

Jellycat Brand Marketing Strategy Analysis - Based on 4I Marketing Theory

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Abstract

Jellycat, as a leader in the high-end soft toy market, has won wide popularity and recognition from global consumers for its unique design, excellent quality and innovative marketing strategies. The article aims to deeply analyse the successful marketing strategy of Jellycat brand in the world, using the 4I marketing theory proposed by Don Schultz, i.e. Interesting, Interests, Interaction, Individuality, as an analytical framework, to explore the reasons behind the brand's global explosion, and to respond to the consumption of the young people in the contemporary world. As a framework of analysis, we discuss the reasons behind the brand's global explosion and reflect the consumption status of modern youth.

Keywords

Jellycat ; Plush toys; 4I ; Brand marketing.

1. Introduction

The plush toy industry, as an important part of the toy market, is driven by the development of the new economy and globalisation. In recent years, consumers' demand for plush toys is no longer limited to traditional styles and functions, but more on the diversification and personalisation aspects of the products. More and more developers are combining with famous IPs to make secondary innovations in play, style, and design to satisfy more consumers. Jellycat, a luxury soft toy brand from London, UK, has successfully broken the traditional plush toy industry with its founders William Gatacre and Thomas Gatacre's deep insight into the plush toy industry and unlimited creativity. With their deep insight into the plush toy industry and unlimited creativity, the brand's founders, William Gatacre and Thomas Gatacre, have successfully broken the limitations of the traditional plush toy market and built Jellycat into one of the world's largest luxury soft toy companies. 2021, Jellycat's sales on Tmall exceeded 100 million members, a year-on-year increase of 47.1 per cent, and it ranked number one in the sales ranking of the plush toy category, and the number of Jellycat-related topic views and plays on Xiaohongshu and Shake Tone were 690 million and 570 million, respectively. 690 million and 570 million. Under the background of the increasing pressure of urban life and changing concepts of marriage and love, the new generation of young people, especially the post-95 and post-00 groups, need more and more physical and mental companionship and spiritual comfort after work. Therefore, the market demand for plush toys, as a kind of companion that can bring warmth and comfort, continues to rise. In a way, because of stress and anxiety, the market size of the healing economy is expanding globally, and emotional resonance, emotional value, and emotional creativity have prompted emotional marketing to become one of the most important ways of brand marketing[1]. Players and plush toys are expected to further expand the user scale of Jellycat with the gradual increase in social pressure and the shift in consumer behavioural preferences.

2. 4I theory analysis

4I theory is an emerging marketing theory, which was first proposed by Don Schultz, the originator of American integrated marketing communication theory, at the beginning of the 21st century, which is based on Internet thinking and emphasises the new principles of marketing activities in the new media environment[2]. 4I represents respectively: Interesting principles, Interests, Interaction and Individuality. With the popularity of the Internet and new media, all people have entered the "entertainment era", so advertising and marketing activities must be entertaining and interesting to effectively attract the attention of consumers [3]; at the same time, marketing activities must provide real benefits and value for the target audience. At the same time, marketing activities must provide real benefits and value for the target audience, so that enterprises can attract and retain consumers, thus improving the marketing effect; the interactivity of the network environment allows consumers to participate more in marketing activities. Enterprises can establish an equal interactive relationship with consumers through social media, online platforms and other channels to understand consumer needs and feedback, adjust marketing strategies promptly, and enhance user satisfaction and loyalty; Today, consumers' personalised needs are becoming more and more obvious. Nowadays, consumers' personalised demands are becoming more and more obvious. Enterprises need to satisfy consumers' diversified demands through personalised marketing and customised services, and it is easier to arouse consumers' interaction and purchase behaviour by letting them feel unique attention and satisfaction.

3. Jellycat's marketing strategy is based on the 4I theory

3.1. Jellycat is based on the principle of Interesting marketing

3.1.1. Creative design to enhance brand recognition

Jellycat's founders, William Gatacre and Thomas Gatacre, brothers, in the establishment of the brand, are determined to break the traditional plush toy market restrictions, they are not satisfied with the production of teddy bears. They were not satisfied with just producing teddy bears, so they changed their design style to give the dolls "life", rather than just a simple replica of the animal. Therefore, Jellycat's dolls are designed to be fashionable and anthropomorphic, each doll has its unique expression and personality, such as the iconic bean-eyed smiley face, which makes the dolls look more vivid and cute. This design not only attracts children's love but also wins the favour of adult consumers. Meanwhile, the brand uses high-quality plush materials to ensure the softness and comfort of the products to satisfy consumers' pursuit of the products. Jellycat launched the Amuseable series in 2018, which paints smiley faces on green plants, sports equipment, food, drinks and other otherwise inanimate objects with no life or senses, adding limbs to make these items lively and interesting. These diversified product lines cover almost all the scenarios of consumers' lives to meet different consumer needs. This innovative design series quickly became one of the brand's most popular products. This creative design not only makes the product itself full of fun, but also quickly catches consumers' eyes through visual attraction, and these creative elements are repeatedly emphasised, enhancing the brand's recognition and memory.

3.1.2. Content marketing gives emotional value

Jellycat enhances fun through content marketing and storytelling. The brand regularly publishes interesting product-related stories, user sharing and other content, which not only enriches the brand image but also stimulates consumers' curiosity and sense of participation. The brand name "Jellycat" was inspired by a child's dream about two seemingly unrelated items, a jelly and a cat. The child dreamed of both "jelly" and "cat" at the same time, two seemingly unrelated objects. Upon awakening, the child was amused by the idea of combining the two

phrases and found it both quirky and hilarious. This story reached the founders of the Jellycat brand, who were touched by this innocence and creativity and decided to use "Jellycat" as the brand name, signifying the combination of the product's softness, such as jelly, with the cute animal image of a cat. Not only the brand name, Jellycat also set up an exclusive name and story background for each doll, creating its unique product brochure, and at the same time giving the dolls personalised stories such as Barcelo Bear is set up as a soft bedtime companion, and Bonnie Rabbit is more nocturnal and sleepy, more timid and easy to frighten, and gentle but poorer in living in a group. This anthropomorphic treatment not only increases the emotional value of the product, so that consumers feel more fun in the process of use.

3.2. Jellycat's marketing is based on the principle of Interests

3.2.1. High quality establishes a brand image

Jellycat pays great attention to the selection of materials and craftsmanship of its products and is committed to providing safety and comfort at the level of mother and baby products, ensuring that each product meets high-quality standards. On the official website of Jellycat for the "safety and comfort" listed in a separate column, its brand selection of raw materials has passed the European Union's CE certification, the European Union EN safety toy standards and the United States ASTM toy testing standards, meaning that newborn babies can be used. This insistence on quality allows consumers to use the process to obtain substantial benefits, that is, a safe and comfortable-to-use experience. Therefore, the professional endorsement of quality gives the Jellycat brand a good image in the minds of the public to attract a large number of consumers in pursuit of quality of life to pay for it.

3.2.2. Create exclusive IP focusing on the healing economy

In the 1930s, Nannenbergh put forward the concept of "art healing", under her impetus, art healing gradually developed in the United States, and rapidly extended to other countries [4]. Today's consumption pattern has shifted, it no longer meets the physiological needs of economic behaviour, and more and more shows the spiritual level of self-pursuit and the value of the meaning of life to achieve personality attributes [5]. Therefore, the brand makes use of the healing properties of plush toys to capture the pain points of consumers. The soft nature of plush toys can make people feel warmth and healing, and at the same time, the brand creates exclusive brand IP through the manufacture of exclusive brochures and profiles, showing that the soft attributes of the brand have gradually become the emotional support and solace of consumers [6]. Perfectly hit the emotional economy, companion economy, healing economy, and loneliness economy Jellycat through social media and other channels to interact with consumers, encouraging consumers to share their own stories with the product, the formation of word-of-mouth communication. Consumers also carry out secondary creations based on the anthropomorphic attributes of the product, such as making emoticons, which further enhance the brand's popularity and influence.

3.2.3. Limited models create its collection value

Jellycat is a well-known plush toy brand, its product line not only contains regular models but also often launches a variety of limited models of toys, these limited models are often highly sought after because of their unique design, limited edition or co-branding cooperation with well-known brands. These limited edition toys not only have a high degree of ornamental but also because of their scarcity and uniqueness have a certain collector's value. For example, the Beastie Boys and Jellycat's 520 Limited Edition Flower Boxes have soared to tens of thousands of dollars on the internet, and Jellycat has also launched limited edition toys in collaboration with other well-known brands such as Disney and Starbucks, which are often a combination of the characteristic elements of the two brands, with innovative and creative designs. The limited edition is also accompanied by its scarcity and uniqueness, its brand through a fixed category +

limited edition model, to inspire consumers to hunt for the psychology of the original driving force of psychology and thus passionate order.

3.3. Jellycat's marketing based on the principle of interactivity

3.3.1. Media interaction enhances marketing attributes

Jellycat actively interacts with users on social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok, replying to comments, liking and sharing, and organising online activities, all of which are places where young people and families gather. By posting content on these platforms, Jellycat can directly reach its target consumers and connect with them. The brand also frequently organises various interactive activities on social media, such as lucky draws and topic challenges. These activities not only increase user engagement and stickiness but also encourage users to share and spread the brand's message through reward mechanisms. The brand also encourages users to share their stories, photos and other content with the dolls and display and promote them on the official platform. In total, more than 18 users have shared their daily lives with Jellycat, and the number of plays on related topics on short video platforms has reached 3,000 plays, such as "Jellycat" with a "black eye" and a subtle curve of the corner of the mouth that is just right. These designs release emotions from the perspective of the workers, allowing people to look at the doll to create the perception that the doll understands them well, and instantly feel empathy. This kind of UGC marketing not only enriches the brand's content ecosystem but also stimulates users' enthusiasm for creation and desire to share.

3.3.2. Online and offline omnichannel contacts to enhance penetration

In addition to the official website, Jellycat opened a flagship shop on Tmall International in 2015, and opened flagship shops on Jingdong and Kaola in 2018, creating convenient conditions for consumers to create their "kryptonite" without opening a shop on Xiaohongshu to place an order for the notes released by the brand, further reducing the steps and difficulty of consumers' purchasing behaviour, and achieving a greater probability of purchasing. The steps and difficulty of the consumer's purchasing behaviour are further reduced, and a greater probability of achieving even sales conversion. Not only is the social media platform, but the brand also in Tmall, Jingdong, Xiaohongshu and WeChat small programs and other online channels to set up flagship shops, multi-channel marketing has greatly increased the brand's flexibility and scalability. Meanwhile, the brand has also set up retail shops in various cities across China, such as 21 in Shanghai, 44 in Beijing and 14 in Chengdu, and organises offline exhibitions from time to time to allow consumers to experience the charm of the products and have face-to-face interactions with the brand.

3.4. Jellycat's marketing is based on the principle of individuality

3.4.1. Diversified product lines provide room for choice

Jellycat offers a diversified product line of plush toys in different shapes, colours and themes to meet the individual needs of different consumers. Consumers can choose the right products according to their preferences and needs. Jellycat's product line covers a wide range of categories, including but not limited to animal series, holiday series, cartoon character series, etc. Under these series, there are many sub-series. These series in turn contain numerous sub-series and individual products, forming a huge SKU system, which enables Jellycat to continuously bring freshness and surprises to consumers. For example, the Bonnie Rabbit series, which is one of the most classic series of Jellycat, is loved by consumers for its soft material and cute shape. Under the Bonnie Bunny series, there are also a variety of products, such as Shy Bonnie Bunny, Flower Fabric Bonnie Bunny, etc., numbering up to more than 90 types. There are also plush toys with different shapes and stories, such as working boy, plant pots and so on. By constantly launching new and creative toy products and meeting the needs

of consumers of different age groups and preferences, Jellycat has won wide recognition and affection in the plush toy market.

3.4.2. Customisation services increase exclusivity:

Jellycat's customisation service allows consumers to add personalised elements to selected dolls, comforters and other items, such as embroidering names, and choosing specific colours or fonts, according to their personal preferences and needs. For example, consumers can choose to have their name or special message embroidered on the ears of a rabbit or other doll to add uniqueness and memorability to the doll. There are also products such as customised soothing towels, which add to the exclusive nature of the customer, thus adding to user stickiness. Jellycat pays attention to detail and creativity when designing dolls so that each doll has a distinctive personality and character. This design concept combined with the customisation service makes the final product not only highly exclusive but also full of fun and artistry. Jellycat's customisation service successfully increases the exclusive nature of the product and satisfies consumers' pursuit of personalisation and uniqueness.

4. Summary

At a time when anxiety has become the undercurrent of the times, the younger generation is immersed in the flattening, fragmentation and non-presence of social interactions, which has led to the need for them to withdraw from high-pressure environments, and the companionship economy, which can alleviate loneliness, is undoubtedly a windfall in a several subsectors that has given them support in disguise. Jellycat has seized this windfall, driving spiritual consumption with healing and warmth as the underlining theme. It has indulged many consumers, and at the same time, it has become an important expression for contemporary young people to share their tastes, personalities and lifestyles.

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