

Research on the Marketing Model of Disneyland and Its Impact on the Chinese Market

– Taking Shanghai and Hong Kong Disneyland as Examples

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Abstract: There are countless themed amusement parks around the world, but there are only six Disney theme parks worldwide. Each of these six themed parks is unique, and since the construction of the first park, Disneyland has continued to attract travellers from all over the world to hit the parks. So why are Disney theme parks so attractive? Why is the Chinese market the only one with two world-class Disneyland parks? Based on the explanation of the marketing model for Disneyland and the analysis of the marketing model, this paper finds that Disneyland and the Chinese market have common points, and the strong development potential of China's theme park market creates the conditions for Disneyland; at the same time, the special location of the city creates the radiation power of the tourism market that will be available after the opening of the park.

Keywords: Disneyland, experiential marketing, Chinese theme parks

1. Introduction

As of the end of 2022, Disneyland has six resorts around the world. These six main parks are located in California, Orlando, Tokyo, Paris, Hong Kong, and Shanghai. Among them, there are two in China. For the Chinese market, the construction of both Disneyland parks has brought advantages to Hong Kong and Shanghai: the tourism sector has become an important pillar of the region's modern service sector. During the 7-8 period, the average daily traffic at Shanghai Disneyland reached 63,600 visitors. Why has Disney World now become the world's leading theme park? And why is it so attractive to global consumers? After Disneyland entered the Chinese market, what positive impetus has it brought to the Chinese market? This study will analyze the marketing model of Disneyland and the development process of Chinese theme parks, and explore why Disneyland has a huge market in China. This paper uses the four Ps of marketing theory. It is dedicated to showing the reader a more holistic vision of what makes Disney's marketing model superior.

2. The Marketing Model of Disneyland

2.1. Experiential Marketing

Experiential marketing is to let tourists integrate into the park and have a fully integrated experience. The experiential marketing model of Disneyland will give tourists a very real play experience. Through various experience modes such as senses, thinking, behavior, and emotions, consumers can experience the products and services provided by Disneyland in person [1].

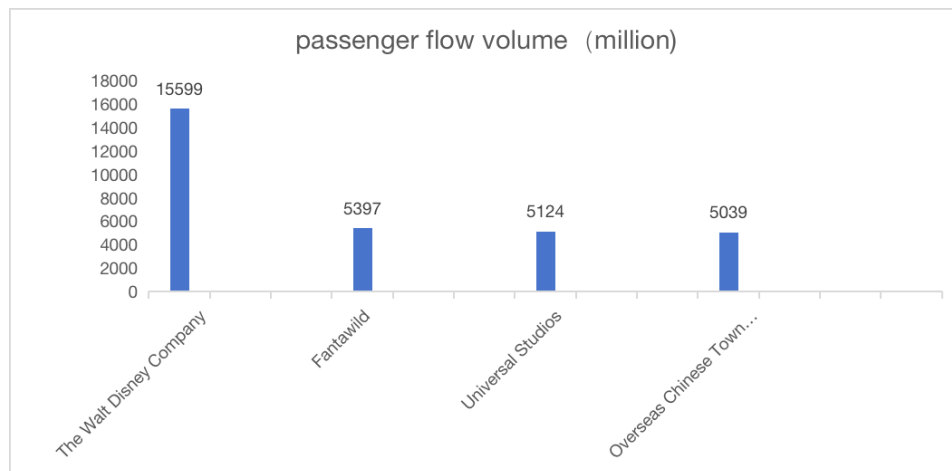


Figure 1: The bar chart of four theme parks' passenger flow.

(Data source : TEA/AECOM 2019 Theme Index and Museum Index: The Global Attractions Attendance Report)

Referring to the passenger flow of theme parks in mainland China during the same period in 2019, There is an evidence shows that the passenger flow of Disneyland in the same period was far greater than that of other theme park parent companies, showing strong market dominance. This shows that the Disney experience book service is very attractive to consumers. Such as perceptual experience and emotional experience. There are usually a large number of amusement facilities or characters in movies and TV shows in a Disneyland. These factors can stimulate consumers' strong curiosity and stimulate consumers' purchase motivation. There are many amusement facilities that can meet the requirements of consumers to enjoy sensory experiences, where customers can experience the happiness brought by different theme parks. In addition, there are many Disney film and television character dolls at Disneyland.

These characters from the animation will also provide passengers with a rich emotional experience, so that consumers can feel the emotions in fairy tale characters or fairy tales. Of course, the emotional experience that Disney brings to consumers is not only in the construction of hardware facilities and the theme planning of the park, but also relies on the enthusiastic and meticulous humanized services of countless Disney employees. Disneyland employees playing fairy tale characters can be seen everywhere in the park. Their body language and behavior are very suitable for the fairy tale characters they play, making consumers feel like they are in a real fairy tale world. These dolls will also take the initiative to interact with tourists, so that tourists can truly feel the joy of being in a fairy tale world. In addition, Disney is also committed to presenting consumers with better services and experiences in terms of details. For example, Disney will issue birthday badges to tourists who celebrate their birthdays that day, and enjoy many birthday benefits in the park; at the same time, some cast members in the park will warmly hug you and give birthday wishes when they see you have a birthday badge.

In this experiential marketing, Disney adopts a mixed strategy to provide tourists with five types of experiences, including sensory experiences, emotional experience, thinking experiences, action experiences and related experiences. After careful planning and design, various experiences are coordinated with each other, allowing passengers to truly enjoy the joy of being in a fairy tale world. This immersive experience appeals not only to younger consumers who love animation, but also to adults. This expands Disney's consumer base and creates a good consumer base for its development in the country.

2.2. Disney Product Sales Strategy (Based on 4P Model Analysis)

(1) Product (product): Theme parks, films, music, resorts, and other Disney items are all based on well-known cartoon characters and cinematic intellectual property. On the one hand, these classic Disney icons and IPs, including Snow White and Mickey Mouse, are very well-known and can draw more customers to make service purchases. On the other side, Disney continues to develop and open new theme parks and IPs, such as the newly introduced "Lina Bell" figure in Shanghai and the recently constructed Frozen theme park in Hong Kong. Theme parks become more alluring and distinctive thanks to these new consumption hotspots. Even new product launches draw a large number of visitors. These all demonstrate the popularity of Disney goods.

(2) Price (price) "Front Door Effect": Despite the fact that Disney tickets are more expensive than those for other theme parks, the cost of the recently announced yearly pass (Wonderful Access) is more reasonable. Additionally, depending on the type of annual card, customers who have annual cards will receive a variety of preferential discounts when buying items from the park. The front door effect will have an impact on how many customers decide to buy annual passes. The Disney parks' long-term attraction is increased by acquiring an annual pass.

(3) Place (channel): Products from Disney are widely available, including through theme parks, online, offline, and other outlets. The company's brand can be better promoted through this distribution channel while also better serving the needs of various consumers. For instance, the Disney consumer market has grown as a result of Disney counters opening at Hong Kong National and Shanghai Pudong airports. Shanghai and Hong Kong both had greater consumption rates at the same time. Locating in these cities can draw clients with better potential for spending. Additionally, these two locations have a larger tourist and population density, which ensures a steady stream of visitors after the park opens [2].

(4) Promotion (promotion): Disney's marketing strategies, which are concentrated on marketing techniques, give customers a wide variety of marketing experiences, improve customer service, and help customers better understand Disney's corporate culture. It is evident from the image above that Disney invests significantly more in advertising than other businesses do. Disney was the advertiser with the greatest spend over the course of the six-month period in the first half of 2020, spending up to US\$210 million on Facebook advertisements in the US market. Disney was only surpassed by the retail giant Home Depot in terms of overall ad spending on the Facebook network in 2019. Disney, for instance, paid more than \$20 million on a 90-second spotlight advertisement in this year's Super Bowl to commemorate Disney's 100th anniversary in the 2023 NFL. The advertisement included Disney previewing new films and episodes of upcoming shows in addition to presenting iconic Disney icons like Mickey Mouse, for instance. The advertisement had a favorable impression on viewers, as later revealed in viewer interviews.

3. The Development History and Existing Problems of Chinese Theme Parks

There are three stages in the development of China's theme parks: the exploratory development stage, the growth and development stage, and the rational development stage [3]. It is worth noting

that we can find theme parks in different stages at present. For example, Hangzhou (Songcheng) in Zhejiang Province is currently a 4A -level tourist attraction in China. This theme park restores the urban style of the Song Dynasty and is a representative of the exploratory development stage of Chinese theme parks. In terms of the quality of amusement in theme parks, the quality of park service is increasingly valued. Parasuraman, et al. defined service quality as the degree of gap between customers' prior expectations for the level of service provided and the actual level of service provided [4]. A large gap between the two indicates low service quality, and a small gap between the two indicates high service quality. However, combined with the park's passenger flow and tourists' feedback, it can be found that due to the aging of the park's recreational facilities, it is too commercialized and lacks cultural value, making it inconvenient to travel. Customers are pessimistic about the actual service level of the theme park, and tourists who enter the park are less willing to come to the park with a "second brush to enter the park", which also leads to the park's continued lack of customer flow. This problem also exists in China's general theme parks.

4. The Collision Between Disneyland and the Chinese Market

With the completion of Shanghai Disneyland in 2014, the growth rate of theme parks in the Chinese market is extremely rapid. When Disney first entered the Chinese market, Hong Kong Disneyland officially opened in 2005, becoming the first Disneyland in the Greater China region. The park covers an area of 126 hectares, including four themed parks and two Disney themed hotels. The four themed parks all have rich Chinese and Western food and beverages, as well as launched tea restaurant-style restaurants unique to the Cantonese region. The restaurant is decorated in the style of Disney's fairy tales, attracting a large number of tourists to check in and experience it. According to the data, Hong Kong Disneyland has fully promoted the development of Hong Kong's tourism industry in the early days of its operation: it has filled the vacancy of Hong Kong as a "shopping paradise" that lacks tourist attractions, and has improved the structure of Hong Kong's tourism industry chain. A large number of "parent-child travel" markets from the Mainland have further enriched the tourist source market in Hong Kong [2]. In addition, the site selection of a large theme park will have a positive effect on surrounding houses and land. Hong Kong Disneyland is located on Lantau Island. During the construction period, it promoted the sale of houses around Lantau Island. In the first half of 2005 alone, second-hand housing transactions increased by 25% compared with the same period last year [5].

At the same time, due to Hong Kong's special geographical location advantages as a world-renowned free port and a trading port integrating finance, logistics, and shipping, it has a very large room for attracting potential consumer groups around the world. At the same time, the Hong Kong government relocated the Hong Kong Airport to its current location on Lantau Island in 1996 and added the "Disneyland Line" to the MTR, which greatly simplified the transportation methods and travel time for tourists. These related factors helped Hong Kong Disneyland become a very popular theme park in Asia once it opened.

In conclusion, Disneyland's introduction into the Chinese market was planned and built in a city with strong traffic accessibility and a high degree of cultural openness, fusing Disney's fairy tale aesthetic with Chinese culture. "Adapting measures to local conditions" is a planning and construction principle. In comparison to China's regional amusement theme parks, this construction type has greater benefits. The creation of the theme park, which was undertaken jointly by China and the United States, has had a positive impact on the local economies and industrial structures [6]. Disney has not only boosted the local tourism, catering and other business development in Hong Kong and Shanghai, but has also radiated more to the neighbouring and even further afield areas. Overall, this is beneficial to China's economic development.

5. Conclusion

The paper is based on the analysis of Disney's marketing model, combined with the 4P model, and analyzes experiential marketing and parks selling products and services. And the conclusions of this paper are: first, Disney, as a well-known multinational media and entertainment group, has achieved great success in the operation and management of the park with the help of the park's experiential marketing model, which not only attracts a large number of tourists but also promotes the development of the neighboring industrial chain and the real estate economy; second, China's theme park market has great development prospects, and Disney's presence in two Chinese cities has brought many advantages to both regions.

This article uses more text to discuss the points of the article. There are shortcomings within the article that are thought to be in the comparison of data that could have taken a more intuitive chart or data type of analysis to present the final point. In addition, the impact of Disney's marketing model on the Chinese market is limited to a positive analysis and lacks dialectical thinking. At a later stage, a more comprehensive perspective will be taken to explore the positive and negative impacts of Disney's presence in the Chinese market.

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