

# ***Stranger Online Social Media Operation and Strategy: Case Study of Tantan App***

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**Abstract:** With the advancement of the Internet and technology, the types of social media software are constantly expanding. Recently, a new kind of social software has gradually emerged in the market. This is stranger dating software. Unlike Facebook, Instagram and WeChat, which are more used to communicate with familiar people, dating social software mainly aims to make friends with strangers. Its emergence is a change in the market. This article will analyze Tantan, the most popular dating software for strangers in the Chinese market, explore its development background, understand its business model, and analyze how it grasps user needs for marketing.

**Keywords:** Stranger, Online Social Media, Operation and Strategy, Tantan.

## **1. Introduction**

Social networking is a combination of a relationship chain plus information transfer and interaction. Social network sites (SNSs) as web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view and traverse their list of connections and those made by others within the system. Social media are Internet-based channels that allow users to opportunistically interact and selectively self-present, either in real-time or asynchronously, with both broad and narrow audiences who derive value from user-generated content and the perception of interaction with others [1]. In contrast, stranger social software is an information transfer behavior based on a weak relationship chain compared to acquaintance social software, which requires additional screening, matching, ice breaking, and relationship building. Enter normal social path, the main needs of users of unfamiliar social apps are as follows: find someone to chat with to relieve boredom and chat to kill time; meet friends to expand social circle; pay attention to the news of friends, browse information and photos of strangers, etc.; meet strangers for short-term or long-term development relation [2]. The question for stranger dating apps is what strategy to use to connect two people who don't know each other. An app like Tantan has chosen a unique approach to capture the user's hormones to develop a unique digital marketing approach.

## **2. Case Description**

Tantan is a prevalent dating software in mainland China and overseas, especially in the international Chinese circle. This software mainly determines the user's social range through geographic location,

and then recommends other unfamiliar users within a certain range to the user through the algorithm of the big data platform. During the recommendation process, users can set personalized recommendation methods through their preferences, such as setting recommended gender, age, and distance of other users in the software. During the user's experience, users can determine whether they are willing to pair with each other by swiping left or right on each other's photos. Swipe left means you don't like each other, and swipe right means you want to know each other. This mode is quick and direct for establishing contact between strangers, so it is trendy among young people. This software was originally launched in 2014, and in March 2015 Tantan launched the Apple Watch platform, making it the first social software for strangers in mainland China that can be used on Apple Watch. That same year, German media company Bertelsmann's investment fund in Asia invested \$5 million in the software. In 2016 and 2017, Tantan completed a \$32 million Series C financing and a \$70 million Series D financing, respectively. Finally, in 2018, Tantan was acquired by Momo, another domestic social media platform, for \$771 million and has continued to this day.

Download Tantan on the mobile device, and after opening the software, users will be required to register a Tantan account with their mobile phone number or other social media. This shows that Tantan will collect the user's usage data and ensure the authenticity of the user's use process by linking the user's other social media. After entering the software, a series of personal information will be filled in the user, such as the user's age, gender, constellation and other essential information. After the first step of information is filled in, more personalized information is collected. Tantan will ask users about their personal interests, fields of work, current residence and other information, which users will see when they match with other users later. Thus, it is convenient for both parties to find the same topic to break the unfamiliarity of strangers. At the same time, Tantan will also provide users with space to write a simple self-introduction and select some personality or life characteristics labels to show themselves more comprehensively. Of course, the most important thing is that users need to upload their photos on the homepage of their personal information, and they can upload up to 6 images. A good photo plays a very important role in socializing with strangers because it can determine the user's next social difficulty and determine the user's initial social positioning [3].

### 3. Operation and Strategy Analysis

After Tantan, dating social software for strangers, is free to download. Its products are all available in internal purchases after downloading. In general, Tantan's products are mainly based on various paid services provided in the later stage of the software. And this kind of payment will achieve the profit effect through online transaction mode. So the overall business logic is a digital marketing model[4]. Before analyzing this model, this study first need to analyze from Tantan's marketing promotion. In the copywriting of the product, Tantan uses a slogan that can stimulate users' hormones, such as 'Take you to find the person in your life' as the brand's promotional slogan. And after the user downloads the software, the set electronic tutorial clearly states that his matching mechanism is to match the person he is interested in by swiping the phone left or right. Such distinctive product features and promotional slogans intuitively tell users the software's features, which helps Tantan stand out from similar software.

After introducing its unique publicity method of Tantan to open the market, its strategy of grasping users' hormones for marketing and its paid service products are closely integrated into every step of the user's use of the software. Tantan has generally set six social path steps based on its marketing model and product characteristics. They establish user characteristics, display user personal information, exploration and discovery, user matching, user chat interaction, and user relationship transfer.

### 3.1. User Feature Creation

Users must upload real-life photos as avatars, and later use photos as the main form as an essential basis for user matching, which has established Tantan's 'hormone matching' strategy; to meet the needs of their users for efficient matching, through photo-driven social matching, increase user exposure. And matching efficiency, it is more suitable for people with a strong purpose. Tantan provides a super-favorite paid service mechanism. If the user has a favorable impression of a matched user, they can pay to buy a service he likes very much and send it to the other party. In this way, the opposite user can receive the user's super-like prompt and first see the information of the user who purchased the service when opening the software. This method chooses irrational consumption based on the eruption of hormones when users use it, and expresses the so-called sincerity to the other party.

However, there are 2 defects in user feature creation. The first is the personal label setting; its classification is relatively rigid and can be further optimized. The second is the rigid threshold. If handsome guys and beauties are regarded as the head crowd, the average-looking 'long tail' part of the crowd can't gain others' love through photos, and this part of the group is the 'majority' in life. Taking appearance as the matching basis, on the one hand, a rigid threshold is set, which is easy to make users feel inferior, which is not conducive to long-term user growth; If it is too heavy, it will cause the user's online and offline experience to be inconsistent, resulting in the sense of disappointment.

### 3.2. User Personal Information Display

The display content uses private photos as the main medium, and the main function is personal photo albums. Most users use this function to show their appearance to the outside world. Less life-like content is mainly based on photos and supplemented by text. Tantan's 'hormonal matching' and efficient platform atmosphere and tone can still be reflected from users; personal privacy information is displayed (including occupational and geographical information), and the *My Questions and Answers* section is used to express one's personality. The characteristics are to achieve efficient mutual understanding and meet the purposeful socialization of people who pursue efficiency. In contrast, personal privacy is disclosed more.

Although the efficiency of matching is improved, there will be fewer users who encounter sincere contacts. Besides, since users leak more personal privacy, there will be a risk of information leakage in communication. For example, some users use other people's photos as their photos displayed in the software.

### 3.3. User Exploration and Discovery

In addition to providing users with a display of value. Tantan is also trying to develop another form of social networking through community operations. Tantan has designed an online platform following the model of Facebook and WeChat. Users send the content they want to express and the photos they want to post in the multi-person community by writing blogs. In this way, users can obtain the value recognition of many people through the neighborhood, thereby increasing the user's social circle.

The lack of content is one of the defects of Tantan in user exploration. Continuing the platform atmosphere of Tantan, photos are a more important concern than the content itself. The number of likes and comments on the dynamic photos of beautiful and handsome guys is significantly higher, while the rest of the dynamic receives less attention. Interest is also less. In addition, Tantan does not use the discovery page as the homepage of the application, reflecting the secondary position of community operations in product positioning;

### 3.4. User Match

After the user has completed the first three steps on Tantan, the fourth step is the time for matching. Tantan's team provides a lot of paid services in this step. In addition to buying super-likes, users can also purchase exposure-increasing services that increase the chances of users being seen by other online users in a short period, thereby increasing the number of matches. When a user accidentally swipes the user he is interested into the left while matching other users, he can get a chance to repent by recharging the membership service. The above two services happen before matching other users. After the user completes the matching in a particular surrounding area, the user can change the device's IP address by paying so that they can make friends locally and locate their location in the world to make friends with friends from all over the world. In this way, the user's circle of friends can be internationalized.

Nevertheless, there are still these problems when matching between strangers.

(1) Strict two-way selection. Both users can only have the opportunity to initiate a private chat after expressing their liking by swiping right on each other. It follows the wishes of both parties and is also in line with the realistic friendship environment. The success rate of two-way selection is higher, eliminating meaningless communication and reflecting efficiency.

(2) Only like/no feeling, no follow function. Judging if you like it within 1-2 minutes based on personal information alone, it is easy to leave users with a frivolous feeling in the product impression. Users also have dilemmas and are prone to misjudgment when faced with decision-making.

(3) Offline matching. There is no guarantee that the other party is online in real time. Even if the pairing is successful, it isn't easy to communicate only by leaving a message in real time. The main reason is that it is impossible to achieve a two-way selection within a short period when both parties are online in real time. If real-time restrictions are added, the difficulty of matching will be greater.

### 3.5. User Chat Interaction

After the two sides matched, they entered the chat session. To enrich the chat content of both parties, Tantan provides a lot of internal purchases in the chat interface. But users need to recharge internally on Tantan first. Convert the real currency into the platform's electronic currency, a special social currency [5]. In this way, after recharging, users on both sides can exchange gifts on the chat interface, improving the mutual goodwill of both parties. At the same time, when the user opens the software, since the mobile phone or device will automatically match the address book, to protect the user's privacy, Tantan provides the function of shielding contacts and hiding online services. This can prevent the user from sometimes being discovered by familiar people around him playing such a stranger dating game, thereby avoiding embarrassing situations. However, Tantan's chat interface will show whether the other party has read the message. Doing so will create a stronger sense of oppression for one party. But this is an efficient way. Knowing whether the other party is online or has read but not responded can help you judge the other party's feelings and get timely feedback.

### 3.6. Relationship Transfer

After the relationship between the two parties gradually warms up, the connection on the unfamiliar social platform is usually transferred to other acquaintance social platforms and software [6]. For example, after two users have the intention of further communication. The two parties will add other social software such as WeChat or Instagram. Tantan has a particular pertinence for the coping strategy of this final link. Do not compete for the market with acquaintances' social products, clarify the positioning of its products, focus on the closed loop of 'building relationships' with strangers, and improve the construction of the transition link between strangers and acquaintances. As long as the intermediate conversion link is done well, it can also be irreplaceable.

## 4. Suggestions

After sorting out the entire social steps and product architecture of Tantan, in response to the existing problems of Tantan, some suggestions and improved methods may help Tantan to improve the quality of operations further.

### 4.1. User Experience

First of all, for Tantan's label settings, Tantan can learn from the American dating software Tinder. Set more specific and detailed user tags to highlight the user's personality. For example, in addition to displaying their basic personal information and hobbies on their interface, users can also write some information that they hate and feel sensitive, to so that they can inform the other party in advance which information they are more susceptible to and reduce the unpleasant feeling of communication between the two parties.

The second problem is the problem of the exploration matching mechanism. Sliding the picture left and right will have an advantage for people with outstanding appearances. But most people are ordinary people, and people are always more inclined to chat with good-looking people. This is unfair to ordinary looking people [7]. Suppose a user has the purpose of making friends sincerely, but limits the scope of making friends because of his appearance. In that case, it will hurt the user's experience and limit the audience of Tantan. It is suggested that Tantan can set up various matching mechanisms, such as learning a stranger dating software called soul to match through the common tags of both users [8]. This can increase the common topics of both parties and improve the quality of making friends, not just by looking at their faces.

The third point is the privacy of users. When using the software, users who are not confident in their appearance or personal conditions often use the photos of other outstanding users to deceive others. The matching mechanism mainly causes this phenomenon. But using other people's photos to display on their homepage violates other people's portrait rights. At the same time, if the two parties develop to meet offline, it will deceive others and lead to an extremely poor user experience. It is suggested that while Tantan implements real-name authentication, the design algorithm can check whether the photos of all users on the platform are duplicated. Filter out and warn users of duplicate photos.

Finally, Tantan needs a way to enrich matching. If you swipe left and right to determine whether a user appears in the matching list, it will often make users who make friends miss each other. Therefore, Tantan can additionally set up a message mechanism. For example, when a user likes another user, in addition to swiping right to show his goodwill, he can also write some words expressing sincere friendship on the message board of the interface. This approach allows both parties to communicate more verbally before matching each other. Thereby improving the quality of matching. Because the visual publicity of information often plays a role in the first impression, the communication of language is still the main body in social media [9].

### 4.2. Platform Operation

Tantan has been trying to expand the national model of operation through various modes and angles. For example, Tantan is imitating mainstream acquaintance social software for community operations. However, the community operation is still in preliminary development and the secondary position of the product line. In fact, Tantan can change the way of thinking, that is, community operation as the primary matching mechanism. Instead of simply letting users swipe left or right to filter through random matching photos.

Users can log in to the community. First, select users they are interested in by browsing the messages or photos posted by other users in the community, and then wait for the other party's match.



This additional screening process can reduce the risk of poor user experience and allow users to collect more accurate information [10]. The second point is that new highlights must be added to the platform's content. Tantan should encourage users to post more meaningful and content information rather than simply posting photos and simple words. Tantan can learn the reward mechanism of video software such as Tik Tok and encourage more users to create rich content in the community, such as making personalized videos and expressing meaningful opinions. After that, the Tantan platform will reward users according to the number of likes or followers of the content posted by users. From another point of view, even if some users are not outstanding in appearance, by producing meaningful content and displaying it on the platform, this approach is equivalent to showing their intrinsic value rather than just showing external value [11]. This will improve the quality of making friends across the community.

## 5. Conclusion

This article aims to analyze the social products of strangers, taking Tantan as an example, after doing some background checks. Through exploring Tantan's social steps, this study will expand the marketing logic of Tantan's products and services step by step. In this way, research can understand how Tantan grasps the psychology and needs of users to design products and provide services. At the same time, the advantages and disadvantages of each strategy are also analyzed in each link. Tantan, as a mature heterosexual dating product, meets people's most natural hormonal needs because the stranger dating market originated from the need for marriage and love at the beginning.

Tantan seized this need in the early days. Its user group usually aims to make friends with the opposite sex and develop long-term/short-term relationships, which is in line with Tantan's Slogan: 'Take you to find that person in your life'. From this perspective, Tantan's efficient matching method of 'love at first sight' is indeed more suitable for white-collar workers with strong purposes. At the level of making friends, Tantan focuses on making friends of the opposite sex. It wants users to meet the opposite sex through the platform and develop short-term or long-term relationships. Its platform users are more purposeful. On the supply and demand level, the imbalance between supply and demand is the biggest challenge faced by strangers socializing. The most typical situation is that there are too many monks and few porridges. On the supply side: handsome guys and beauties are the scarce resources of strangers' social platforms. On the demand side, the problem is that people tend to be appearance-oriented, resulting in centralized competition and pursuit and poor user experience for long-tail users who do not look good. All in all, Tantan is a market-targeted social software for strangers, with its unique operation style. Still, it needs to be more humane and considerate in the user experience and don't make making friends too utilitarian and impatient.

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