

Research on Brand Rejuvenation Strategy of Old Brands from the Perspective of Brand Marketing

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Abstract: With the continuous development of the economy and the increasingly fierce market environment, the competition of brands in the consumer market is becoming increasingly fierce. In this situation, old brands are inevitably placed at a disadvantage and may even be gradually forgotten by consumers and eliminated from the market. To cope with rapid market changes and the developing situation of market competition, many old brands with weak competitiveness have chosen brand revitalization strategies to ensure a foothold in the consumer market. At present, although some old brands have successfully revived their brands through brand rejuvenation strategies, others have fallen into the trap of such strategies. When implementing brand rejuvenation strategies, many old brands have issues such as unclear brand awareness and positioning, superficial strategy implementation, and rapid strategy advancement. Therefore, it is suggested to emphasize the importance of individuation, adaptability, and conveying the brand's essence during the process of revitalization. This article analyzes various cases of old brands' rejuvenation, discusses and summarizes the potential problems commonly faced in the process of brand rejuvenation, and provides practical warnings and suggestions for old brands to implement brand rejuvenation strategies.

Keywords: brand rejuvenation, brand communication, old brands

1. Introduction

With the development of economic globalization, various brands are constantly occupying China, the world's second-largest consumer market. New domestic brands are emerging one after another, and a large number of foreign brands are also vying to take a share, resulting in increasingly fierce market competition. In this situation, old brands will inevitably face fierce market competition and challenges to their reform and innovation.

For many years, China's economy has been continuously developing at a high speed, and consumer spending is increasing. However, recent macroeconomic pressures have affected the confidence of Chinese consumers. The sluggish stock and housing markets, as well as measures taken to curb the spread of the epidemic, have added uncertainty to the consumer outlook. Despite the slowdown in economic development and the impact on consumer confidence, the Chinese economy still exhibits strong resilience, which may help consumers establish a cautious and optimistic mood [1].

The continuous iteration of the main consumer group over time means that the brand needs to constantly gain insight into the market, keep up with the market trend promptly, understand the changes in the values and consumer attitudes of young consumers, and correspondingly develop the brand's youthfulness. Especially for some old brands that lack communication and innovation capabilities, it is necessary to inject vitality into brand development, extend brand cycles, and try to find new market growth points for the brand through the rejuvenation of all aspects of the brand. At the same time, due to the emergence of classic successful cases of rejuvenation of old brands such as Holiland, a large number of old brands have started a wave of brand rejuvenation transformation. Faced with the current consumer market in China, how old brands break the crisis of brand aging, make scientific and reasonable strategic choices for the direction of brand rejuvenation, revitalize the brand, and remain active in the market for a long time has become a hot topic.

This article is based on the comparison and analysis of some cases of old brand rejuvenation in the existing market in China, studying and summarizing the strategic misconceptions that old brands need to pay attention to when carrying out brand rejuvenation strategies and providing universal suggestions for old brands.

The current market competition is fierce, and if old brands do not pay attention to the changes in objective factors such as the consumer market, economic environment, and main consumer groups that affect brand operation, they are easily forgotten and eliminated by the market and consumers. This article interprets the brand rejuvenation strategy through case analysis, providing reference and theoretical support for the transformation and construction of the brand rejuvenation of old enterprises and promoting the self-innovation and development of old brands.

2. The Significance of Rejuvenating Old Brands

Times are changing, and the main consumer groups in different fields are also changing. Faced with fierce market competition and an increasing number of homogeneous products, traditional old brands are becoming increasingly vulnerable and even gradually marginalized by consumers. Brand managers all hope to extend the maturity stage of the brand lifecycle and be able to reverse or restart growth during the recession stage to ensure the sustainable survival of the brand; this forms the main idea of brand rejuvenation [2].

2.1. Emphasize Brand Tonality

The implementation of the brand rejuvenation strategy can propel the brand to research the market and brand audience in which the product is located to achieve an objective understanding of the brand tonality, thereby promoting the brand's self-repositioning, helping the brand expand the market and revitalizing the brand image.

2.2. Revitalizing Brand Status

A large number of old brands have been eliminated in the new wave of consumption, and their presence in the consumer market has been significantly reduced, leaving only the so-called deep brand history and culture. During the post-pandemic period, the Chinese market is gradually recovering, and various brands hope to stabilize their brand positions in the new consumer market. Older brands urgently need to achieve long-term healthy brand development and revitalize their market position through effective brand strategies, and brand rejuvenation is one of the best choices.

2.3. Increase Enterprise Profitability

Old brands can find new market growth points for the brand through the promotion of the brand's youthfulness strategy. Alternatively, after fully investigating the market situation and repositioning the brand, we can seek sales breakthroughs by adding new product lines.

3. Potential Misconceptions in the Process of Brand Rejuvenation

3.1. Target Customer Group Positioning Error

In the fiercely competitive market environment, a large number of old brands have chosen to follow the development path of brand rejuvenation, infusing vitality into their brands. However, some brands do not consider their brand positioning, whether the brand tonality is suitable for a youthful audience, or whether the original culture of the brand can be compatible with young cultures. It is important to note that not every category is targeted at young people, and not every brand should consider young people as the core market. Brand rejuvenation should be seen as a means rather than a result.

3.1.1. The Positioning Error of Heilan Home

Taking Heilan Home as an example, the brand's tag is "Men's Wardrobe", and its products mainly focus on business attire, targeting middle-aged and mature businessmen. According to the financial report provided on the official website of Heilan Home, since 2016, Heilan Home's revenue and net profit have entered an era of "single-digit growth", with consecutive year-on-year declines in 2019 and 2020. Especially in 2020, enterprises were affected by the epidemic, with a year-on-year decrease of 44.42%, which was the worst year since going public. In 2022, the company's net profit attributable to the parent company was still below the level of 2014. [3]

Therefore, Heilan Home urgently hopes to find positive market growth points during the brand downturn, and in the end, young consumers have become the brand's breakthrough point. The implementation of the brand's strategy to appeal to the youth can be reflected in the choice of a brand spokesperson. In 2020, the brand started choosing Jay Chou, a popular singer among young people, and Wang Yaoqing, an actor, as the brand's spokesperson. In 2021, Heilan Home announced that Hou Minghao and Wei Zheming, young actors, became spokesmen, and also developed the China-Chic series and other young series products to target young groups. However, the continuous change of spokespersons has not upgraded consumers' awareness of the brand. On the contrary, due to the vastly different styles of the spokespersons, leaves consumers feeling that their strategic direction is uncertain. Frequent replacement of spokespersons is a major taboo in marketing communication, as it not only increases the company's advertising expenses but also hinders brand consolidation in consumers' minds. Therefore, this incorrect marketing plan has led to a significant portion of Heilan Home's marketing expenses not using in the right place, increasing brand operating costs, and resulting in a lack of positive marketing effects.

3.1.2. Burberry's Positioning Error

In addition, the Burberry logo change and printing incident is also a typical failing case of blindly promoting brand rejuvenation. From 2013 to 2016, Burberry, who adhered to classic design, was deeply mired in difficulties. Whether it was a performance crisis or a personnel change at the top of the brand, people gradually saw the fatigue of this century-old brand. In 2016, Burberry successfully stimulated the Asia Pacific market, especially the Chinese market, by signing a Chinese traffic male star. This move helped Burberry turn around its previous decline, injecting a dose of strength and once again proving the importance of brand rejuvenation for the current development of the brand

market. Then Burberry launched various series in collaboration with young designers, as well as various forms of activities, such as getting Beckham's oldest son to shoot a perfume advertisement. In 2018, with the trend of luxury brands collectively changing their logos, Burberry also changed the logo font to a San's serif font, removing the iconic knight and horse pattern. This move is the beginning of the wrong brand's rejuvenation strategy. The knight-horse pattern precisely reflects Burberry's aristocratic lineage. Removing the horse pattern is equivalent to losing the brand's core culture. In addition, the brand's classic checkered print has also undergone a youthful transformation, which has further eroded Burberry's core British style. Burberry did not carefully consider its own audience and brand tone and insisted on rejuvenating and fashioning the brand, which ultimately led to Burberry's declining status among luxury brands.

From the brand history and positioning of Burberry, it can be seen that the luxury brand's audience generally targets the middle class and above, and its profound and noble British cultural heritage is particularly popular among the old money class. Old luxury brands may gain significant benefits in the short term by focusing on the strutting hotspots and aggressively moving towards the younger group. However, in the long run, disregarding brand tonality and advantages, forcing brand rejuvenation, and forgetting the core and original intention of brand value will only cause a significant blow to the brand tone of luxury goods.

3.2. Excessive "Superficial" Brand Rejuvenation Strategy

Some brands have a misconception about brand rejuvenation, which fundamentally stems from the stereotype of young consumers. That is, they do not attach importance to the research and analysis of the spiritual demands of potential audience users and only blindly follow new hot topics for strategic development.

Wahaha, the largest food and beverage production enterprise in China founded in 1987, is a typical example. In 2018, Zong Fuli, the daughter of the Chairman of Wahaha, took over and began exploring the direction of youth development. During the Mid-Autumn Festival of that year, Wahaha launched the AD calcium milk moon cake. Afterwards, they replaced the 10-year-old packaging of Nutritional Express, Wahaha's most classic product, to move closer to the younger product style. Zong Fuli continued pushing the boundaries of Wahaha and emphasized that the future focus would be on prioritizing consumers and enhancing the brand. In the brand rejuvenation strategy, Wahaha is enthusiastic about cross-border cooperation with new brands to increase their popularity. For example, they partnered with Zhongxuegao to launch "Underage Ice Cream", Bubble Mart to launch a blind box with randomly packaged soda water and random flavors, and the Bilibili video platform to launch a program called "Underage Academy". They also became a partner of the official LPL competition of League of Legends in China. These actions showcase Wahaha's new image of cross-border. In terms of product development, Wahaha has always tried to launch new products to attract the attention of young people, such as ice cream, blind box, and other popular youth-oriented products.

Despite continuous brand innovation, Wahaha's impression on the public has always remained focused on items such as AD calcium milk and Nutritional Express. The implementation of the brand rejuvenation strategy, whether from public opinion or brand tonality, seems to be a bit disorganized. The root cause of this problem is that Wahaha has not made targeted designs for the brand's youthfulness strategy based on its brand tonality and advantages; instead, they just simply follow the trend.

3.3. The Decline in Consumer Acceptance Caused by the Rapid Process of Brand Rejuvenation Strategy

Compared to new brands, old brands have a great advantage, which is that they have a group of loyal consumers who grow with them. These consumers have deep emotions with the brand, but their consumption needs and desires are gradually decreasing. Therefore, old brands need to expand to new consumer groups to maintain brand sales power. Many old brands face this situation and are prone to overly focusing on the development of brand rejuvenation while neglecting the operation of the old customer group. Therefore, how to "solidify the foundation and expand the new" is a problem that old brands need to pay attention to when carrying out brand rejuvenation development.

For example, the Toyota Crown, which was introduced in 1995, was once a symbol of success and status in the eyes of Chinese people, achieving great success in the Chinese automotive market. Later, some European brands entered China and designed large size and spacious models according to the needs of the Chinese people, seizing the market, and the Crown began to decline. In response, the Crown has made multiple revisions to cater to the needs of the new generation of consumer groups in China, but sales have not rebounded and have instead fallen again and again. The noble brand value and brand emotion retained by Crown also seem to be disappearing in the continuous cross-border transformation, which not only fails to win the young people's market but also causes the loss of a large number of old customers.

4. Success Case Analysis: Holiland

As a time-honored Chinese local cake brand established in 1991, Holiland has not been facing the dilemma of many local baking brands. Instead, in recent years, with its popular classic products, various co-branded products, and distinctive themed stores such as Holiland Pink and Holiland Lab, it has become a focus of attention for young people and an iconic brand for fashionable pastries.

In 2014, Holiland began exploring the rejuvenation of the brand. It continuously develops new products based on the preferences and needs of its audience. In 2015, Holiland developed and launched a popular product: semi-cooked cheese. Afterwards, a series of exquisite desserts and bread was launched, and the designed products were more youthful, such as a large number of cross-border co-branded collaborations: the Xicha co-branded version, the Oreo co-branded version, and the Bubble Mart co-branded version. Recently, Holiland also launched Barbie themed cakes. On the path of youthfulness while improving the appearance of its products, Holiland always prioritizes maintaining high quality. It strives to do a good job in every product, using high-quality products as a foundation and combining marketing content and promotion methods that directly target the preferences of young people to achieve the maximum effect of the brand rejuvenation strategy.

Holiland has witnessed changes in the Chinese retail market and is constantly transforming its marketing thinking to meet the diverse consumer needs of young Generation Z people. From "unfashionable" to "online popularity", Holly Way is deeply in line with the ISMAS model in the new retail era driven by social media marketing, adheres to the concept of "pursuing innovation and consumer orientation", and attracts and retains consumers with the marketing idea of "good products plus good stories". [4] This is precisely the embodiment of Holiland's implementation of the brand strategy, constantly walking at the forefront of the trend and steadily grasping consumers' consumption preferences.

5. Implementation Suggestions for Brand Rejuvenation Strategy

Based on the above case analysis of the rejuvenation of old brand brands, it can be seen that many brands have different understandings of the brand rejuvenation strategy, and various strategic issues

often arise at the implementation level. Therefore, the following are some universal suggestions for the implementation of the rejuvenation strategy of old brand brands as a reference.

5.1. Carefully Consider Whether the Brand Is Suitable for a Brand Rejuvenation

For old brands, the prerequisite for brand rejuvenation is to confirm whether there is a need for youthfulness in their brand and what commercial issues need to be addressed to achieve youthfulness. Youthfulness is only the surface layer of brand strategy, and the core is still the brand's commercial demands in the new internal and external environment.

5.2. Personalized Strategy for Brand Rejuvenation

Firms should do intensive research before taking the decision for revitalization brands by measuring the brands through suitable tools. It all depends on the nature and characteristics of the brand and also its marketing environment [5].

The process of rejuvenation can be achieved through two core activities: innovation and re-positioning of the brand [6]. Before formulating a brand rejuvenation strategy, it is necessary to conduct a large amount of rigorous market analysis and research, and also conduct an objective evaluation of the brand itself. Starting from the brand tonality and audience goals, we should deeply explore our brand connotation, identify the marketing content points that best match young people in the brand, and personalized design the details of the brand rejuvenation strategy. Each brand has a unique history, a specific life cycle and a customized mix of ageing causes [7]. Therefore, targeted strategies should be developed based on the specific situation of the brand.

At the same time, the rejuvenation of old brands does not mean blindly catering to young people. The target audience for brand rejuvenation should be all users. Youthfulness is not only the youth of the brand's appearance but also the youthfulness of the brand's core. This brand rejuvenation strategy promotes brand renewal from the inside out, not a superficial accumulation of young elements, nor simply following the trend of young people to design products or carry out marketing.

5.3. Pay Attention to the Expression of the Connotation of Brand Rejuvenation

Before implementing the brand's youthfulness strategy, the brand must have a deep understanding of the needs of the real young population. At the same time, brand rejuvenation cannot deviate from brand values. We need to deeply explore the core values of the brand and combine them with the requirements of the times to sublimate or unleash them in order to find a suitable fit for the consumption needs of contemporary young people [8].

5.4. Products Need to Be Constantly Iterated and Upgraded

Markets are fundamental to managerial thought and practice because they present the domain of action for firms. Over time, existing markets can undergo dramatic changes and entirely new markets may emerge, posing significant challenges to firms [9]. To cope with this constantly changing market, in addition to the rejuvenation and upgrading of various aspects such as brand marketing, brand rejuvenation requires the support of the brand's product.

5.5. Creating Sub-Brands, or Specializing in New Product Lines

Segmenting the market, creating new brands, and attracting young consumers with sub-brands is a way for old brands to become younger.

For example, taking CHANITEX as an example, as a young fashion brand of the A.O. Smith family, in product design, functional development, marketing communication, and other aspects, this

brand also pays more attention to the habits and preferences of young consumers, which are characterized by intelligence, avant-garde style, and fashion. With excellent appearance and quality, CHANITEX wins the favor of young consumers. At the same time, this brand uses fashion social media platforms as its main communication channel. For example, in the Chinese market, it has chosen the Xiaohongshu platform, which has attracted the interest of young consumers through a combination of expert experience, user unboxing, professional evaluation, and other forms. From A.O. Smith, who has been around for over a hundred years, to the young CHANITEX, both provide corresponding product services for different target consumers, infuse new vitality into the century-old electrical brand, and improve the brand influence.

5.6. Brand Rejuvenation Marketing

In terms of brand marketing, brands need to consider their brands, deeply explore the consumption behavior and interests of young consumer groups and identify emotional connection points between the brand and consumers. If marketing does not meet the current situation of brand development, lacks scientific investigation, or simply follows the trend of marketing creativity, it will not only not improve the brand but also waste marketing resources in vain. Entertainment-based communication methods may not necessarily apply to every brand: products have different positioning and tone, and the applicable communication methods vary [10]. Brands don't need to follow the trend of mass entertainment in brand marketing and promotion. It is crucial to find marketing methods that are suitable for the brand's tone.

Furthermore, simple external marketing stimuli, such as celebrity endorsements, do indeed stimulate consumers to purchase in the short term, but most consumers do not purchase products based on their love and trust for the brand. When external marketing stimuli end, consumers will give up purchasing products. So, what brands need to think more about is how to make the brand stand firm in the long-term landscape. Brand story marketing and appropriate emotional marketing are marketing directions that brands can consider.

6. Conclusion

In the current tight consumer market, various brands are vigorously carrying out brand marketing to gain more consumer attention and improve their brand influence. The brand rejuvenation strategy is a very practical strategy method for old brands.

However, old brands need to pay attention to the positioning of their target audience in the implementation of their brand rejuvenation strategy and carefully carry out the strategy to avoid falling into the misconception of excessively "superficial" or excessively fast brand strategy. More importantly, before deciding to implement the brand rejuvenation strategy, it is necessary to carefully consider the suitability of the brand itself and the strategy, and conduct personalized strategic thinking. Brand rejuvenation strategy requires the combination of high-quality products and personalized brand models to maximize the benefits of the brand strategy. The implementation of any brand strategy requires the brand to truly understand the needs of the audience in order to achieve the ultimate goal of marketing.

This article has certain reference significance in the implementation of the rejuvenation strategy for old brands. Some typical successful cases of old brand rejuvenation in the article will also provide new ideas for brand rejuvenation. Due to limited personal knowledge reserves, the relevant information consulted is not comprehensive, so there are many shortcomings in not delving into and discussing some issues related to brand rejuvenation. In my future studies, I will continue to focus on research related to brand rejuvenation and conduct more in-depth research on brand rejuvenation.

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