

Research on Marketing Strategy of Zhongshuge Physical Bookstore Based on 5A Consumption Path

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Abstract: *In recent years, under the strong influence of Internet economy and epidemic factors, Zhongshuge Bookstore is facing greater challenges than before. In order for Zhongshuge Bookstore to strengthen its relationship with readers, it must establish and improve the readers' omni-channel seamless experience, and appropriate marketing strategies have become an important part of the store to get out of the predicament. Based on the case study method, theoretical deduction method, literature research method and other relevant research methods, this paper analyzes the development process, marketing status and existing problems of Zhongshuge Bookstore, combines the 5A consumption path theory, and analyzes the marketing strategy of Zhongshuge Bookstore from five aspects of cognition, appeal, inquiry, action and advocacy, and studies the marketing mode of Zhongshuge Bookstore. And the article provides some countermeasures for the sustainable development of Zhongshuge.*

Keywords: *5A consumption path; Zhong Shuge; Marketing strategy*

1. Introduction

In recent years, due to the impact of COVID-19, the average daily customer flow of many physical bookstores such as Zhongshuge has gradually declined. At the same time, the future development prospect and direction are also showing an uncertain development trend due to the change of the epidemic, the continuous change of transmission means and control methods. In the face of this problem, Zhongshuge Bookstore took its own rescue and defense measures, based on the "5A consumption path" theory of marketing strategy, through the reengineering mechanism, with consumers and users as the center, the business model of physical bookstore changed from a weak brand single profit model to a high brand diversified profit model.

The main research purpose of this paper is to take Zhongshuge physical Bookstore as an example, combined with the "5A consumption path" and other related theoretical research as the analysis framework, to study the current marketing strategy of Zhongshuge physical bookstore. On the one hand, the marketing strategy of Zhongshuge and its reasons are studied. Based on the "5A consumption path" theory, the marketing strategy of Zhongshuge is analyzed and studied from five aspects from the perspective of consumers, so as to reshape the value of bookstores and the suggestions of collaborative channels and integrated development, and keep up with the consumption behavior patterns of various readers under the background of the new era. On the other hand, several optimization strategies are given based on the 5A theory. Through the problems exposed by the marketing mode of Zhongshuge Bookstore in the difficult situation of the epidemic, the corresponding analysis of the 5A consumption path theory to find out the market challenges faced by the bookstore, the challenges of marketing mode and other aspects of the countermeasures are given.

This paper mainly uses three research methods. 1. Case study method. The specific case of Zhongshuge Physical Bookstore is used to illustrate the problem. 2. Theoretical deduction method. Tracing the relevant research methods and results can provide theoretical basis for the topic selection and analysis of the paper, and has an inspirational effect on the research methods. 3. Literature research method. The author employs literature review to obtain relevant information such as "physical bookstore" and "5A consumption path", thus comprehensively and accurately understanding a method of Zhongshuge physical bookstore's marketing strategy.

2. Introduction of 5A consumption path theory

Philip Kotler (2017) defined 5A and redefined the customer experience path as 5A: Aware, Appeal, Ask, Act and Advocate in Marketing ^[1]4.0 published on the basis of values, connection, big data, community and new generation of analysis technology. The 5A consumption path theory mainly focuses on the transformation path from the perspective of consumers, focusing on the positive interaction between users and brands, two-way communication between different consumers, and consumers' attitudes and actions towards brands. It advocates brands to pay attention to marketing, improve the experience of consumption for bookstore brands, improve the focus of contact between brands and consumers, and make consumer behavior qualitative.

Now in the Internet era, the 5A consumption path is considered as one of the main theories of a company's content marketing. The 5A model is more from the perspective of users to look at the transformation path, which is also applicable to the physical bookstore industry, which is a transformation from managing books to managing readers. This paper uses the 5A consumption path theory to study the marketing strategy of Zhongshuge Bookstore, so as to explore some inspiration and enlightenment for the future development of physical bookstores.

3. The development process of Zhongshuge physical bookstore

The first stage: bookstore period (1955-2012). Zhongshuge Bookstore mainly relied on offline sales of traditional bookstores, mainly dealing in teaching and auxiliary books. Zhongshuge Bookstore began to transform itself from a business, gaining a reputation among consumers for its high-quality service, as well as the consent of regional district and county schools and libraries. In addition, Zhongshuge Bookstore provides book group purchase and delivery services for various companies, which has also become the characteristics of Zhongshuge Library purchase. The second stage: the rise of Zhongshuge brand (2012-2020). During this period, the traditional bookstore model was redefined, and Zhongshuge Bookstore began to shift from the traditional bookstore business model to the compound business model. With the goal of "the most beautiful bookstore", Zhongshuge Bookstore opened chain branches in major cities across the country, and stepped into the road of comprehensive cultural space and platform transformation. The third stage: the current outbreak continues in 2020. Seriously affected by the epidemic, physical bookstores are facing the problem of poor operation due to the decrease of customers. Zhongshuge has gradually paid attention to reading book services, focusing on building bookstores with books as the center, laying the foundation of reading services, online and offline as the whole, and stabilizing the flow of customers, so as to carry out self-help and help.

4. Analysis of marketing status and problems of Zhongshuge based on 5A consumption path

Based on the analysis framework of 5A consumption path, this part will analyze the marketing status and problems of Zhongshuge from five aspects: cognition stage, appeal stage, inquiry stage, action stage and advocacy stage.

4.1. Cognition stage

Build brand image to improve reader awareness. Cognition is consumers' first impression and impression of the brand value of an enterprise, so many physical bookstores will use more funds to choose the location and store design, so as to attract more consumers to the bookstore for consumption. Zhongshuge Bookstores adopt the business model of "chain but not copy". Each Zhongshuge will do a good job of preliminary research according to different locations and environments^[2].

At the same time, Zhongshuge is not only limited to reading, but also carries out diversified and compound management. In the process of business, Zhongshuge has set up different areas for reading and leisure, such as providing coffee drinks and cultural and creative sales services in the store to meet readers' learning and leisure needs. By using the shape and mirror features of books, it opens the public's aesthetic cognition of bookstores, and makes the brand value of bookstores meet the spiritual needs of customers through design, so as to improve consumers' cognition of Zhongshuge Bookstores rooted in people's hearts.

4.2. The stage of appeal

4.2.1. Current situation: Create a live experience to attract readers' attention

In order to attract more readers, multi-format marketing mode has become the mainstream of Zhongshuge Bookstore's development:

First of all, Zhongshuge Bookstore combined with the needs of consumers around the store decoration design. Book products and mirror design are used to carefully plan the reading function zone, store books, and perfectly integrate the local cultural characteristics and natural scenery into the bookstore, so as to stimulate the emotional resonance of consumers, and shape the life style of space aesthetics to lead customers^[3].

Secondly, diversified operation of "bookstore +" mode. Zhongshuge has promoted three main lines to the outside world: integrating books into enterprises, creating cultural activity areas and cultural creative designs for enterprises; Books are integrated into families, providing door-to-door establishment of learning enterprises to help consumers create ideal learning places suitable for family reading; Books will be integrated into the campus, creating Chinese-style retro bookstores on campus, advocating Chinese culture and integrating reading into teaching.

4.2.2. Problem: high operating costs lead to the neglect of the value of books

First of all, from the current point of view, high operating costs are one of the great obstacles for many physical bookstores to stably obtain marketing profits during and after the epidemic, and it is also the main and common reason. The rent of stores set up in different areas, the business premises in prosperous areas, the recruitment investment of bookstore staff, and the design cost required to create the "most beautiful bookstore" are all the operating costs that Zhongshuge has to bear in the operation stage.^[4] The high cost of operation makes it difficult for Zhongshuge to provide lower book prices than online bookstores with low operating costs, thus greatly reducing customers' consumption behavior of books.

Secondly, from the main functions of the bookstore, Zhongshuge has the title of "the most beautiful bookstore" in China in the process of marketing transformation, and the implementation of the "bookstore +" mode of marketing methods to form a compound bookstore. Zhongshuge is a compound high level bookstore, according to the compound management of profits, multi-business management is its main characteristics. Only selling books does not necessarily support the bookstore, but too eager to do "bookstore +", bookstores will only make bookstores lose their original intention when looking for their own development prospects.

4.3. The inquiry stage

4.3.1. Status quo: Focus on cooperation and mutual assistance to achieve multi-level social interaction

Zhongshuge Bookstore aims to reach the Ask stage by means of community management marketing and cooperation with other enterprises. In the asking stage, readers' consumption path has changed from individual behavior to social behavior. Readers can go through physical channels, or by searching online reviews, consulting online customer service or community issues. The information provided by social activities can greatly influence readers' purchase intentions, and readers can get positive information to help them take purchase actions.

In terms of cooperation and mutual assistance: First of all, Zhongshuge attaches great importance to cooperation with other public reading service providers. On March 8, 2022, to improve the level of public cultural services and provide readers with the service of "you choose books and the library pays for them", Zhongshuge helped the construction of "Book Science and Technology City" in Binjiang District.^[5] Hangzhou Branch of Zhongshuge and Binjiang District Library jointly held relevant activities. Secondly, it cooperated with other commercial brands to establish the library. With the theme of "Open books are different and enjoy powerful", Zhongshuge&Buick Smart Travel Library has set up reading Spaces in Buick 4S stores in Suzhou, Wuxi and other regions, and carried out activities such as excellent book promotion, reading sharing meeting and public welfare book donation. During the period of improving its brand influence, it also promoted the Buick car brand Enkovi Plus, which is equipped with Quiet Tuning library-level quiet technology, to achieve the goal of mutual benefit.

4.3.2. Problem: insufficient community management

Zhong Shuge has some problems in the management of community marketing. Online publicity channels mainly include wechat official account, Douyin video account, Xiaohongshue, Weibo and so

on. The video with the highest number of likes on wechat video account is only 28, while the video with the highest number of likes on Douyin video account is 257, and the rest of the videos have about 12 likes.^[6] Each tweet on Zhongshuge's wechat official account has been read around 1,000 times; Xiaohongshue posted 13 tweets with 25 followers; The video on Weibo has been viewed 40,000 times.

In general, the construction of Zhong Shuge started late, lacked interaction with readers, and did not realize the real integration with the new media platform. The output content is not exciting enough to be recognized by users. To some extent, this reduces the channels for consumers to learn about Zhong Shuge, making it difficult for consumers to transform their consumption paths into social behaviors. Meanwhile, it also reduces the loyalty of readers and increases the probability that they will not be attracted to physical stores for consumption.

4.4. Action stage

4.4.1. Current situation: The appropriate location of bookstores causes consumer behavior

When readers have obtained sufficient information, they can know whether they are willing to further communicate with the bookstore and whether they will take relevant purchase actions according to their own situation. Location considerations are crucial for readers to take real action and turn loafing into consumer behavior. At the present stage, Zhongshuge's branch location strategy is mainly in first - and second-tier cities, with urban culture as the core, unified management, and the establishment of bookstores with local cultural characteristics, so that Zhongshug bookstores across the country can differentiate and shine, that is, "chain but not copy".

In 2017, Zhongshuge came to Suzhou and faced new challenges in the cultural city, which has many well-known bookstores at home and abroad. Five years after the establishment of the first Most Beautiful bookstore, Zhong Shuge needed a brand new bookstore to declare China's most beautiful bookstore and continue to lead The Times. Taking Zhongshuge Bookstore in Suzhou as an example, its book selling space is continuous, and the auxiliary space on both sides is interactive. It presents the design of moving line with a single line, which is the combination of multi-format marketing mode.

4.4.2. Problem: consumption habit on the line

In terms of marketing design, Zhongshuge has adopted innovative models such as "bookstore +", which has increased the number of customers attracted and improved the effect. However, with the development of The Times, the sales environment is also very different. With the rise of e-commerce, digital reading brings new experiences, and most consumers prefer digital reading without time and place restrictions. At the same time, the progress of Internet technology has promoted the continuous development of digital publishing industry.^[7] Online shopping has broken the obstacles of time and environment, and consumers can open the APP of e-commerce at any time to order books. In terms of purchase cost, the price of books is low, because the rent and other operating costs may be much lower than that of physical bookstores such as Zhongshuge, which is undoubtedly the main driving force for consumers to choose online in terms of consumption behavior. The growing number of mobile apps, such as short video social interaction, has taken up a lot of people's free time and greatly changed readers' reading habits.

4.5. Advocacy stage

4.5.1. Status quo: Establish membership system to gain reputation

The idea of actively promoting Advocate reflects readers' support and dependence on the brand of the enterprise.

For Zhongshuge Physical Bookstore, if it wants to gain a good reputation through marketing, it is necessary to establish a complete membership system.^[8] Zhongshuge opens "customized study" business for enterprises, public institutions and families, and sets up a membership system for consumers. It provides member consumers with special services conducive to their own purchase and experience. In order to protect the personal privacy of members, the bookstore provides hidden shelves to save the books purchased by members in the store. By combining all the materials of the bookstore to make meetings and plans, and deeply understand the needs of customers, this is an opportunity for Zhongshuge to change from "business" to "business" and change the marketing mode of the bookstore from inside the store to outside the store. The establishment of membership system not only improves the stickiness and loyalty of consumers, but more importantly, accumulates valuable data resources.

4.5.2. Problem: insufficient integration with new media technologies

Through the analysis of bookstores around Zhongshuge, we learned that bookstores can explore local cultural characteristics, so that local cultural characteristics can be combined with the structural design of Zhongshuge Bookstore to create a unique image of bookstore characteristics. At present, the membership system and membership management established by Zhongshuge Bookstore are still in the initial stage, and the integration with new media technology is not mature enough.^[9] The personal information and book purchase information of members are registered and saved, and no data analysis system has been established to analyze these data.

Therefore, the imperfect membership system will greatly affect consumers' reading and buying experience and good spiritual enjoyment, and further affect consumers' subjective and objective evaluation of the bookstore as well as their strong willingness to share and loyalty to the brand.

5. Zhongshuge marketing development optimization countermeasures

According to the above analysis of the marketing strategy of Zhongshuge, the author gives several marketing development optimization strategies of Zhongshuge based on the five aspects of the 5A consumption path theory, seeking more levels and all-round consumption ability and demand, so as to promote the association and interaction between Zhongshuge Bookstore and users in the marketing environment.

5.1. Pay attention to the core value of bookstores

A good bookstore is to take books as the core value. Refocusing on and shaping the core value of the bookstore, the key is that the marketer should re-analyze and make good use of all the functions used by the bookstore. Zhongshuge Bookstore excels in reading services, with books as the primary focus of the store itself, and realizes the brand value marketed by the bookstore, enabling readers to unconsciously linger and engage in consumption actions. It clarifies the attributes of the bookstore and establishes the entire industry chain.

The main task of the bookstore is to sell books and creative reading experience. This cultural field is the core of the bookstore, and its work is to establish an online and offline platform for reading publicity and knowledge service interaction. In addition, there should be a complete support service, that is, resources that integrate resources.^[10] When the business model of Zhongshuge Bookstore is updated and improved, the marketing premise based on the 5A consumption theory must be to ensure the wealth of knowledge and culture, and focus on the core value of books from beginning to end.

5.2. Providing high-quality books based on users' thinking

First of all, provide high-quality books. The main marketing business of a bookstore is books. The quality selection of Zhongshuge books should reflect the mode and concept of the bookstore's marketing. Generally speaking, Zhongshuge should first choose the publishing house with good reputation and good business; The second is to choose books with professional popularity; The third is to choose the appearance of the binding of high quality books and so on.

Secondly, pay attention to user thinking. When customers buy books in online bookstores, they will search for keywords in the search box, then check the product introduction, and make purchases based on sales and reviews. However, this method will inevitably lead to many unknown possibilities. On the contrary, offline purchases offer more probability that profits can be achieved through sales. Therefore, this requires the spatial structure of the bookstore and the operators, that is, the staff, to pay attention to their own value in the bookstore, always remember the location of the bookstore, the quality of the selection of books and the reading service experience required by the readers.^[11]

5.3. Attention should be paid to community operation and activation service scenarios

First of all, attach importance to community operation. Zhongshuge selects books in the community, making the marketing strategy more accurate and effective, to achieve the marketing model from single product management to single customer management. With the help of network thinking, Zhongshuge physical bookstore can pay attention to community management marketing and experience services, strengthen its own resources and capacity building, and use short films or on-site books to increase the

number of customers who can participate in it, which will be conducive to the communication between Zhongshuge and readers, so as to achieve the set marketing volume, sustainable development of marketing mode and mission vision.

Secondly, activate the service scene. Zhongshuge adopts a series of online promotion services such as network broadcast to carry out marketing strategies, and has achieved corresponding results. For example, Beijing branch Zhongshuge Bookstore has achieved good results in the network broadcast, which not only provides readers with more books to choose from, but also improves the influence of Zhongshuge Bookstore in the social foreign language books industry. Activating and transforming the service scene, and changing the perception of the reading experience service of physical bookstores in the past, may provide a new development direction for bookstores that wish to change their marketing model and take action after the epidemic.

5.4. Provide quality reading services

A bookstore that can be recognized by the outside world should create a broad and multi-level cultural atmosphere and knowledge atmosphere, actively lead the public to update and improve the aesthetic experience, and build its service marketing model in line with the field of mass culture. The reading service of Dayin Bookstore has achieved certain results, and the activities of traditional bookstores have become profitable products exported to foreign countries. The positioning of Dayin Book Company is to provide a comprehensive solution provider of reading culture, build an industrial chain of reading culture, and build a physical bookstore retailer, cultural content provider, public place operator and complex place planner.^[12] From 2016 to 2021, Dayin Book Company has carried out more than 1,000 exhibitions, creating a platform to provide cultural reading services for state organs, social groups and so on, which can enjoy the reading experience.

5.5. Actively publicize and extend the service boundary

Once customers start to have a purchase behavior of the bookstore and get a satisfactory self-experience, the bookstore should always take precautions for the promotion of all aspects of the store, give full play to the role of network new media publicity and promotion. Therefore, the mechanism of mutual cooperation can be adopted. On the one hand, the traditional marketing strategy should be paid attention to. On the other hand, the ability of promoting publicity should be vigorously promoted by the network new media, and the sharing of publicity force with consumers on the social platform should be formed to create a good atmosphere for the whole people to read. At the same time, Zhong Shuge can change the concept of physical space marketing environment. Zhongshuge physical bookstore can also be transformed into a concept space with unlimited meaning, taking reading services of books as the overall situation and expanding the reading service space.

6. Conclusion

The first part of this paper summarizes the 5A consumption path, and improves the brand marketing strategy from the perspective of consumers. The second part gives an overview of Zhongshuge physical bookstore and analyzes the marketing status of the bookstore. Under the background of economic downturn, Zhongshuge and other physical bookstores have to carry out marketing strategy reform. The third part based on the 5A consumption path of Zhongshuge's marketing strategy, from five aspects, detailed analysis of Zhongshuge bookstore brand, social cooperation and mutual assistance, bookstore location and consumer behavior and other marketing strategies; At the same time, it analyzes the reasons that exist in bookstore marketing and are easy to ignore. The fourth part of the marketing development of Zhongshuge put forward the suggestions of attaching importance to the core value of bookstores, providing high-quality books based on the user's thinking, paying attention to community operation and management, providing quality services and actively promoting to extend the service boundary.

In general, based on the enlightenment of the 5A consumption theory to the marketing strategy of Zhongshuge, we should fully meet the needs of consumers, achieve a virtuous cycle and interaction, update the business philosophy, never forget the cultural mission of the bookstore, and make contributions to the shared culture. In order to survive, Zhongshuge Bookstore needs to live a stable and rising life. They not only need to be helped by the power of diversification, but also need to explore paths in more directions and implement relevant strategies in a scientific and reasonable way. In this way, brick-and-mortar bookstores such as Zhongshuge will show new vitality.

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