

# Research on Brand Rejuvenation Strategy—Taking Guizhou Maotai as an Example

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**Abstract:** With the continuous development and change of China's market economy, the competition in the alcohol industry has been intensifying, young consumers have become an important consumer group in the alcohol market, and rejuvenation has become a necessary path for alcohol brands to keep up with the development of the times. As one of China's top ten famous alcoholic beverages, Guizhou Moutai has been committed to exploring brand rejuvenation in recent years, and has gradually gained the favor of young consumers through the "three driving forces" of products, marketing and channels, and has become the new choice of young consumers in alcohol consumption. This paper takes Guizhou Maotai brand rejuvenation strategy as an example and puts forward thoughts on brand rejuvenation, which in turn provides some ideas for other alcohol brands to promote the long-term development of the brand.

**Keywords:** Brand rejuvenation, Alcohol brands, Guizhou Maotai, Product innovation, Cross-border co-branding, Digitalization

## 1. Introduction

The so-called brand rejuvenation refers to two tendencies: one is that consumers tend to consume younger and more fashionable brands, and the other is that the brand itself tends to be more youthful consumers, and constantly pursues a sense of freshness in its image. No enterprise is willing to see the aging of the brand, brand rejuvenation is one of the effective means to solve this problem[1].

## 2. Background of Moutai brand rejuvenation in Guizhou

In recent years, some national brands have begun to seek new changes and carry out brand rejuvenation, giving the brand connotation of rejuvenation, so as to adapt to the new consumer trends. The background of Maotai brand rejuvenation is mainly in the following aspects: on the one hand, it is influenced by policy factors. From 2012, the government introduced the policy of limiting "three public consumption", and now some regions have introduced the "ban on alcohol", so that the traditional market of high-end liquor upscale hotels, dining table consumption has been reduced, the high-end liquor industry production, revenue and profit growth rate has dropped significantly. The entire liquor industry is forced to make corresponding adjustments and reforms. On the other hand, it is affected by changes in consumer groups, with the development of the economy and society, the arrival of the mobile Internet era, the consumer structure and consumer behavior have undergone a huge change[2].

## 3. Guizhou Maotai Brand Rejuvenation Strategy

Young consumers consume high-end liquor mostly for socializing, investment and gift-giving, and very little for daily drinking. Guizhou Maotai, with its long history and deep cultural heritage, has always hoped to find ways to increase affinity and attract a new generation of consumers. Therefore, in recent years, Maotai has been committed to meeting the consumption needs of young people and actively exploring brand rejuvenation.

### 3.1. Catering to modern trends - rejuvenation of product strategy

Maotai's original consumer groups are those over 35 years old with a certain economic base and social experience. In order to comply with the trend of rejuvenation and develop new consumer groups, Moutai actively explores and develops new liquor brands, constantly adapts to the preferences of young

consumers in the packaging of its new products, and focuses on the perfect fusion of market and value in its product innovations, so as to satisfy the diversified consumer demands in the liquor market.

In early 2015, a wholly owned subsidiary of Moutai launched Yumi Blueberry Liqueur, a low-concentration fruit wine for female consumers. Although this fruit wine is based on soy sauce wine, it contains up to 50% fruit juice, so the taste is not spicy, but very sweet. In addition, the wine also adopts a unique lipstick shape with brilliant colors, which has a splendid visual effect and unique product packaging, and thus the wine was quickly loved by the majority of female consumers once it was launched.

### 3.2. Cross-border co-branding out of the circle - marketing strategy rejuvenation

Enterprises use the characteristics and advantages of their respective brands, the core elements will be refined, and cooperation "partners" of the core elements of the brand to fit, from more than one side of the interpretation of a common user experience, this marketing approach is called cross-border marketing<sup>[3]</sup>. In recent years, cross-border co-branding has gradually emerged in the commercial field, becoming a cooperation trend between enterprises seeking win-win situation. Good cross-border cooperation, can fully integrate the resources of both sides, the formation of brand effect superposition, produce more tension brand association<sup>[4]</sup>. Maotai in the marketing strategy to make continuous attempts, bold cross-border, novelty co-branding play out a new fashion, so that the brand image more diversified.

On May 29, 2022, Moutai and Mengniu co-branded three ice creams, namely the classic original flavor, the plum wine flavor, and the vanilla flavor, whose biggest highlight is the addition of Moutai wine with a content of about 1.6%-2%. The researchers skillfully blended the wine aroma of Moutai wine and the milky flavor of the ice cream, coupled with the ice-cold texture that hit the taste buds, arousing young consumers' desire to try the ice creams. The taste of ice cream hits the taste buds, stimulating the desire of young consumers to try it<sup>[5]</sup>. 2023, September 4, Moutai and Luckin coffee co-branded "sauce-flavored latte" on the market, on the first day of the line sold 5,420,000 cups, the sales of a single product exceeded 100 million yuan, to achieve a double harvest of brand marketing and economic benefits. On September 14, 2023, Moutai officially announced that it had co-branded with Dove Chocolate to launch wine heart chocolate. From this series of cross-border co-branding marketing activities, it is easy to see that Moutai is conveying the signal of "close to young people", and with the contrast of "traditional and modern", co-branding with brands in different fields, especially those in the fields of trends and life, which are of concern to young consumers, in order to attract the attention of young consumers. In this way, the brand attracts the attention and favor of young consumers. At the same time, young consumers like the feeling of novelty, rarity, and limited edition. Moutai has accurately grasped the consumption psychology and logic of young groups through cross-border co-branding marketing, and has made a strong appearance by virtue of its strength, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Moutai's cross-border co-branding with other brands

Co-brand	Co-product	Co-brand Industry
Mengniu	Ice cream	Dairy industry
Luckin Coffee	Sauce-flavored Latte	Beverage industry
Dove Chocolate	Chocolate with wine center	Food, snacks industry

### 3.3. Digital transformation - rejuvenation of channel strategy

In the process of trying to rejuvenate the Moutai brand, an important initiative in Moutai's marketing reform was carried out, namely the creation of the digital marketing platform i Moutai. This also means that Moutai's direct sales channel has expanded from a single store channel to a parallel model of two channels: store + i Moutai. "i Maotai", which mainly adopts the sales model of online subscription + self-service pickup in offline stores<sup>[6]</sup>, was formally launched on May 19, 2022, and once online, it quickly went out of the loop, with more than 5 million registered users on the 1st day, more than 10 million on the 19th day, and more than 40 million in a year, and more than 24 million people involved in subscription, with the number of reservations reaching 3,162 million, and the number of cloud appointments reaching 3,162 million. The total number of subscriptions exceeded 24 million people, the number of appointments reached 3,162 million, the total number of cloud purchase clicks exceeded 17 million people, the number of visits reached 1,392 million, and 26 million people participated in interactive activities.

"i Maotai" online reservation subscription, in a sense, with young people speculation shoes, speculation blind box has the same flavor, won the favor of young consumers. At the same time, i Maotai

allows consumers to realize the traceability of key information such as production, warehousing, logistics and sales for each bottle of Maotai, which also makes more young consumers feel more at ease when purchasing Maotai.

#### **4. Reflections on brand rejuvenation**

In recent years, Guizhou Maotai has carried out a series of practices on the road of brand rejuvenation, is a practitioner of brand rejuvenation, and has gradually established its image in the hearts of the younger generation of consumers. Therefore, based on Guizhou Moutai's brand rejuvenation strategy, there are several thoughts on brand rejuvenation as follows.

##### ***4.1. Focus on product innovation to cater to the preferences of young consumers***

Product innovation is a crucial part of the process of brand rejuvenation. Consumers' preferences change rapidly, especially young consumers, who desire fresh and unique goods, seek uniqueness and novelty of brands, pursue experiences and sensations, and want to show their personalities and values through these products. Brands should offer creative products to attract more young consumers, which will not only improve the competitiveness of the brand, but also increase brand awareness and reputation. Therefore, the brand should be combined with its own advantages in the full study of the current young consumers taste preferences on the basis of innovative research and development, to create a stunning pop-ups, pop-ups to attract young consumers, and then drive consumers to the brand's recognition and identity<sup>[7]</sup>. Liquor brands should avoid the phenomenon of brand homogenization while innovating their products. Homogenization will make the brand lose its uniqueness and gradually be forgotten by consumers, thus being eliminated by the market and affecting the long-term development of the brand.

##### ***4.2. Focus on cross-border marketing to break down stereotypes***

In the new round of market competition, cross-border marketing is an important direction and development trend of brand rejuvenation strategy. With the help of cross-border marketing, it can break through the traditional brand image, challenge consumers' inherent perceptions, attract the attention of young consumers, and cause them to have new perceptions and expectations of the brand. By cooperating with other brands in different industries and fields, launching crossover co-branded products, and carrying out crossover activities and events, brands can further enhance the modernity and uniqueness of their brands, and thus connect more closely with young consumers. In the process of brand cross-border marketing, attention should be paid to identifying potential partners that are most likely to resonate with the brand according to its own core values, strengths, target markets and other actual circumstances, and assessing the significance and effect of cross-border marketing. It is important to keep up with the pace of the Internet era and understand the new developments and trends in technology, such as social media marketing, mobile marketing, etc., which are crucial for realizing the innovation and sustainable development of cross-border brands. Brand cross-border marketing should pay attention to the consumption concepts, behavioral habits and brand values of young consumers, and respond to their changing needs, find the right entry point to cut in, and use new marketing strategies and means to attract their attention and stimulate consumption desire.

##### ***4.3. Focusing on channel building and accelerating the digitization process***

With the development of the Internet, digitalization has become an important trend in brand development. By using digital channels such as social media and e-commerce platforms, brands can directly contact and interact with consumers and gain a deeper understanding of the needs and preferences of young consumers, so as to provide more personalized and convenient products. In addition, digital channels enable data tracking and analysis, helping brands better understand consumers and optimize marketing strategies. Therefore, brands should actively seize the opportunities of digitalization and accelerate the construction of digital channels to increase their influence and recognition among young consumers.

#### **5. Conclusions**

Guizhou Maotai has achieved brand rejuvenation at multiple levels, including product, marketing and channel, giving the brand new life and vitality, and gaining recognition and love from young consumers,

which provides a reference experience for other alcohol brands to rejuvenate. However, in the process of brand rejuvenation, Guizhou Maotai must always pay attention to its own value and brand image, and be wary of blind crossover leading to a blurred brand impression. Although Moutai's high-intensity cross-border co-branding has refreshed the traditional liquor industry's stereotypical brand impression in young people's minds, and brought it closer to the young group, blindly crossing the border without restrictions will blur the brand impression to a certain extent. At the same time, it is necessary to adjust and optimize the brand rejuvenation strategy according to market feedback and consumer behavior, and build a scientific evaluation system to measure the effect of brand rejuvenation. Therefore, in the future road of brand rejuvenation, we should give full play to the brand's own advantages, avoid deficiencies, combine with our own reality, insist on keeping pace with the times, continue to gain insight into the consumption attitudes and habits of the new generation of consumer groups, and continue to push forward new ideas to expand the brand connotation, so as to make the brand's connection with young users deeper and stronger.

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