

Branding Strategies of Outdoor Music Festival: A Case Study of Strawberry Festival

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Abstract. With the change of music industry, the traditional recording industry began to decline, and diversified music forms were accepted by people. Outdoor music festival is one of the representatives, it is gradually gaining more and more attention due to high participation and immersive on-site experience and occupying more share in entertainment market. Compared with other forms of music performance, music festival is not only a platform to show a variety of styles and types of music performance, but also can be integrated with tourism and other forms of business, forming a comprehensive entertainment industry model. Even in the post-pandemic world, music festivals still show a astonishingly development trend. In the face of fierce competition in the music market, how to play the role of branding and establish a new normal for event promoting should be considered by music festival organizers. The study took outdoor music festival as the research object, case on China Strawberry Music Festival to elaborate the development status of China's outdoor music festival and the problems existing in the branding process, discussed the developing pattern of strawberry Music Festival branding from two aspects of positioning and strategy. The study investigated the promotion effect of exact branding strategies on the development of music festivals, and proposed a practical path for the branding music festivals using brand marketing theory and literature research. The study puts forward the strategy of outdoor music festival branding in brand positioning, brand communication, brand management and other aspects, and concludes the importance of combining the analysis of music festival and city.

Keywords: Branding strategy; Strawberry music festival.

1. Introduction

The word "music festival" originated from the west, first appeared in the United Kingdom, and then the Woodstock Rock Festival, held in United States, is a complete miracle that 400,000 people in different areas gathered there with the love of music, with the faith of love and peace. After a long period of evolution, the world's most influential music festival brands include US Coachella Festival, Japan Fuji Rock Festival and UK Glastonbury Festival etc (see Table 1). With the rapid development of China's economy and culture, people's demand for cultural entertainment consumption is becoming more and more diversified. Music festival has gradually come to attention for the larger Chinese public and shown an amazing development trend in recent years. The venue of a music festival is different from a concert or concert hall. An enclosed, partitioned and highly stratified performance space that is both outdoor and open. Whether it is a city park, tourist resort, can be used as an outdoor music festival venue [1].

Table 1. Worldwide Influential Music Festivals

Time	Locate	Festival	Feature
June	Vienna	Donauinsselfest	The largest open-air festival around the globe; free popular, reputable, profitable
April	Australia		
	California	Coachella	Music and Art festival
	USA		
August	Japan	Fuji Rock	The biggest music fest in Japan sets the bar for worldwide music festivals
June	Pilton	Glastonbury	
	UK		

Strawberry Music Festival is founded by Chinese music company Modern Sky in 2009 after "Modern Sky Music Festival", which has the characteristics of "spring, romance and love". It has

been held in Beijing, Shanghai, Changsha, Chengdu, Wuhan etc until 2022. At the beginning of its establishment, it took the youth as the target group to create a young music festival, attracting young people from all over the country with features like trendy atmosphere, cool stage, colorful and intuitive signs. Strawberry Music Festival not only expands the influence of original independent music in China, but also becomes a typical representative of high-quality economic model among many music festivals, which has huge social impact [1].

literature on branding paths of consumer goods is mountainous in marketing books but less in journal articles. The success of well-developed brands reflects the importance of the management principles and tactics, while the branding situation of cultural festival is more special and complex. Since festivals cannot be used in the same ways as traditional industries such as education, banking, food, and telecommunication. creating and developing a strong music festival brand cannot simply replicate the successful paths of other industries [2]. Brand attributes are related to the concept of service to a certain extent. Core attributes refer to the information the brand wants to convey, and interaction attributes include sociability [3].

The study takes outdoor music festival as the research object and takes China Strawberry Music Festival as the case to elaborate the development status of China's outdoor music festival and the problems existing in the festival branding. Focusing on the subject, the study is divided into three parts: (1) overview of the development status of China's outdoor music festivals (2) case study of Strawberry music Festival (3) provides the systematic branding path for the music festival, and put forward points that needed attention in festival branding.

2. Case Study

2.1 Brand Positioning of Strawberry Music Festival

Brand carries consumers' recognition of the products or services provided by the enterprise, and it is also an intangible asset that can improve the economic benefits, which has long-term value. Brand positioning refers to the commercial decision made by an enterprise on the cultural orientation and personality differences of a specific brand on the basis of market positioning and product positioning, the core is to build brand value]. Strawberry Music Festival focuses on the theme of "Spring, Romance, love". The brand calls itself "Strawberry Planet", and the participator of Strawberry Music Festival are called "Strawberry Star people". Different from another famous music festival brand in China, "MIDI Music Festival", which highlights the characteristics of rock music festival, Strawberry Music Festival pays more attention to diversity and synthesis, mainly embodied in the variety of music types and stage forms. Here you can feel the live music of different styles such as folk, electronic, pop and rock. According to the organizers, "Strawberry Festival is not about strawberries as a form of fruit, but about a positive attitude toward enjoying life and music." the brand can be positioned through two points: (1) Youth-oriented target market (2) Diversification and internationalization.

2.1.1 Youth-oriented target market

Since the inception of the brand, the target group of Strawberry Music Festival is young people who love music and are full of vitality. Focus on this, they have carried out targeted brand planning and launched a series of creative activities in aims of attract young people and make them resonate with the brand, so as to obtain a fixed group and market competitiveness. At the same time, relying on the artist resources of Modern Sky Music company, many independent musicians have obtained a stage. They represent the youth subculture group, which is out of reality, avant-garde and full of rebellious spirit. That makes its easy to resonate with young people, especially college students and white-collar workers, stimulate their desire for emotional release. Through independent musicians to show the eccentric style of Strawberry Music Festival, so as to bring a kind of spiritual identity for the subcultural group, and also a resonance of unique lifestyle and cultural connotation [4].

2.1.2 Diversification and internationalization

In the choice of its lineups, considering its own positioning of the fashion and young, take into account the needs of multiple styles: rock, folk, electronics, hip-hop..., in addition to relying on the modern sky music artist resources, artists invited to the festival covers domestic and overseas. Also, there are both minority band and famous band. For example, the 2015 Shanghai Strawberry Music Festival adhering to the concept of internationalization and localization, not only singers and bands from the Chinese mainland and Taiwan participated in the performance, but also invited 35 groups of well-known overseas bands to join. Such as Swedish rock band "The Hives", British Trip-hop king Triky, Global Fashion singer Carly Rae Jepsen, etc.

2.2 Branding Strategies of Strawberry Music Festival

2.2.1 Brand communication

Brand communication refers to the strategy used by companies to communicate with their potential and existing customers using means such as social media and advertising. The purpose is to affect customers' perception of the brand and its significance [5].

An obvious feature of Strawberry Music Festival in brand communication is "symbolization", which is mainly reflected in the different themes of each festival. These themes are generally consistent with current fashion trends. For example, in 2019, "Recycling World" integrates the music festival with the theme of environmental protection, highlighting the concept of recycling, and jointly completes the theme with WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature). In the first three years, from 2009 to 2011, The poster depicts that the Strawberry Festival from birth to operation in space and created the concept of Strawberry Planet successfully.

The Strawberry Music Festival uses social media commonly used by young people, such as Weibo, Tieba, Douban etc, as its main media. However, there are still problems such as small transmission intensity and narrow transmission range. As for the community construction, most of the communities that Strawberry Festival audiences join are fans of performing artists, which depends on the audience's loyalty to the singers, but the audience who joined the community of Strawberry Music Festival are less, it mainly focuses on the functional content like ticket dealing, there is very little content of information sharing.

With the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic as a critical point, the offline performance market received a sharp impact. According to statistics from the China Performance Industry Association, as many as 8,000 projects were affected in 2020, with an estimated loss of 9-11 billion yuan in box office revenue, which rebounded in 2021, up 248.07% year on year, but still down 3.75% from 2019 [6]. Against this background, the Modern Sky launched an online program called "strawberry nebula" in 2020, set performances, interviews, interaction in one platform. In 2022, the overall recovery of offline performances is well, and the focus of the music performance business has also returned to the offline from online, so the future of "Strawberry Nebula" remains to be vague.

2.2.2 Brand extension

Brand stretching or brand extension is a kind of marketing strategy, usually means that a company utilizes the same brand name in several product categories when marketing a product with a fine image. With the increase in popularity of Strawberry Music festival, the sub-brand—Little Strawberry Parent-Child Music Festival has been derived. It Relies on the rapid-developed parent-child tourism industry, promotes the host tourism to create a characteristic city name card. Little Strawberry Music Festival can not only make families enjoy the pleasant atmosphere together, promote parent-child communication in busy life, but also help to enlighten children's perception of music through the wondrous experience. As a result, nearly 2,000 families participated in the first event. It makes a clear distinction with Strawberry Music Festival in targeting, defining the positioning through the differences within the same brand and attracting a wide range of age groups.

In addition, depending on the IP of Strawberry Music Festival, Modern Sky Music Company also launched the music variety program "Man from Strawberry Planet". During the free time of the

festival, more audiences can feel the unique brand charm of Strawberry Festival. It is also the first competition reality show that combines a music festival with a variety show, also gives many niche independent musicians the opportunity to stage on the Strawberry Festival. Meanwhile, the effect of the variety show "The Man from Strawberry Planet" can be reflected on the brand of Strawberry Music Festival and promote the development of Strawberry Music Festival.

Strawberry Festival emphasizes the integration of music with other content, when Strawberry Music Festival was founded in 2009, Modern Sky Music put forward the concept of "Music +". As for the embodiment of "music + leisure", modern sky launched "Strawberry Town". The most representative youth culture is taken as the overall development concept to create a new scene of youth culture consumption. It integrates various project modes such as live performance, creative market and interactive experience. Strawberry Town is more like a combination of art festival and theme park, various forms of leisure are merged into the town, which increases the diversity of on-site activities and brings richer experience to consumers. In the embodiment of "music + art", Strawberry Music Festival set up "Strawberry Star Art Hall", inviting celebrities and experts from various fields such as film and television, music, sports, etc to participate in the festival and host exchange activities with young people about music, photography, public welfare and some other topics. This kind of culture salon, which is in line with the taste of youth, provides a quiet humanistic care to the boiling music festival scene [7].

2.2.3 Brand management

With the rapid development of music festivals, during the Golden Week holiday, outdoor music festivals in China appear to cluster. At it worst, dozens of music festivals are taking place simultaneously across the country [8]. By summarizing the line-up invited to participate in Chinese music festivals in recent years, it can be found that many well-known domestic bands, such as New Pants Band, Tong Yang Band and Summer Invasion Project band, have participated in many music festivals in a year. Due to the large number of fans and high popularity of the band, many new music festival brands are more willing to choose such bands to expand the market and obtain short-term profits. Strawberry Music Festival also has homogeneity phenomenon in the performance lineup compared with other domestic music festivals, which reduces the competitiveness of the brand obviously. In addition, Strawberry Music Festival relies on the artist resources of Modern Sky Company, and the same artists will also appear in their other music festivals, so the performance lineup is not an outstanding advantage compared with them. In terms of music genre, unlike the MIDI Music Festival, which is dominated by rock music, Strawberry Music Festival chooses a combination of multiple music styles. The diversified stage and performances cater to audiences with different preferences, but there is a risk of turning the concert into a hors d'oeuvre concert.

In addition, as for the venue facilities, many participants feedback questions on social media as the lack of infrastructure, queues nearly an hour for toilets, volunteer service stations are not standardized, etc. All these problems will lead to the poor experience of consumers and damage the image of brand greatly, adverse to the benign development of the brand.

3. Discussion

There are many problems in the development of outdoor music festivals in China, such as serious homogeneity, few brand communication mode, difficulty in making profits, insufficient brand extension, etc. The solution of these problems is related to the sustainable development of Chinese music festivals and whether they can embark on the road of internationalization. Therefore, music festival brand should draw on the successful story of strong music festival brands, integrate and innovate the resources from the perspective of branding.

3.1 Avoid Homogenization

First of all, brand positioning and target groups should be clarified in the early stage of brand construction. Brand positioning should be analyzed according to the age, education background,

preference and location of target groups. Then the brand should clarify the target marketing and consumer persona, conduct precise marketing through market centralization, adopt the model of product specialization to accurately sell to the target market and create exclusive content. The music festival sponsored by the city pays attention to cultivating the artistic atmosphere of the city and the shaping of the local cultural image, those which sponsored by music companies lay emphasis to brand benefits and economic benefits. Different functional positioning also has different emphasis on the content and form of music festivals, which in favor of differentiation strategy of music festivals.

In China, in order to attract more audiences, many music festivals position themselves as comprehensive music festivals, most outdoor music festivals have multiple stages with different musical styles to accommodate the different musical preferences of the audience. However, this form causes the similarity of the performance lineup and the confusion of the performance rhythm, which makes it difficult to highlight the characteristics of the festival. "To be successful, a festival needs to establish its own style and build the brand around it. Without a unique style and investing in it blindly, you will not have a guaranteed box office, let alone sustain the vitality of the festival [9]." Therefore, the organizers can create music festivals with distinct themes and full of personality by segmenting the target market, use own advantages to attract a larger group of participants. As well, they can seek cooperation with popular IP in the early stage of brand development and combine IP with the theme of music festival. Lay a good foundation for the future independent development, acquire visibility to some extent.

3.2 Diversify Brand Communication

In terms of brand communication, the main reflect of music festival is reaching participants by what kind of scene and ways. The theme setting, brand identity and theme introduction of music festival can convey the brand image to the audience. The essential function of marketing and communication is to spread information to consumers and change consumers' perception of a product. Brands can conduct marketing through a variety of approaches, such as content marketing and emotional marketing.

In the aspect of content marketing, music festival content should be innovated to make it have special competitive advantages, so as to stimulate the audience's desire to participate. For music festivals, the target market is mainly subcultural youth group, which has strong particularity. Therefore, content output should be targeted, and different marketing content should be made according to market demand. On the other hand, it is necessary to conform to the social trend and formulate marketing themes in line with the trend to gain more social attention. Music festivals should proceed diversity management on a strategic level, innovate music festivals from the style, type, content to lineup of the performance.

As for the emotional marketing, brand could pay close attention to improving the audience's sense of experience to improve customers' loyalty to the brand. In recent years, in order to make brands connect more closely with individuals on an emotional level. Emotional marketing strategy is widely adopted, while traditional strategy are gradually replaced [10]. For this purpose, social media can be used to build a community of music festival brands, provide a place for communication, feedback and interaction. The organizers should attach importance to the information convey function of the community before the music festival, Including transportation routes, essential lists, site layout, precautions, etc. During the festival, participants are encouraged to share pictures and highlights of the festival in the community or on public social media through relevant activities designed in advance, so expand the online discussion of the music festival. After the festival, collect feedback in the community and send gifts to the audience who have made adoptable suggestions, summarized the shortcomings and proposed improvement measures in public. Produce the long tail effect and achieve the purpose of emotional marketing strategy.

In the rapid development of new media, it is essential to make full use of new forms of communication, such as Weibo, We-chat official accounts, video websites, etc. Brand communication channels should stress the combination of new technology and use real-time interactive methods to attract larger consumer groups and promote the application of O2O (Online to Offline) mode in music

festivals. In the context of the pandemic, majority of music festivals have had to be canceled because of local policies, which has resulted in many music fans missing out on opportunities to attend festivals. Digital convergence is changing the way people entertain and invading the territory of traditional forms of entertainment [11]. Cooperation with video platforms to carry out online live streaming of music festivals provides a way for music fans who can't attend the event to engage, people chat and interact with each other through live commentary, increasing their sense of engagement and presence. On the other hand, as the organizer, online live streaming is also contributed to brand communication and help increase the online discussion of the music festival.

3.3 Relying on Geographical Environment

Cultural industry should fully tap regional characteristic cultural resources to get competitive edge, and there is no exception in the development of music festival. Its positioning must be closely combined with the temperament and characteristics of the host city, which is more conducive to the establishment of the brand image of music festival. It is no exaggeration to say that culture is the name card of a city. In the continuous development and practice of tourism, the coincidence between culture and tourism is getting higher and higher [12]. For example, Japan Fuji Rock Festival is generally held in the forest far away from the city center, which is consistent with the theme of returning to nature. participants need to prepare hiking equipment and daily necessities. They can enjoy picnic, camping and music in the pure nature, and harvest the most unforgettable music festival experience. Precisely because of the perfect combination of the festival and the natural environment, Fuji Rock Festival has a unique appeal and become one of the three major music festivals in Japan. In China, The Zhang Bei Grassland Music Festival is also garnering a lot of attention for the vast grassland environment. One of the most prominent features that distinguishes outdoor music festival from concert is that it is deeply affected by geographical environment, which becomes the key element and determines the quality of the music festival.

On the contrary, the cultural development of the region also depends on the holding of music festivals or art festivals. Favored by young people, music festival has brought unprecedented levels of rapid development. According to online surveys, cities that have hosted music festivals give young people an impression of being "trendy and enthusiastic", and they will also be prioritized when choosing a place to work or visit in the future. From the perspective of urban creation, this shows that the active cooperation between the city and outdoor music festival brands is beneficial to the activation of city, improve the vitality of the city, and promote regional population mobility and economic development. Therefore, more attention should be paid to outdoor music festivals in plans to increase the cultural influence of cities. Local governments should consider that create city card through the utilization of local environmental characteristics, attract music festival brands to hold there. What's more, it is also important to encourage the development of local non-profit music festival, develop local music festival brand, and create a good cultural atmosphere in the city.

4. Conclusion

Music festivals are becoming more and more popular among young people and keep attracting their attention. The audience is also turning into more diverse than just fans of certain band. Under this circumstance, Music festivals not only need to carry out scientific management, focus on improving the overall professionalism of the team, but also should have a clear and comprehensive brand marketing path, scheme systematic maintenance and extension of brand, so as to create favorable conditions for the promotion of music festival and long-term development in music market. Strawberry Music Festival is a large-scale music festival brand in China. It performs its own brand characteristics in each stage of brand development, which has research and reference significance.

By analyzing the brand marketing methods of Strawberry Music Festival, this study summarizes several aspects worth paying attention to from the perspective of brand marketing. First of all, in brand positioning, it is necessary to keep the brand characteristics, subdivide market and clarify target group, carry out the development and promotion of the brand on the basis of precise positioning.

Secondly, in brand communication, brands can utilize a combined way to do the marketing. Content marketing should follow the trend and focus on the theme of music festival. It can attract audiences through innovative activities and inviting unique performance lineups and adopts different marketing content and placement for different audience groups. Emotional marketing aims to enhance the loyalty of the audience, it is essential to enrich their experience, pay attention to build brand community, and improve the communication between the audience and the host and the audience.

Outdoor music festivals are greatly influenced by the environment. Different types of music festivals should play different radiating roles in the region, drive the development of urban cultural industry, and enrich the overall cultural image of the region, which can exert a positive impact on the population of urban pop culture and the development of urban economy.

For the future music festival market. It is still a challenge for music festivals to highlight the brand effect and occupy the market share in the fierce market competition of music festivals. In addition, according to the different characteristics of different types of music festivals, different brand marketing paths should be developed to adapt to the changes in the music festival market and summarize the brand marketing paths suitable for a certain type of music festivals.

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