dissatisfaction, so REDnote should take some measures to continuously improve this aspect, so as to guarantee the user experience and obtain a better reputation.

3.1. Strengthening Content Management and Audit

For UGC platforms, users' content is one of the most significant elements, but REDnote still falls short in this area. Even though REDnote has a relatively strict content policy, which clearly and detailedly enumerates and explains the community guidelines and violation terms, there is always some content in REDnote that brings users negative emotions, like anxiety, anger, sadness, etc.

Also, sometimes REDnote's system misjudges whether the content is illegal, and estimating legitimate content as illegal content may not only make the flow and influence of the content that users have worked hard to create become worse, but also affect their moods. These both lead to a poor user experience and undermine users' trust in REDnote's community management, so REDnote should upgrade its user content moderation methods as soon as possible.

REDnote can first try to solve the problems of illegal content from the root, through platform education and publicity regularly uploading the cases of illegal content, so that every user can more directly and easily understand the content policy. At the same time, REDnote can set up a reward mechanism. For example, REDnote can give the users with good performance some corresponding points, titles, badges, etc. to satisfy users' social community vanity; and also through the recommendation algorithm, give high-quality compliance original content more flow rewards to encourage them to maintain the positive community atmosphere.

As for content audit management, REDnote can implement both technical and manual audits, and carry out real-time monitoring of the content published in the app to deal with illegal content promptly. After artificial intelligence and some other technology tools automatically identify and filter the offending content, a professionally trained human audit team can review the content screened by AI in more detail to ensure the accuracy of checking whether user content is in violation. By these measures, REDnote can more efficiently manage and control the content to avoid the emergence of undesirable information that may affect the user experience and maintain the brand image and social responsibility.

3.2. Balance Commercialization and User Experience

In terms of the strategy of cooperating with KOLs, it plays an important role in community interaction, and has brought many economic benefits to REDnote in the short term, but it causes REDnote to become overly commercialized, which may bring some adverse effects and risks. With the accelerated development of commercialization in REDnote, the number of KOLs keeps increasing. In order to improve their commercial value, some KOLs may share some posts with obvious commercial purposes or false content, and increase the number of their followers and content interactions through improper means, thus leading to the overall authenticity, credibility, and authority of content in REDnote to be greatly reduced. These not only destroy the original excellent content community atmosphere, and make users have resistant attitudes and distrust of REDnote, resulting in user loss, but also damage the brand image, and bring a certain degree of legal risk, so REDnote and KOLs need to work hard together to balance commercialization and user experience.

For the improvement plans, REDnote should first raise the access threshold for KOLs, and strictly check and publicly display the certification materials about every KOL's professional background. After passing the audit, KOLs also need to receive regular education and training from REDnote to improve their awareness of maintaining to creating high-quality content that is valuable to users.

Meanwhile, REDnote should put user experience and engagement in the first place, severely regulating content commercial advertisements to ensure that advertisements and commercial content do not excessively interfere with users' normal use. REDnote should have a transparent advertising policy, which marks and prompts the advertising content for users, allowing them to choose whether to continue reading or watching, so as to win the trust of users.

Also, it is helpful to establish a well-developed reputation system, because the trust or reputation system can not only help users evaluate others' degree of trust, but also quantify and disseminate trust values to the entire community by analyzing users, but also quantify and disseminate the trust value to the whole community by analyzing the feedback of user interaction to encourage trustworthy behaviour of participants and prevent dishonest behaviour of participants [10]. After screening out some low-quality or false content, REDnote should also forcibly delete them and give disseminators some corresponding warnings and punishments, such as deducting credit points or kicking them out of the KOL group.

This series of actions puts higher standards on KOLs and creator content, so that maintaining the authenticity and quality of content and protecting users' experience and interests to promote the long-term stable development of REDnote.

3.3. Making New Functions and Events Obvious

Finally, REDnote also has a regrettable drawback, that is, many users do not know some new features, like voting and Find Partners mentioned above, and some creative online activities, such as photography competitions, writing challenges, video creation contests, etc., although these functions and activities can provide users with great convenience and different interesting experiences. If users

cannot access the interesting and novel content, in the long run, they may gradually find REDnote boring and lose interest in using it. Instead, they may spend more time on other similar types of social apps and reduce the time and frequency of using REDnote, which can lead to a decline in the overall satisfaction and loyalty of users, and the number of long-term and high-engagement users shrinks, so REDnote should try its best to change this situation.

To help more users get to know the development of new functions and the organization of new activities, REDnote should adjust the overall interface design of the app, and make reasonable classification of these items, so that users can easily and quickly find the entrance and column of them, and clearly and accurately locate the functions and activities that they are interested in. Shao et al. also concluded in their empirical research that platform designers must constantly improve design methods and add vivid elements to help users efficiently find specific information or resources and enable users to move smoothly from one place to another block [11]. Then, REDnote should also aggressively and visibly propagandize new features and upcoming events. For instance, REDnote can set the page advertisements that appear when users enter the app as reminders or posters showing information about new functions and activities, send relevant content information to users on the notification page, and let KOLs or other influencers insert or embed the information about new features and activities in their content and works, so as to attract users' expectations and attention.

Moreover, REDnote should also optimize the user experience in this aspect, providing users with clear and concise operating guidelines and rules on new features and activities to ensure that they are familiar with the details of the use and participation.

If these solutions can be implemented, REDnote may effectively increase the visibility of its new functions and activities to attract more new users to join and build deeper community interaction with existing users, so that enhancing the vitality and attractiveness of the community.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, this article has illustrated the way REDnote's virtual community interaction form attracts lots of long-term and high-engagement users and the corresponding optimization plans. The result is that although REDnote has an open UGC model, commercial KOL strategy, and rich community interaction features, which are attractive, it also needs to improve the control of content audit, pay attention to avoid the situation of over-commercialization, and strengthen the promotion of new features and activities.

However, it is important to note that this study has some limitations, particularly the lack of quantitative questionnaire interviews with different types of users and the absence of comparison with platforms of the same type. Therefore, future research could add a control group to conduct a more in-depth and professional analysis in combination with interviews, and it could also start with a more comprehensive and detailed discussion of the three main sections mentioned in this paper.

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