

Huawei's Brand Rejuvenation Strategy Analysis on the Rednote Platform

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Abstract

In the era of digital marketing, social e-commerce platforms have become an important tool for brands to reach young consumers. In the increasingly competitive market, all major brands are striving to attract young consumers, especially Gen Z which is proficient in technology and has social awareness. As a leading technology company in China, Huawei actively implements the brand revival strategy to enhance its appeal among Gen Z consumers. Rednote (Xiaohongshu) is a social e-commerce platform that is deeply loved by young Chinese consumers. This study highlights the advantages and challenges of Huawei's smartphone marketing activities on the Rednote platform, and explores issues such as product positioning, consumer engagement, and the need for emotional resonance. Although Huawei smartphones have achieved success in leveraging key opinion leaders and influencer marketing, they still face significant challenges in how to align with Gen Z's values, demonstrate authenticity, assume social responsibilities, and achieve environmental sustainability. This study focuses on analyzing Huawei's Brand Rejuvenation strategy. The improvement suggestions include enhancing the emotional connection of the brand, promoting sustainable development, and adopting a more personalized product supply method to adapt to the constantly changing preferences of Gen Z.

Keywords

Social E-commerce Platform, Brand Rejuvenation, Rednote, Huawei Smartphones, Generation.

1. Introduction

In today's increasingly competitive market, brands are striving to connect with young consumers who are more proficient in digital technology and have a stronger sense of society. With the gradual decay of traditional advertisement methods, new social e-commerce sites such as Rednote have brought in an effective way by which Huawei phones can talk to Gen Z. Such platforms involve content generation, user recommendation, and shopping functionalities, thereby facilitating a genuine brand-customer interaction with Gen Z. Considering this scenario, Brand Rejuvenation has become an integral strategy for brands to look to reinvent themselves and bring themselves in consonance with new consumerism tenets. Huawei, renowned for its innovation and advanced technologies, has invested heavily in brand rejuvenation to attract the younger generation. But there is a critical gap regarding how Chinese tech firms utilize the domestic social e-commerce platform to undertake Brand Rejuvenation, especially in the case of long-standing domestic firms like Huawei. Relatively little research has been done on how the firms use tools like Rednote to reboot their branding strategies to fit the unique needs of Gen Z consumers. This article aims to critically evaluate Huawei's brand rejuvenation strategy, with particular attention to the effectiveness and challenges of its marketing activities on

Rednote, such as "Huawei P60 - This is rococo pearl" [1]. "Huawei Nova Flip" [2] and "Huawei Pura X & Rednote REDGALA"[3]. By analyzing the advantages and challenges of these activities, this study will provide practical insights into how Huawei can enhance brand interaction with young consumers.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Social E-commerce and Brand Rejuvenation

Social E-commerce refers to the promotion and sale of products or services through social media platforms. It enables enterprises and customers to interact directly, thereby bringing a directly shopping experience to the social networks commonly used by users. This, in turn, can enhance customer reach, engagement and conversion rate [4]. Social e-commerce combines social network functions with online shopping, enabling brands to establish closer relationships with consumers. Research shows that Gen Z is more inclined towards those brands that attach importance to authenticity, undertake social responsibilities, and value brand values [5]. For brands aiming to attract young audiences, this model is crucial as it offers a direct, informal and interactive way to reach out to the young consumer group. In addition, social media influencers have become a powerful driver of consumers' cognition, preferences and engagement. Influencers shape their public image through strategic self-branding, attract fans and trigger interaction [6].

As enterprises develop, brand customers and target audiences may change. brand rejuvenation aims to restore the brand's reputation and make it resonate with modern audiences. Brand revival aims to reposition a company's brand image to attract new target markets or adapt to the rapidly changing market landscape [7]. This means that it is necessary to re-examine aspects such as the core values of the brand, brand messages and the overall customer experience. Therefore, the brand rejuvenation strategy should not only attach importance to young consumers but also combine the brand's values and communication style with the cultural trends and digital behaviors of this group.

2.2. Characteristics of Rednote and its User Behavior

Rednote is one of the most popular social e-commerce platforms in China, characterized by the combination of user-generated content (UGC) and online shopping [8]. This platform enables users to share life experiences, product reviews and personal stories, creating an extremely attractive environment for brands to promote their products. According to Deep digital China[9], the Rednote platform will provide more shopping recommendations based on users' social circles, such as goods shared by friends. Functions such as likes and comments will become important references for users' purchasing decisions. Brands can enhance conversion rates by interacting with content creators and leveraging the "social + e-commerce" model. The user group of Rednote is mainly young people, and a large proportion of them belong to Gen Z [10]. Rednote emphasizes community recommendations. Compared with traditional advertising, users trust their peers and influential key opinion leaders (Kols) more. Therefore, brands that want to succeed on Rednote must understand the importance of the relevance, authenticity and emotional resonance of their content.

2.3. Huawei's Brand Rejuvenation Strategy

In recent years, Huawei has demonstrated strong resilience and innovation capabilities in the global technology industry. Since 2019, Huawei has been subject to a global technology blockade by the United States, which has led to a temporary decline in its market share in the smartphone sector. To address this challenge, Huawei has increased its investment in independent research and development, especially in the fields of chip manufacturing and operating systems. In 2024, Huawei launched a brand-new operating system - HarmonyOS Next,

marking its independence in the field of operating systems [11]. Despite facing technological restrictions from the United States and competitive pressure from the international market, Huawei has still reshaped its brand image and promoted diversified business development through strategic transformation and technological autonomy.

Huawei smartphones reshape their brand image by establishing strategic partnerships with Kols, inviting celebrities to endorse their products, and launching digital-first marketing campaigns. Li Xing emphasized that it is crucial to understand the unique characteristics and consumption behaviors of Gen Z in the digital age. He pointed out that Gen Z is the first generation that grew up with digital media and they have unique consumption preferences and behaviors. Brands must pay attention to these preferences and behaviors[12]. Huawei emphasizes cutting-edge technology, design aesthetics and functionality, all of which are highly attractive to young consumers who are proficient in technology. However, there are also criticisms suggesting that Huawei's marketing often lacks a genuine emotional connection with Gen Z and focuses too much on product functions while neglecting the experiences or values that can resonate with young consumers [13]. Huawei's brand rejuvenation strategy must address the growing values such as social responsibility, environmental sustainability and authenticity, which are crucial to the purchasing decisions of Gen Z.

3. Case Studies: Huawei's Marketing Campaigns on Rednote

3.1. Huawei P60 – “This is Rococo Pearl”

Huawei's promotional activities for smartphones on Rednote usually revolve around product launches, influencer promotion, and interactive content that encourages user participation. For instance, in 2023, Huawei launched the new P60 series and introduced a new color -rococo pearl. The brand held the new product marketing campaign "This is rococo pearl" on the Rednote platform. By observing consumption trends, quickly establish consumers' perception of new products through life scenarios. This marketing campaign chose the coffee scene, which is in line with the artistic temperament of the product. The target audience often appears in the coffee scene and can establish cognitive associations through the atmosphere of the scene. For instance, placing a P60 mobile phone in a coffee shop, its appearance echoes the exquisite feel of the coffee scene, allowing consumers to naturally develop a favorable impression of the phone while enjoying their coffee, thus laying the foundation for customer group cognition. The current young generation is passionate about coffee culture. The event takes coffee as its entry point, catering to the preferences of the target users and enhancing their attention and acceptance of the event content. Huawei launched related topic activities online, with over 20 million views, attracting public participation and achieving exposure of new products. Offline collaboration with coffee stores has created theme coffee shops, launched customized peripheral products, and maintained continuous activity popularity, achieving marketing success. In addition, for this marketing campaign, Huawei avoided the conventional marketing of hardcore technology and professional configuration, emphasizing the advantages of the phone's color and appearance, making it easier for users to accept and share, and thus forming a communication advantage [1].

3.2. Huawei Nova Flip

To promote the new generation of smart phone Nova Flip, Huawei and Rednote jointly created a limited-time pop-up event in Guangzhou, attracting young consumers, especially the fashion trends group, through experiential marketing. This marketing campaign mainly focuses on experiential marketing, integrates the new lifestyle of fashion trends, and stimulates the in-depth participation of UGC. The event invites celebrities to join, combines product highlights with fashion trends life, focuses on specific themes, and creates a fashion trends district from

multiple dimensions. The event lasted for 12 days, attracting 600,000 to 800,000 participants. It spread on multiple social media platforms in China, with a cumulative exposure of over 200 million and a reading volume of over 143 million. Kols and KOCs produced over 300 high-quality notes on Rednote [2].

3.3. Huawei Pura X & RedNote REDGALA

During the Spring Festival of 2025, the cooperation event between Rednote's REDGALA Spring opening Ceremony and Huawei Pura X stood out in terms of content presentation, brand marketing and user interaction. This event is held in Hangzhou. It takes advantage of the beautiful scenery of West Lake in March to create water red carpet and other elements, creating a sense of life scenes. The event leverages celebrity hotspots to leave social discussion topics for viewers. Many real UGCs have driven the event to attract attention, and topics such as #RednoteREDGALA have received 1.45 billion views. Huawei Pura X breaks the traditional aspect ratio of mobile phones. Its 16:10 wide screen is compatible with the content format of Rednote. During the event, Huawei Pura X was naturally integrated through forms such as celebrity catwalks and setting up giant installations. The product is no longer an isolated commodity but integrates into life scenarios, making it easier for the audience to accept. Rednote brought the community atmosphere within the site to the event site. Through the Spring Garden Party, it enabled brands to establish connections with users. Each brand had a unique storyline, enhancing users' sense of participation and interaction [3].

4. Discussion

4.1. Challenges

First of all, while Huawei P60's marketing campaign on Rednote made full use of KOL influence and experiential marketing, and focused on appearance, it didn't showcase enough of the P60's powerful imaging system, BeiDou satellite messaging and other powerful features. It is difficult for users to fully understand the value of the product, which may affect the purchasing decisions of consumers who pursue functionality. In addition, this event focused on young people who are passionate about a refined lifestyle and coffee culture, while neglecting other potential consumer groups, such as men who are more interested in technological functions and consumers who pay attention to cost performance, which restricted the market expansion of the product[1].

The marketing campaign of Huawei Nova Flip is mainly aimed at attracting the young consumer group. The product price of the mobile phone ranges from ¥5,288 to ¥6,488. For some people in this group, the price is relatively high, resulting in the target group being attracted by the campaign but not purchasing due to the price. This marketing campaign of Huawei Nova Flip has deficiencies in many aspects. These problems have affected the effect of the campaign and also posed certain obstacles to the promotion of the product. Furthermore, the event has attracted a great deal of attention and discussion, but the handling of consumer feedback was not timely. For instance, issues such as the fragile screen, creases, and configuration doubts of the product have been frequently mentioned on social media platforms, but the official has not effectively responded to or resolved them. If this continues for a long time, negative reviews will accumulate, affecting the brand image and subsequent product promotion [2].

Huawei Pura X & Rednote REDGALA, although the event invited many celebrities and Kols, the number of on-site participants might still be limited and unable to meet the demand of many users for offline participation. Moreover, the gathering of many people may lead to a poor on-site experience, such as congestion and long queuing times. Despite the high exposure of the event, with 3.5 million views on the live stream and nearly 200 hot topics on social media platforms, it is difficult to precisely measure the actual commercial conversion effect of the

brand. For example, it is difficult to precisely know the sales growth of Huawei Pura X after the event, and it is difficult to judge the direct promotion effect of the event on sales[3].

Furthermore, many smart phone brands have carried out different marketing activities on the Rednote platform. For example, vivo has collaborated with Rednote to launch the vivo X200 Pro mini phone. These marketing activities pose challenges to Huawei smartphones in terms of market share, product awareness, and user attention. Huawei smartphones need to adopt a differentiation strategy and continuously optimize the brand rejuvenation strategy on the Rednote platform to maintain the market advantage.

4.2. Comparison with Competitors

Huawei's principal competitors on the Rednote platform include Apple and Xiaomi, which wield considerable influence. Apple has been highly successful in establishing itself as a lifestyle brand, with an emphasis on user experience, emotional engagement, and innovation, all of which have powerfully appealed to young consumers. Secondly, from smartphones through wearable devices to services, Apple's product ecosystem has been tightly integrated to offer a compelling value proposition regarding usability and design aesthetics[14].

Xiaomi has attracted the attention of Gen Z with its highly competitive prices and best-class technology, making it an ideal choice for young consumers who want affordable prices without sacrificing performance. Although Huawei focuses on high-end technologies, the convenience and low prices offered by Xiaomi generate some competition for Huawei. Xiaomi has managed to strike a balance between quality and price, which is very attractive to young consumers [15].

4.3. Adaptability to Gen Z Consumer Behavior on RedNote

Gen Z users on Rednote are attracted by genuine, life-related and community-oriented content. This platform focuses on user-generated content (UGC), which has cultivated a sense of trust and connection among its audience mainly composed of young urban women. According to [10], approximately 50% of Rednote's 300 million monthly active users come from Gen Z, and a large proportion of them live in first- and second-tier cities in China. The platform has over 80 million community sharers, with user-generated content (UGC) accounting for 90%. Huawei's interaction with Gen Z consumers on Rednote reflects its strategic adaptation to the unique ecosystem of this platform, which is characterized by the integration of social interaction and e-commerce. This strategy aligns with Gen Z's preference for genuine, community-driven content and shopping experiences.

4.4. Recommendations for Improvement

Despite Huawei's efforts, it still faces challenges in fully aligning the values of Gen Z on Rednote to achieve brand rejuvenation. The community-driven nature of this platform requires brands to engage in genuine interaction and offer value beyond product promotion. Gen Z consumers seek brands that can demonstrate social responsibility and authenticity. They pay attention to the brand's performance in environmental protection, social welfare and other aspects, and hope that the brand can make achievements in these fields [16]. Huawei can release contents related to sustainable development, public welfare activities, etc. through Rednote to demonstrate the brand's sense of social responsibility, thereby enhancing the emotional connection with Gen Z.

Gen Z is skeptical of traditional advertising and prefers to trust recommendations from peers, KOCs and Kols. Huawei should encourage user-generated content (UGC) and collaborate with KOCs and Kols to publish genuine usage experiences and evaluations in order to enhance the credibility and affinity of the content [17]. Meanwhile, Gen Z pursues a personalized and diversified lifestyle and likes to showcase himself through social platforms. Huawei can attract the attention and participation of Gen Z by launching customized products and marketing activities in combination with the lifestyle and culture that Gen Z loves.

Brands with stories and emotions are more likely to attract Gen Z consumers. 83% of Chinese Gen Z discovered products through Rednote, and users spent more than 45 minutes browsing reviews and tutorials every day[18]. Huawei can enhance the emotional value of its brand by telling its history, culture and the stories behind it. In addition, Huawei can incorporate emotional elements into product promotion, demonstrating how the products improve users' lives and enhance their emotional experiences. Gen Z's loyalty to the brand is based on a good user experience. Huawei should constantly optimize the quality and performance of its products and enhance the user experience. At the same time, a complete after-sales service system should be established to respond promptly to users' feedback and suggestions and enhance users' satisfaction and loyalty. Huawei could consider establishing online communities on social media platforms. According to Cheng et al. [19], in the digital age, enhancing customer loyalty is a key focus for marketers, as online communities have become an important platform for leveraging relationship-building strategies to cultivate brand loyalty. Through the above measures, Huawei can better adapt to the consumption behavior and psychological needs of Gen Z, establish a deep emotional connection with Gen Z, and thereby achieve brand rejuvenation and long-term development.

5. Conclusion

Huawei smartphones actively promote brand rejuvenation through a series of marketing activities on the Rednote. However, although Huawei has made efforts in this process, it still faces many challenges. Gen Z pays far more attention to authenticity, social responsibility and brand values than traditional product function displays. During the process of brand rejuvenation, Huawei needs to pay more attention to the emotional resonance with Gen Z, strengthen the brand's sense of social responsibility and sustainable development concept, and enhance user participation and interactivity. In addition, although Huawei's marketing activities have achieved certain market responses by collaborating with Kols and KOCs and leveraging the social e-commerce model of the Rednote platform, compared with competitors like Apple and Xiaomi, Huawei's brand positioning still requires deeper innovation, especially in terms of price, product diversity, and consumer experience. Huawei pays attention to the demands of Gen Z for personalization and lifestyle and further optimizes its products and services to enhance its long-term connection with the younger group.

This study is limited to Huawei's smartphone marketing behavior on the Rednote platform and doesn't involve consumers' attitudes using the primary research. Subsequent studies can introduce consumer surveys or interviews to discuss the Generation Z's attitude towards Huawei's Brand Rejuvenation strategy in-depth or conduct comparative studies of different platforms like Douyin for more well-rounded understanding of Huawei's Brand Rejuvenation strategy.

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