

Successful Marketing of Video Games During COVID-19: A Case Study of Nintendo Switch

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Abstract: In 2019, the new coronavirus began to spread around the world. Due to the home isolation policies adopted by various countries in response to the epidemic, and the online work forms adopted by various companies, people are forced to stay at home. This has severely hit the global real economy, especially the catering industry and tourism industry. At the same time, however, this lifestyle has also opened up new opportunities for online companies and the gaming industry, with Nintendo in particular. This paper focuses on how Nintendo used product-specific features and marketing methods to enable it to succeed during the epidemic. It adopts literature reading and analysis as the research method. It can be concluded that Nintendo Switch, through marketing with multiple media platforms and formats, being reasonable designed and owning strong social attributes, and the unique portability and fidelity of the product, combined with the background of the epidemic, made the Nintendo switch succeed.

Keywords: Covid-19, epidemic, Nintendo switch, marketing

1. Introduction

Nintendo is known for popular video games such as Mario, Pokémon Go, and The Legend of Zelda. As for Nintendo's latest product in 2017, the Nintendo Switch, a portable game console that supports a variety of switch-exclusive games, including Zelda: Breath of the Wild, Animal Crossing: New Horizons, Pokémon: Sword & Shield, etc. The Switch was officially launched worldwide and immediately sold out at dealers in many regions.

Accordingly, hardware unit sales for the entire Nintendo Switch family, including Nintendo Switch and Nintendo Switch Lite, rose by 37.1% year-on-year from 2020 to 2021, to 28.83 million units [1]. This financial figure can be considered a great improvement for Nintendo, which has not been in a good shape in recent years, which is pretty notable. This paper would like to summarize the factors that influenced the success of the Nintendo Switch game console during the epidemic, and hope to be able to play a role in referencing and helping by reading through the literature and analyzing to find out why the Nintendo Switch can achieve such success.

2. Clever Promotion

The Switch uses bundling and cross-promotion models in its sales, where game manufacturers will release new games with unique, similarly colored, designed, or patterned hosts and games together in

a bundle. The bundle was very attractive to customers who wanted to buy a switch console, who were looking forward to experiencing new games, or who were fans of the game's IP (intellectual property), and the results showed that this type of marketing was indeed effective. This type of marketing has been seen across the global switch market to cater to the different preferences of gamers across the country. For instance, a bundle with Splatoon 2 themes was released on July 21, 2017, in both Europe and Japan. In addition, a separate bundle featuring "neon" green and pink Joy-Con (in line with the color schemes from Splatoon 2) was made available in Japan. [2] [3] On November 2, a Diablo III: Eternal Collection pack-in bundle featuring themed decals on the dock, console, and a carrying case went on sale exclusively at GameStop in Europe and the US [4].

In addition to the sales strategy, Nintendo's appropriate TV advertising, various game-themed movies, and Internet publicity also played a key role in the switch's sales success during the epidemic. In addition, the Switch's target market and target consumers are different than they were for earlier consoles. The report claims that the Nintendo Expanding to new user -mainly 20-year-olds- groups rather than satisfying existing customers. Maintaining a balance between its conventional console business and the new generation of smart device gamers is thus one of the goals of the product strategy. It's also important to remember that there weren't many games available when the Nintendo Switch was originally released, however, as time goes on, a growing number of games are being added to the sales list. The Nintendo Switch now has a wide range of various game genres available, including shooters, action-adventure games, and strategy games for single and multiplayer. Customers may have a better experience playing these games, which may encourage them to purchase the Switch.

As a representative of Nintendo's famous IP and its famous derivatives. Pokémon Detective Pikachu, a well-liked film, released in May 2019. The film's North American previews alone brought around \$5.7 million [5]. This movie once again shows one of the famous Nintendo's famous ip: pokemon in front of the public's eyes, attracting the interest of many media and viewers, and successfully creating the image of Nintendo as an excellent game manufacturer Everyone is aware of Nintendo's success in terms of brand image and positive interaction with the general public. In addition to creating a positive corporate image, Nintendo has developed strong brand loyalty with those well-known video game characters.

In terms of television commercials, During the broadcast of Super Bowl LI, Nintendo aired their first Super Bowl ad in the US. The advertisement, which included several play modes for the Switch's launch games, including Breath of the Wild and forthcoming releases, was set to Imagine Dragons' song "Believer"[6]. The Super Bowl ad was followed by other TV spots designed to showcase the Switch in different demographics, for both "casual" and "hard-core" players.

Making it obvious in our messaging "what the product is and what it can do" is a crucial component of promoting the Switch, according to Fils-Aimé, president and chief operating officer of Nintendo of America. In addition to the advertisements, Nintendo is preparing a number of "sample events" so that gamers may test the system out before it is officially released [7]. According to Kimishima, Nintendo's fifth president, the company has to get the Switch into the hands of players, particularly "professional gamers," so they can understand how it differs from the company's earlier products. [8] In addition to the advertisements, Nintendo is preparing a number of "sample events" so that gamers may test the system out before it is officially released. Kimishima thinks it's critical for Nintendo to distribute the Switch to gamers, especially "professional gamers," so they can see how the device differs from the company's earlier offerings.

The voice is another another intriguing feature of Nintendo's marketing approach. Similar to when someone snaps their fingers or inserts the joystick, the Nintendo Switch has a recurring sign in the form of a "click" sound. This is a fundamental strategy used by marketers to link aspects of products to everyday behaviors. This sound can be heard in every advertisement, allowing Nintendo to easily express a consistent, non-written message that leaves a lasting effect on viewers [9].

Therefore, through marketing with various media platforms and forms, Nintendo has enabled the company to further expand its corporate reputation and pave the way for expanding its consumer base.

3. Unique Feature

Joy-con is the name of the switch's controller, which is really made up of two individual controllers. The controllers are secured to the Switch console via a locking mechanism through a side rail, and they may be unlocked with a tiny button on the rear [10]. Once disassembled, they may be used as separate controllers by two different players or by a single player in pairs. They can also be linked to a handle that resembles a gamepad. A single Switch system may accept up to 8 Joy-Con connections. The Switch also supports a wireless controller with a more conventional form in addition to the joy-cons, the Nintendo Switch Pro Controller [11].

Because by "sharing" one Joy-Con with others, you can play against each other or collaborate anytime and anywhere. This feature for people isolated at home meant that families -Generally families of three to five people- could play one console together to relax and pass the time. So, the switch became the way many families relaxed during the epidemic in their leisure time: by using two joy-con or extra controllers, families could play party games like Mario Kart, Nintendo Smash, and other multiplayer-enabled games.

Moreover, due to the various quarantine policies and restrictions on going out during the epidemic, the number of time people had to visit friends, meet up and hang out during their free time was drastically reduced, and most people had to contact each other by way of video calls and phone calls. This is where the unique features of the Nintendo Switch provide a solution. By joining Nintendo Switch Online (paid), people would be able to play against or collaborate with players from around the world or with friends from far away. They are also enabled to connect with the Nintendo smartphone app to meet up with friends or play while chatting on voice.

In addition to the switch's multiplayer capabilities, its unique design has brought more customers and built a good image.

The Switch also offers a parental control option that enables parents to limit how long their kids play games and keep track of how much time they spend gaming daily. Parents don't have to worry as much about their kids becoming gaming addicts because to this function, which also makes it easier for parents to supervise and reprimand their kids. In this approach, the Switch may establish a positive rapport with parents of this age even if they are not its target market

In addition, the switch designed a unique screenshot button. Players can tap the screenshot button to intercept the current game screen. Apart from that, players can long press the screenshot button to save fifteen seconds before button time video recording. These saved images can be easily shared with friends or transferred to a mobile device via Bluetooth for saving or sharing. This feature has been praised by many players, while the saved images play a promotional role when they are shared.

Besides, the motion capture feature of the Nintendo Switch's joy-con allows people to give feedback to the console by waving the joy-con, enabling many physical games such as Ring Fit Adventure, Super Mario Party and Fitness Boxing, etc.

Therefore, proper product design and strong social attributes will help the product perfectly meet the needs of consumers, thereby further increasing customer stickiness.

4. Strong Competitiveness

The Switch became the best-selling console in the United States in December 2017. Earlier this January, growing demand for the console led to a 175 percent increase in Nintendo's revenue Other major consoles, including Sony's PlayStation 4 and Microsoft's Xbox One, failed to beat the Nintendo Switch in its first year of sales [12].

The key differences between Sony's recently launched ps5 console and the switch, if you compare them, are flexibility and fidelity. The Switch is flexible, and users can dock it to a TV and play it like a standard console, or pick it up and take it anywhere as a handheld gaming system. And the PS5 offers superior graphics hardware and processing power for gamers who want the highest fidelity experience possible.

In terms of promotion, Sony's ads feature realistic game graphics that showcase the uniqueness of their games. In contrast Nintendo used bright ads to show happy families playing together, or kids using their joystick switches while traveling. In addition, Sony's target customers are professional gamers or people with high demands for games. Nintendo has positioned the console as designed for casual and non-casual gamers. It is a console that people will not be as competitive with, but rather just for fun. Therefore, Nintendo targets different customers compared to Microsoft and Sony, which helps Nintendo avoiding competition and creates a brand image. In today's conservative epidemic-influenced society, the switch's interactive capabilities and remote pass-through functionality have helped the Nintendo switch reap more customers.

The Nintendo Switch and pc are more of a tool for students and workers in today's society compared to the pc due to the increase in time people spend working and studying at home due to the epidemic. While the pc is also a great way to play games, the switch offers a more flexible way: you can play numerous pc games, as well as various switch exclusive games, in a more flexible and relaxing way: you no longer need to sit at the computer desk constantly, you can lie down, lie on your back, etc., thanks to the switch's portable design and superior performance. Thanks to the switch's portable design and superior gaming performance, it has increased portability while maintaining gameplay, making it slightly better in terms of flexibility in the competition with traditional computer games.

Contrary to other console producers, Nintendo has a large number of physical storefronts, and the Switch is offered by practically all online and brick-and-mortar gaming stores [13]. Additionally, customers may purchase Switch items online from a number of well-known merchants, including Amazon and e-bay. Nintendo produces the goods, distributes them to shops via wholesalers, and then sells them to customers. Thus the Switch's world-wide distribution network provides quick and easy access to Switch for users.

In short, the portability and reliability of the product provide consumers with a good user interface, which further attracts customers' interest in purchasing.

5. Conclusion

The most appealing feature of the Switch is that it first combines portable and home functionality, representing a complete upgrade of the Switch product strategy. When a company designs a product, it needs to take into account the features that set it apart from similar products from other companies. At the same time, the epidemic provided a great opportunity to be on your own while trapping everyone at home. So people can enjoy the benefits that Nintendo's unique features give them: Nintendo's signature classics, or friends connect remotely to enjoy Nintendo's signature classics, and play fun indoor sports. Finally, Nintendo has achieved a very effective marketing purpose with its multiple deep-rooted IPs and the release of the Switch before and after its release with the help of multiple media campaigns. In addition to this, Nintendo has a relatively sophisticated layout strategy and is adept at seeking multiple channels to sell the Switch in the marketplace.

All in all, the Nintendo Switch's features cater to today's context and the needs of the people while contributing to efficient promotion and timely supply, contributing to the success of the Nintendo Switch during the epidemic. This article has many limitations because it utilizes literature reading and analysis, such as the actual situation shown may deviate from the expected conclusions or the time frame is somewhat constrained. It is hoped that future research will have a larger range of research data, so that there will be more detailed and accurate conclusions.

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