

Research on the Digital Marketing Strategy of White Rabbit Creamy Candy in the Chinese Market

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Abstract: In the rapidly evolving landscape of modern brand marketing, traditional brands are tasked with the intricate challenge of melding their storied cultural heritage with innovative digital strategies. This research delves into the digital marketing tactics of White Rabbit Creamy Candy, an iconic Chinese snack brand deeply rooted in historical and emotional narratives. The study illuminates the brand's distinctiveness in the market by exploring its historical significance, cultural symbols, and emotional resonance. Employing a comprehensive research framework, the investigation uncovers pressing issues such as a constrained digital presence, insufficient engagement on social media, a disconnect with younger generations, the untapped potential of e-commerce, and a lack of collaborative efforts with digital influencers. Notably, consumer stereotypes and the generational divide emerge as salient challenges. In response, a multifaceted approach is recommended, involving the development of a robust digital strategy for heightened online visibility, immersive interactive content, strategic partnerships with digital influencers, rejuvenation of the brand image to resonate with contemporary audiences, alignment with evolving health trends, and strategic positioning against competitive pressures. This study contributes valuable insights into the digital transformation journey of traditional brands and offers pragmatic guidance to enhance digital marketing endeavors in the dynamic modern landscape.

Keywords: traditional brand transformation, digital marketing strategy, nostalgia marketing, White Rabbit Creamy Candy, generational engagement

1. Introduction

In the contemporary digital era, the landscape of brand marketing has undergone a profound transformation, fundamentally altering how businesses and organizations engage with their audiences [1]. The rapid evolution of internet technology has positioned digital marketing as a pivotal conduit for direct interaction between businesses and consumers. This paradigm shift has brought forth both unprecedented opportunities and formidable challenges in the realm of brand communication and market promotion. In an environment marked by abundant prospects and intense competition, traditional brands like White Rabbit Creamy Candy face the dual challenge of preserving their unique cultural heritage and adapting to emerging digital marketing strategies. As an emblematic brand steeped in history and emotional resonance, White Rabbit Creamy Candy has to harmonize traditional and contemporary elements, captivating widespread attention for its digital

marketing endeavors in the Chinese market. China, one of the world's largest consumer markets, is a fertile ground for innovation and application in digital marketing. Especially From the birth of e-commerce in 1990 to the current era of universal e-commerce, the emerging electronic commerce industry has rapidly evolved into a mature and stable phase [2]. This enables deeper connections with a vast and diverse consumer base.

White Rabbit Creamy Candy, a classic and distinctive Chinese snack brand, has been intrinsically intertwined with countless individuals' childhood memories since its inception. Beyond being a delightful snack, it embodies emotions and history. Notably, the brand has long employed a nostalgic marketing strategy, leveraging market segmentation and nostalgia culture to enhance its promotional efforts. However, as consumer perspectives and behaviors gradually shift, and the digitization of daily life amplifies the importance of digital marketing, there arises an imperative to integrate nostalgic marketing with contemporary digital strategies. The challenge lies in how traditional brands effectively engage with modern consumers in the digital age while retaining their unique allure.

Navigating the path of digital transformation for traditional brands is complex, necessitating a delicate equilibrium between safeguarding core values and adeptly responding to evolving consumer behaviors in the digital realm. The motivation behind this study stems from the deep-seated desire to uncover the intricacies of White Rabbit Creamy Candy's digital marketing strategies within the Chinese market. This paper aims to dissect the brand's digital marketing practices and unveil its adept fusion of modern digital channels with age-old culture, ultimately captivating, engaging, and retaining today's consumers. Furthermore, this paper seeks to address the existing research gap concerning digital marketing within the context of White Rabbit Creamy Candy, thereby offering novel insights for scholarly inquiries into brand communication and the digital marketing landscape.

The majority of prior literature has predominantly concentrated on traditional marketing realms, investigating the methodologies through which conventional brands engage in advertising and promotion via conventional media and channels. However, under the transformative influence of the digital revolution, traditional brands have transcended conventional marketing methods and now confront new opportunities and challenges presented by digital channels.

Nevertheless, research about effective brand marketing in the digital age and integrating traditional cultural elements with modern digital strategies remains sparse. Few scholars have explored how traditional brands can establish a robust digital brand image, connect with consumers on digital platforms and social media, and navigate these novel domains. This void is particularly pronounced in the case of brands like White Rabbit Creamy Candy, which boast rich historical and emotional heritage, prompting questions about how to preserve their uniqueness and appeal in the digital age.

This study aims to address this research gap precisely. By conducting an exhaustive analysis of White Rabbit Creamy Candy's digital marketing strategies in the Chinese market, this paper aims to provide meaningful guidance for the digital transformation of traditional brands while offering fresh perspectives and inspiration to the academic landscape in digital marketing and brand communication.

To embark on this journey, the paper will first focus on the distinctive position of White Rabbit Creamy Candy as a brand imbued with profound historical and emotional significance. This paper will unveil its unique value in consumers' perceptions by rigorously analyzing its historical roots, cultural symbols, and emotional resonance. This segment will shed light on why White Rabbit Creamy Candy's digital marketing strategies stand apart from those of other brands.

Subsequently, the paper will delve into an in-depth exposition of the research methodology and framework. It will elucidate how data collection and analysis will be executed to glean deep insights

into White Rabbit Creamy Candy's digital marketing strategies within the Chinese market. Additionally, it will explore the theoretical underpinnings that inform the chosen research methods, clarifying how these methods will be applied to address the research questions.

Lastly, the paper will summarize the expected contributions of the study. Emphasis will be placed on the practical significance of the research for guiding the digital transformation of traditional brands, along with the innovative viewpoints it introduces to digital marketing and brand communication. The paper will also address potential research limitations and suggest future pathways for further investigation.

By following this coherent, logical sequence, this study will comprehensively explore the digital marketing strategies of White Rabbit Creamy Candy within the Chinese market, offering invaluable insights and inspiration for brand management, digital marketing practices, and scholarly research.

2. Case Description

In the Chinese market, White Rabbit Creamy Candy has evolved into a cultural icon that transcends its status as a mere confection. With origins dating back to the 1950s, this nostalgic treat has undergone a remarkable journey that has cemented its place in the hearts of generations. White Rabbit Creamy Candy was produced by Shanghai Candu Factory in 1959, cherished for its unique milky flavour and soft, chewy texture. White Rabbit Creamy candy has a different kind of feeling in Shanghai. In those days of scarcity, White Rabbit candies were seen as nourishment. In the planned economy era, White Rabbit creamy candy was the pride of Shanghai people and the synonym for Shanghai goods [3].

The success of White Rabbit Creamy Candy stems from its ability to delicately preserve the brand's classic attributes while incorporating necessary innovation. By emphasizing its rich historical background and emotional depth, the brand has effectively cultivated a sense of nostalgia, allowing consumers to relive memories while enjoying the candy. This nostalgia establishes a profound emotional connection between the brand and consumers and imparts unique cultural value to White Rabbit Creamy Candy.

However, it is important to note that White Rabbit Creamy Candy is not as popular among young consumers as some contemporary candy brands. Nonetheless, the brand's influence among the older demographic remains strong. This is largely attributed to the brand's longstanding emphasis on traditional values and emotional bonds and its revered status among the older generation.

The current development status of White Rabbit Creamy Candy in the Chinese market showcases how a classic brand can maintain its distinctiveness and influence through clever nostalgic marketing and cultural heritage amidst market transformations. While its popularity among the younger generation is limited, in recent years, with the emergence of many well-known international brands and emerging brands, China's time-honored brands are facing more and more severe challenges. Of more than 160 time-honored brands in China, only about 10% are operating well, and the rest barely survive or even have long-term losses [4].

Digital marketing is one of the most important marketing strategies nowadays, and White Rabbit Creamy Candy does not perform well in this regard. The brand's digital marketing efforts have been notably limited, struggling to engage with younger consumers more attuned to modern digital platforms. While the brand's nostalgic appeal continues to capture the hearts of its loyal fan base, its digital presence falls short of effectively connecting with the tech-savvy younger audience.

3. Analysis on the Problems

3.1. Current Development of White Rabbit Creamy Candy's Marketing Strategy

White Rabbit Creamy Candy has indubitably etched its mark as a cherished nostalgic brand within the older demographic, capitalizing on its storied history and emotional resonance. Its traditional marketing tactics, rooted in invoking sentimental reminiscences, have engendered a loyal customer base that spans old generations. The brand's shrewd adaptation to changing consumer desires propelled it into a national sensation. Recognizing the increasing demand for premium-quality products and diverse flavors, White Rabbit expanded its product line to include various variants such as matcha, coffee, and fruit-infused options. It also introduced products and packages like ice cream, recycle bags, iron boxes, etc. "Up to now, regardless of lip balms, coffee, fragrances, or clothing, they have all extended along a 'brand matrix' centered around creamy candy, expanding towards taste, smell, and sight. In the end, it forms an emotional network centered around White Rabbit Creamy Candy," said Shen Qinfeng, Marketing Manager of White Rabbit, adding, "This has led to an emotional network centered around White Rabbit [5]." White Rabbit Creamy Candy opened its first flagship store in Shanghai in 2021 and has continued to open several stores in Shanghai [6]. White Rabbit Creamy Candy tried to create their unique IP.

3.2. Problem Identified by White Rabbit Creamy Candy Marketing Strategy

In attempting to bridge the gap between White Rabbit Creamy Candy's enduring charm and the demands of modern digital marketing, a range of issues come to the fore:

Inadequate Digital Footprint: White Rabbit Creamy Candy's digital footprint is disproportionately small despite its notable cultural and historical significance. In the digital era, a brand's impact relies heavily on its presence within the online realm. However, the brand has not effectively harnessed this opportunity to engage with younger audiences through diverse digital channels, limiting its digital domain influence. For example, according to Tik Tok, each video on the White Rabbit's official flagship store account received only a few likes [7].

Ineffectual Social Media Engagement: Efforts towards social media engagement from the brand have often remained surface-level and misaligned with contemporary consumer behaviors. Younger audiences are particularly active on social media platforms and expect substantive brand interactions. However, White Rabbit Creamy Candy's online presence lacks depth and fails to meet these expectations.

Generational Disconnect Challenge: Despite its iconic status among the older generation, bridging the gap to engage a younger audience in the digital era presents a challenge. The brand's digital marketing strategies lack the appeal required to resonate with the younger generation. This generational disconnect could potentially limit the brand's impact across age demographics.

Underutilization of E-commerce Channels: The brand's foray into e-commerce platforms remains limited, a critical component of the digital marketing landscape. This limits accessibility and reach, particularly among consumers who prefer online shopping.

Lack of Influencer Collaborations: Collaborating with digital influencers is pivotal in modern marketing strategies. However, White Rabbit Creamy Candy's hesitance to engage with digital influencers hampers its ability to resonate with younger audiences effectively.

Limited Presence among Younger Audience: White Rabbit Creamy Candy has a remarkably limited presence among the younger generation despite being a well-known brand. This could be attributed to its failure to exude vitality and appeal in the digital realm, resulting in insufficient interest and resonance among the youth. While most young people might have heard of White Rabbit Creamy Candy, few relate it to their modern lifestyles and values.

Low Purchase Intent: Despite its widespread recognition, White Rabbit Creamy Candy has not successfully translated into tangible purchase intent among consumers. This implies a lack of influence the brand has on the younger generation, possibly due to its digital marketing strategy failing to convey values that resonate with them effectively. Young consumers are more likely to opt for other brands that align better with their contemporary lifestyle and emotional connections.

Changing Consumer Preferences: As consumer preferences evolve toward healthier and more natural snacks, White Rabbit faces the challenge of aligning its product offerings with these trends. A shift in demand toward organic, low-sugar, and natural ingredient-based candies could impact the company's market share if it doesn't adapt swiftly.

Competition in the industry is fierce: In addition, the variety of candy substitutes on the market, leisure snacks, has increased, and it is also constantly engaging the market space of the confectionery industry. Traditional confectionery enterprises face superior competition from foreign-funded enterprises, such as Xu Fuji, the Alps, etc.

3.3. Reason Identified of Problem

White Rabbit Creamy Candy, as a brand with rich historical and cultural background, might face certain consumer stereotypes among some younger consumers. These stereotypes could stem from the brand's longstanding association with nostalgia and an older generation, leading to preconceived notions among the younger demographic.

One potential stereotype is that White Rabbit Creamy Candy is perceived as an "old-fashioned" brand, more suitable for older consumers' tastes. This perception could lead the younger generation to believe that the brand does not align with their lifestyle and preferences, potentially causing skepticism or disregard for its digital marketing efforts.

Another stereotype could be that White Rabbit Creamy Candy lacks innovation and modernity in the digital age. Younger consumers often seek progressive and contemporary brands, and they might perceive that the brand lacks sufficient investment and innovation in digital marketing, diminishing its visibility and appeal among the youth.

Additionally, some younger consumers might view White Rabbit Creamy Candy as better suited for traditional settings, such as being gifted or enjoyed as a nostalgic snack, rather than a product for sharing and discussing on modern social media platforms. This perception could result in limited engagement with the brand on digital channels, affecting its influence among the younger demographic.

4. Suggestions

Optimizing the Marketing Strategy for White Rabbit Creamy Candy involves addressing two main aspects: addressing the deficiency in its digital strategy and tackling market changes and competitive pressures.

4.1. Deficiency in Digital Strategy

4.1.1. Invest in Comprehensive Digital Strategy to Enhance Online Presence

White Rabbit Creamy Candy can expand its digital presence by utilizing various online platforms, including social media, and e-commerce websites, and engaging with popular content-sharing platforms to overcome the limited digital footprint. Developing a unified digital strategy will enhance visibility among younger audiences and foster brand awareness. Learning from successful brands like MIXUE Ice Cream & Tea, which rapidly expanded using precise branding, a complete industry chain, IP marketing, and sound marketing, could provide valuable insights [8].

4.1.2. Create Immersive Social Media Interaction Experience

White Rabbit Creamy Candy should create dynamic, interactive content aligned with contemporary consumer behaviors. It needs to develop a content strategy that focuses on genuine interaction with the audience, moving beyond simple product imagery. The aim is to craft storytelling content that encourages discussions, user-generated content sharing, and engagement. Introducing interactive content such as polls, quizzes, challenges, and contests can boost participation and community-building around the brand.

4.1.3. Bridge the Generational Gap to Attract Younger Audiences

Engaging with marketing experts specializing in younger demographics can help White Rabbit Creamy Candy create content that resonates with their interests and values while respecting the brand's historical significance. Modernizing packaging, messaging, and imagery might be necessary rather than sticking solely to traditional packaging. Drawing inspiration from Cocon Tree Coconut Juice's packaging, which features distinctive colors (red, yellow, blue) for strong brand recognition, could be useful [9].

4.1.4. Expand E-commerce Channels for Enhanced Online Sales

Expanding the brand's presence on e-commerce platforms allows White Rabbit Creamy Candy to engage in live sales and introduce exclusive and limited-edition products. Leveraging e-commerce channels will lead to growth in online sales and foster consumer loyalty by delivering satisfying shopping experiences. This expanded visibility can elevate sales opportunities and enhance its digital market position.

4.1.5. Collaborate with Digital Influencers to Amplify Influence

Identify digital influencers whose values align with the brand and who can attract the target audience. Collaborate with them to create authentic content, reviews, and giveaways, showcasing the relevance of White Rabbit Creamy Candy in a modern context. White Rabbit Creamy Candy has partnered with numerous well-known brands, such as Bright Dairy, to introduce a co-branded "official, authentic lineage" milk candy-flavored ice cream. The collaboration between Bright Dairy and "White Rabbit" aims to unearth the brand value of traditional heritage, merging it with the current allure of youth culture and nostalgic flavors. The intention is to engage with the younger generation through a confident, trendy, and fashionable dialogue, although these collaborations did not yield substantial results. Hence, White Rabbit Creamy Candy needs to combine digital marketing efforts, such as increasing exposure on social media platforms, to achieve its objectives [10].

4.1.6. Limited Presence among Younger Audiences

This might be one of the most significant challenges for White Rabbit Creamy Candy. It is essential to redefine the brand image to make it more appealing and relevant to the younger generation. Incorporating modern visual effects, slogans, and narratives that resonate with contemporary lifestyles while respecting the brand's heritage is crucial.

4.2. Market Changes and Competitive Pressures

4.2.1. Cultivate Emotional Resonance in Purchase Experience

Develop captivating marketing campaigns that highlight the cultural significance of White Rabbit Creamy Candy, evoking nostalgic emotions. Showcase how the candy adapts to modern occasions and daily habits, addressing consumers' emotional factors. For instance, producing short videos in office scenarios can illustrate the candy's role in everyday life.

4.2.2. Embrace Health Trends and Adjust Product Line

With its current nine flavors lacking a distinct standout, White Rabbit Creamy Candy could research and introduce a new product line that aligns with healthier snack trends. Consider offering organic, low-sugar, or natural ingredient-based options while preserving the candy's original flavor characteristics.

4.2.3. Highlight Uniqueness to Counter Intense Competition

White Rabbit Creamy Candy needs to differentiate itself from substitutes, enticing consumers to choose it over alternatives. Nostalgia marketing (incorporating nostalgic elements into campaigns to trigger consumers' emotional ties and encourage purchasing) is a common strategy for such candies [11]. Building on this foundation, White Rabbit Creamy Candy should incorporate modern elements to captivate consumers' attention and establish a distinct image compared to other candies.

5. Conclusion

In the rapidly evolving landscape of brand marketing in the digital age, White Rabbit Creamy Candy's journey is a poignant example of the challenges and opportunities traditional brands face in adapting to contemporary digital strategies. This paper has explored the brand's historical significance, cultural value, and emotional resonance, setting the stage for a comprehensive analysis of its digital marketing practices within the Chinese market.

The digital marketing challenges faced by White Rabbit Creamy Candy have been discussed, including its presence, its disconnect with younger generations, and the underutilization of modern strategies. However, addressing these challenges presents an opportunity for the brand to establish a presence among younger audiences while maintaining its nostalgic appeal.

The strategies presented in this paper can greatly improve White Rabbit Creamy Candy's marketing approach. By expanding its presence across platforms and creating engaging interactions, the brand can encourage participation and foster a sense of community. Collaborating with influencers can help increase its reach and credibility among the younger demographic. Additionally, embracing e-commerce channels redefining the brand image, and introducing product options can strengthen its position in the market. Resonate with evolving consumer preferences.

Successfully blending charm with digital strategies has the potential to shape the future path of White Rabbit Creamy Candy. Bridging the gap between generations capturing consumers' attention, and adapting to changing market dynamics are steps for ensuring this beloved brand's enduring relevance and growth. By combining tradition and innovation, White Rabbit Creamy Candy can navigate the complexities of the age while preserving its unique allure and cultural significance.

This paper has laid the groundwork for White Rabbit Creamy Candy to embark on a journey and establish itself in digital marketing.

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