

# ***Apple's Business Operations and Marketing Strategies: A Comparative Study with Huawei***

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**Abstract:** This study focuses on the comparison of business operation and marketing strategies between Apple and Huawei, aiming at in-depth analysis of their competitive situation and strategic differences in the global market. First, it Outlines the comprehensive strength of Apple as a global technology giant, emphasizing its leading position in innovative technology, high-end product design and ecosystem construction. At the same time, it briefly introduces the rapid development and achievements of Huawei, in the fields of communication equipment, smart phones and cloud computing. Then, it discusses Apple's business operation model in detail, including its unique hardware and software integration sales strategy, rich virtual service provision, strong platform and ecosystem operation capabilities, and continuous innovation and technology research and development investment. Together, these have underpinned Apple's strong performance and high profits in the global market. In terms of marketing strategy, Apple has successfully created high-end brand image and loyalty through precise product positioning, high-end pricing strategy, strict channel control and innovative advertising. Further, this study compares and analyzes the main differences between Apple and Huawei, including market positioning, technological innovation path, globalization strategy implementation, etc., and reveals the different emphases and advantages of the two in competition. Finally, the conclusion summarizes the main differences between Apple and Huawei in business operation and marketing strategies, emphasizes their respective advantages and challenges, and provides valuable reference and enlightenment for enterprises in related industries.

**Keywords:** Apple Inc., Huawei Inc., Business Operation Model, Profit, Marketing Strategy.

## **1. Introduction**

This article focuses on the differences and effectiveness of Apple Inc. 's (AAPL) and Huawei Technologies Co., Ltd.' s (Huawei Technologies Co., Ltd.) marketing strategies in the field of marketing, in-depth analysis of how the two technology giants through innovative marketing methods to build brand image and promote product market penetration. Based on its unique product design philosophy, excellent user experience and highly integrated ecosystem, Apple has built strong brand loyalty and continues to lead the industry through precise market positioning and diversified marketing channels. In contrast, Huawei, with its deep technology accumulation, comprehensive product line layout and breakthrough progress in cutting-edge technologies such as 5G, combined

with flexible marketing strategies, has rapidly risen globally and become a competitor that cannot be ignored by Apple.

The significance of this study lies in that the comparative analysis of the marketing strategies of Apple and Huawei not only enriches the theoretical research on the marketing strategies of technology enterprises, but also provides valuable practical guidance for other technology enterprises. This study aims to reveal the successful elements of both in terms of brand building, market segmentation, marketing mix, and how these elements interact to drive companies to stand out in a highly competitive market.

The research structure of this paper includes four parts: literature review, case analysis, comparative analysis, research conclusion and revelation. First of all, by combing the relevant literature, establish the research foundation; Then, the marketing strategies of Apple and Huawei are analyzed in depth. Then, the key success factors are extracted by comparing the main differences between them in marketing strategies. Finally, summarize the research results, put forward the enlightenment to the marketing strategy of science and technology enterprises, and look forward to the future research direction.

## **2. Overview of Research Objects**

### **2.1. Apple**

Apple Inc., founded in 1976, is an American multinational technology company and one of the world's leading technology companies, headquartered in Silicon Valley, Cupertino, California, USA. The company initially designed and sold computers, but has since expanded to include consumer electronics, computer software, online services, and personal computers. Later, Apple also launched the iPhone to become famous, followed by the launch of iPad, Mac, Apple Watch and other products to become more famous, while building Apple's strong and closed ecosystem to provide users with an independent and convenient digital life experience. Apple's revenue has shown steady growth and volatility between fiscal years. For example, in the 2020/2021 fiscal year, Apple's total revenue achieved significant growth, with a year-over-year growth rate of 33.44%, driven by strong sales of the iPhone 12 series and continued growth in its services business. However, in the following fiscal year, the revenue growth rate slowed down or even showed negative growth, which may be related to the global economic situation, market competition and product cycles.

### **2.2. Huawei**

Huawei Technologies Co., LTD., founded in 1987 by Ren Zhengfei, is headquartered in Longgang District, Shenzhen, Guangdong Province. It is the largest telecommunications equipment supplier in China and the world's leading ICT (information and communication technology) solution provider, and is also far ahead in the world. Huawei's products and services cover telecom operators, enterprises, terminals and cloud computing, especially in 5G technology, smartphones, network equipment and other areas have made remarkable achievements. Huawei is committed to providing smarter and more efficient digital solutions to customers around the world through continuous technological innovation. In the development of recent years, it has also continued to strengthen itself and occupied a large market share in the world. Huawei's revenue has shown steady growth and fluctuations in different years. For example, between 2019 and 2020, Huawei's revenue continued to grow, but the rate of growth slowed. However, in 2021, Huawei's revenue declined due to the impact of the external environment. But then, in 2022 and 2023, Huawei achieved steady revenue growth by increasing investment in research and development, optimizing business structure and other measures.

### 3. Apple's Business Operation Model

#### 3.1. Software and Hardware Product Sales

Yang (2018) mentioned that when Apple was on the brink of bankruptcy, it coincided with the return of the legendary Steve Jobs to the helm [1]. At the time, the company was saddled with \$1 billion in losses and its prospects were bleak. However, Jobs's return was like a strong wind, and it quickly set off sweeping changes within the company.

He first showed extraordinary strategic vision, decided to shake hands with the former competitor - Microsoft, through the way of cross-licensing, not only eased the tension between the two sides, but also opened up new cooperation and development space for Apple. Then, Jobs was keen to catch the pulse of the market and the voice of consumers, personally led the team to launch the revolutionary personal laptop computer iMac. With its unprecedented dazzling appearance and unique design concept, this product instantly ignited the enthusiasm of the market and won the fanatical pursuit and love of consumers.

Subsequently, Apple followed suit with the launch of an upgraded version of the iMac, the iMac II, and the lightweight and stylish iBook series of laptops. All of these products continue to continue Apple's innovative spirit and excellent quality, and have won the favor and praise of consumers. This series of well-planned and highly executed market offensive successfully pulled Apple back from the brink of bankruptcy, and in just one year after Jobs took office, miraculously achieved a profit of \$309 million, writing another legendary chapter in business history.

In recent years, Apple has made money by selling high-quality hardware products (such as iPhone, iPad, Mac, etc.) and supporting software systems (such as iOS, macOS, etc.). Its product design focuses on user experience and aesthetic design, and has won a large number of loyal users. At the same time, Apple also maintains market heat and promotes sales growth by constantly updating products.

#### 3.2. Virtual Service Provision

In addition to hardware products, Apple also provides a wealth of digital content and services through virtual service platforms such as iTunes and App Store, including music, movies, applications, and so on. These services not only provide users with a convenient way to entertain and work, but also bring considerable revenue to Apple.

Zhang mentioned that the core focus of iCloud is to seamlessly manage and store user data, ensuring that this data can be updated instantly and synchronously across all devices of the user, including iPhone, iPod touch, Mac and PC [2]. Going one step further, iCloud offers automatic synchronization, greatly simplifying the complexity of managing data across devices.

In terms of security, the iCloud keychain uses advanced encryption technologies, such as public key encryption based on elliptic curve algorithm and AES-256 encryption standards, to ensure that users' data is strictly encrypted before transferring it to the Internet. This encryption process ensures the privacy of the data, as only the user with the appropriate private key can decrypt and access the data stored in iCloud. In addition, the entire data transmission process follows industry-standard communication protocols, further strengthening the security of the iCloud service, effectively preventing the risk of data leakage or unauthorized access.

Apple's services business, which includes virtual services, has become an important driver of the company's growth in recent years. According to the financial data released by Apple, the proportion of service business revenue in total revenue has increased year by year, becoming the second largest revenue source after iPhone. In the third quarter of fiscal year 2024, Apple's services business revenue reached \$24.213 billion, an increase of 14.1%. This shows that virtual services have taken a

significant share of Apple's services business and continue to contribute to the company's overall revenue growth.

### **3.3. Platform and Ecosystem Operation**

Apple has built an ecosystem with iOS at its core, closely connecting users through services such as iCloud, Apple Music, and Apple TV+. This ecosystem model enhances user stickiness, improves user loyalty, and at the same time provides a broad stage for developers to promote the prosperity of the application ecosystem.

iOS, as an operating system carefully built by Apple for mobile devices such as iPhone and iPad, is famous for its unique closed architecture [3]. This feature has a profound impact on user experience and system security, which is reflected in the following dimensions:

First and foremost, iOS and Apple hardware devices achieve seamless integration, building a unified and efficient use of the environment. With its strong vertical integration ability, Apple has strictly controlled every step from the careful design of hardware to the deep optimization of software, ensuring the smooth operation of the system and impeccable security performance.

Further, the iOS system builds a solid barrier, limiting the user's deep customization and modification of the system. This is in sharp contrast to the open philosophy of many open source operating systems, where users have no direct access to the underlying architecture of the system and can't install applications that have not been officially approved by Apple. This strict control mechanism effectively prevents the intrusion of malware and maintains the purity and security of the ecosystem.

Apple's App Store is the only official channel for app distribution, and its strict app review process ensures the quality and safety of apps on the shelf. Each application is screened to ensure that it does not violate user privacy or violate Apple's security specifications, providing users with a safe application environment.

In addition, the iOS system is also equipped with a series of advanced security features, such as data encryption technology to ensure the safety of user data, security start-up mechanism to prevent the launch of malware attacks at the same time, the system's automatic update mechanism to ensure that all devices can receive the latest security patches and function optimization in a timely manner, further enhancing the user's security experience and convenience.

However, the closed nature of iOS, while bringing security and convenience, also limits users' freedom and personalized choices to a certain extent. Some users may desire more customization space and innovation possibilities, and the strict limitations of iOS are difficult to meet these needs. Despite this, the iOS system has won the favor and trust of hundreds of millions of users around the world with its excellent performance and security.

### **3.4. Innovation and Technology Research and Development**

Apple has always regarded innovation as the core driving force of enterprise development, and has continuously increased investment in research and development to promote the continuous progress of products and technologies [4]. From Touch ID to Face ID, from Siri to M series chips, Apple's innovations continue to lead the industry. In terms of product innovation, Apple has completely reshaped the mobile communication market landscape with its iconic iPhone smart phone as an example. iPhone not only integrates advanced hardware technology, such as high-resolution display, high-performance processor, etc., but also provides users with unprecedented smooth experience and rich application ecosystem through the deep integration of the iOS operating system. This innovative mode of hardware and software integration not only improves the overall competitiveness of the product, but also leads the trend of industry development.

In addition, Apple's innovation in the business model is also commendable. The company has built a digital content distribution platform with App Store as the core, which provides developers with a broad creative space and profit channels, and also brings massive and high-quality application resources to users. This win-win business model has not only promoted the rapid growth of Apple's own business, but also promoted the prosperity of the entire mobile application industry.

### 3.5. Overall Financial Performance

Thanks to its unique business model and strong brand influence, Apple has maintained a solid financial performance. Its high profit margins, high cash flow and large market share have made Apple one of the most valuable companies in the world. However, Cook (2019) pointed out that although the pricing strategy in the United States has changed little from the previous year, the price difference of the iPhone in other countries has been significantly amplified due to currency fluctuations, which has attracted high attention from the company. In response to the market pressure brought by high prices, Apple plans to implement a price reduction policy in some specific countries, and adjust the pricing strategy, no longer solely based on the US dollar as the benchmark, but according to the local currency of each country flexible pricing. Apple's net income also showed a similar trend to its total revenue. In the year of revenue growth, net profit also achieved a corresponding increase; In a year when revenue fell, net profit was also affected. However, it is worth noting that Apple's net profit margin has remained at a high level, which reflects its strong profitability and cost control ability. In short, Apple's revenue situation has been closely watched, and its solid growth and strong profitability have brought rich returns to investors. However, in the face of future uncertainties and challenges, Apple needs to remain vigilant and flexible.

## 4. Apple's Marketing Strategy

### 4.1. Product Strategy

Apple's product strategy focuses on competitive differentiation and contrasts with competitors through unique design, superior performance and superior user experience. At the same time, Apple also pays attention to the comprehensive layout of the product line to meet the needs of different consumer groups. In the ever-changing IT market, new things and new technologies emerge in an endless stream, however, Apple's products can stand out among many competitors, not only limited to the short-term popularity, but also to maintain its best-selling prosperity in the long term. Once users experience the charm of Apple products, they will often irresistibly continue to buy other Apple products, and even some loyal users resolutely refuse to use other brands of electronic products. In this era of increasingly shorter product replacement cycles, Apple and its products have not been forgotten by consumers, but can quickly gain widespread recognition and favor in the market. Today, a series of well-known Apple products, such as iPhone, iPad, Mac book notebook computers and AirPods, its sales are firmly in the forefront of the industry, leading the market trend.

### 4.2. Price Strategy

Apple's products are often priced above the market average, which reflects both its premium brand positioning and the high quality and uniqueness of its products [5]. Through its premium pricing strategy, Apple has succeeded in attracting consumers who seek quality and experience. The price of the iPhone 14 is 4,799 yuan to 8,099 yuan, which is much higher than other brands. When setting prices, Apple carefully considers competitors' pricing movements and market feedback, and adopts a flexible strategy. In the face of competing products with similar functions, Apple may choose to take the initiative to reduce prices to stabilize its market position; When their own products firmly occupy



the market, they may stick to or even increase the price in order to grab more lucrative profits. In addition, Apple also knows how to manage the product life cycle. When a new product is launched, it often sets a high price to attract early adopters, and then lowers the price when the product reaches the mature stage, so as to broaden the sales territory and ensure the market continues to prosper. In recent years, Apple has adopted a flexible pricing strategy in several markets. For example, in the Chinese market, in the face of fierce competition from local brands such as Huawei and consumers' higher demand for cost performance, Apple sells products such as iPhones at steep price cuts during e-commerce promotions such as the "6.18 Shopping Festival" to attract more consumers. This strategy not only increased sales, but also effectively eased the pressure of market competition [6].

### 4.3. Channel Strategy

Apple adopts the channel strategy of combining direct sales with authorized resellers to achieve wide coverage and convenient purchase of products through various channels such as official websites, Apple Store physical stores and third-party authorized resellers [7]. This multi-channel strategy increases market penetration and enhances brand image building. Apple's channel strategy is highly innovative and integrated. The strategy not only covers traditional retail channels such as direct stores and authorized dealers, but also actively embraces new channels such as e-commerce and social media to achieve a deep integration of online and offline. By strictly controlling channel quality, ensuring the consistency of product experience and high-end positioning of brand image, while using data analysis and market feedback to continuously optimize channel layout and marketing strategy, Apple has won widespread market recognition and consumer loyalty around the world. This diversified channel strategy not only improves the market coverage of Apple products, but also enhances its competitiveness and profitability in the global market.

### 4.4. Publicity Strategy

In terms of publicity, Apple pays attention to emotional resonance and brand value transmission, and creates a unique brand image and brand culture through exquisite advertising, shocking press conferences and social media marketing [8]. At the same time, Apple is also good at using word-of-mouth marketing and viral communication to expand brand influence through users' spontaneous promotion. In the Chinese market, Apple has accurately positioned the mobile phone as a high-tech fashion intelligent communication product, which is clearly conveyed to the young consumer groups who pursue fashion and technology. Apple emphasizes the high-tech content and fashion attributes of its mobile phones to meet the high-end needs of this part of consumers, thus cultivating a large number of loyal "fruit fans". These "Apple fans" not only become loyal users of Apple products themselves, but also help Apple expand its influence in the Chinese mobile phone market through word-of-mouth and social media, forming a virtuous circle.

Therefore, Apple's success in market positioning lies in its creative positioning of mobile phones as fashionable high-tech intelligent communication products, and clearly communicated to the target consumer groups. This position has not only made the iPhone synonymous with technology and fashion, but also prompted the company to constantly pursue innovation to consolidate and strengthen its market position.

## 5. Competitor Analysis: Huawei

### 5.1. Huawei's Business Model

Huawei's business model is driven by technological innovation to meet the diverse needs of customers around the world by providing comprehensive ICT solutions and high-quality communication

equipment. Huawei has strong competitiveness in 5G technology, smartphones, network equipment and other fields, and is committed to building an open, cooperative and win-win ecosystem [9].

Huawei's ecological model builds a multi-dimensional and collaborative development ecosystem, the core of which is to promote the deep integration of upstream and downstream enterprises in the industrial chain through open cooperation, resource sharing, and technological innovation around smart terminals, cloud computing, Internet of Things and other technology fields. This model has not only promoted the rapid growth of Huawei's own business, but also led to technological progress and industrial upgrading of the entire industry.

In the Huawei ecosystem, enterprises achieve win-win results through technical standard setting, platform sharing, and joint innovation. Huawei actively builds an open technology architecture and platform to attract the participation of developers and partners, and promotes the enrichment and personalization of application services. At the same time, Huawei also focuses on deep integration with vertical industries by providing customized solutions to meet the specific needs of customers in different industries.

In addition, Huawei has continued to expand its ecological territory through investment, mergers and acquisitions, strategic cooperation and other ways to strengthen its layout in key technologies and market areas. These measures not only enhance Huawei's competitiveness in the global market, but also provide a broader development space for its ecological partners.

To sum up, Huawei's ecological model is an ecosystem based on open cooperation, technological innovation and industrial chain integration, which promotes the sustainable development of the enterprise and the entire industry by building diversified cooperative relationships and win-win mechanisms.

## 5.2. Huawei's Marketing Strategy

Huawei's marketing model is known for its excellent innovation and market acumen [10]. This model closely focuses on the market demand, and successfully locks the target customer base through accurate market analysis and positioning. Huawei has made full use of online and offline multi-channel marketing strategies, combined with international cooperation, to build a global brand communication network. In terms of user experience, Huawei always regards it as the core driving force, and constantly improves the market competitiveness of products and user satisfaction through technological innovation and product iteration.

At the same time, Huawei actively embraces the trend of digital marketing and uses modern technological means such as social media and big data to achieve precision and efficiency of marketing activities. Through in-depth analysis of user behavior data, Huawei can adjust marketing strategies in a timely manner to ensure a rapid and accurate market response. In addition, Huawei also actively participates in international exchange activities, such as international exhibitions, technical forums, etc. These initiatives not only enhance the international influence of the brand, but also further deepen the global market's awareness and recognition of the Huawei brand.

To sum up, the success of Huawei's marketing model lies not only in its strong technical strength and brand influence but also in its adherence to customer-centric, continuous innovation and optimization of marketing strategies to meet the changing needs of the market. This customer-oriented marketing model has won Huawei wide recognition and support in the global market competition.

## **6. Analysis of the Main Differences Between Apple and Huawei**

### **6.1. Business Model Differences**

Apple's business model is a model in the industry, and its core is to build a closed-loop ecosystem. This system with the iOS operating system as the core, closely connected to the iPhone, iPad, Mac and other hardware devices, as well as the App Store, iCloud and other services, forming a strong user stickiness. Through the strategy of hardware and software integration, Apple ensures seamless collaboration between products and provides users with the ultimate user experience. At the same time, the App Store, as a key platform for content distribution, provides a broad stage for developers and further enriches the diversity of the ecosystem. In contrast, Huawei has adopted a more diversified business model, focusing on technological innovation and global layout. Huawei is not only deeply engaged in hardware fields such as mobile phones and communication equipment, but also actively expanding into frontier fields such as cloud computing and artificial intelligence to provide comprehensive ICT solutions. Through technological innovation, Huawei has continuously improved the competitiveness of its products to meet the diverse needs of different markets around the world. In addition, Huawei has further consolidated its market position by establishing an extensive sales network and partnerships through its global layout.

### **6.2. Marketing Strategy Differences**

In terms of marketing, Apple and Huawei also show different styles. Apple excels at branding and empathy, and its advertising campaigns are often known for being concise, high-end and creative. Its advertising theme usually revolves around the core selling point of the product itself, such as design aesthetics, technological innovation, user experience, etc. Apple ads have a unified style, bright colors and strong visual effects, which can quickly attract consumers' attention. For example, Apple may use a concise and powerful tagline such as "Think Different" to convey the uniqueness and innovative spirit of its brand. Apple's press conference has become a major event in the science and technology industry, and every new product release can trigger widespread attention and discussion. In addition, Apple also makes full use of social media and other channels for marketing, through accurate positioning and creative content, to establish a deep emotional connection with consumers.

Huawei, on the other hand, pays more attention to the publicity of technical strength and cost-effective advantages. Huawei's advertising pays more attention to emotional resonance and scene presentation. Huawei's advertisements often integrate products into consumers' daily life scenes by telling stories and showing characters' emotions, so as to establish the emotional connection between products and consumers. Huawei's advertising styles are diverse, with both technological displays and warm and touching emotional expressions, which can meet the aesthetic needs of different consumers. Huawei often emphasizes its technological innovation and product quality in advertising, and attracts consumers' attention by displaying advanced functions and excellent performance of its products. At the same time, Huawei also pays attention to the creation of cost-effective, through a reasonable pricing strategy, so that more consumers can enjoy high-quality products and services.

### **6.3. Regional Market Differences**

In terms of geographical market, Apple and Huawei also show different characteristics [11]. With its strong brand influence and excellent product experience, Apple enjoys high visibility and reputation in the global market. Especially in North America and Europe, Apple's market share has long held a leading position. Consumers in these markets generally have high consumption power and the pursuit of quality life, which is highly consistent with Apple's brand positioning. Huawei, on the other hand, has strong local advantages in the Chinese market. As a local technology enterprise in China, Huawei



has a deep understanding of the needs and preferences of Chinese consumers, and has won the love of consumers through precise market positioning and differentiated product strategies. In addition, Huawei has also actively explored emerging markets such as Asia and Africa, and achieved remarkable results by providing products and services that meet local market needs. However, it is worth noting that due to the influence of international political factors, Huawei faces certain challenges and difficulties in some markets. This requires Huawei to strengthen risk management and response capabilities while maintaining technological innovation and global layout.

## 7. Conclusion

To sum up, Apple and Huawei have their own differences in business operations and marketing strategies. Apple has won the favor of consumers around the world with its unique ecosystem construction and excellent user experience; Huawei, on the other hand, has risen rapidly in the market with its technological innovation and global layout. They show significant differences in business model, marketing strategy and regional market. These differences not only reflect the advantages and characteristics of the two companies in different fields, but also inject new vitality and impetus into the development of the global technology industry. In the future, with the continuous progress of science and technology and the constant changes in the market environment, Apple and Huawei will continue to work intensively in their respective fields to bring more quality products and services to consumers around the world.

Due to the lack of detailed data on the specific revenue of Apple and Huawei, the results of this study may be biased. In the future, we will try to conduct in-depth research by combining various research methods to improve the accuracy and reliability of the research results. At the same time, pay attention to the development and application of new technologies and new tools, and constantly improve the technical level and efficiency of research.

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