

Positioning for Success: Enhancing Brand Image and Online Presence in Tina Bakery's Journey

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to address the challenges faced by Tina's Bakery in terms of brand positioning and digital marketing. Despite being a mid-high-end bakery brand, the bakery lacks accurate brand positioning, a suitable target audience, and effective communication strategies. In order to bridge the reputation vision gap, the author suggests a brand update to reflect an optimized brand positioning and create a more aligned image. Additionally, it is recommended to enhance the online promotion strategy by creating high-quality content, exploring new advertising channels, and analyzing online performance. By implementing these strategies, Tina's Bakery can distinguish itself, attract a broader customer base, and increase sales.

KEYWORDS

Brand Positioning; Word-of-Mouth Communication; Online Promotion.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Opportunities and Challenges in the Chinese Bakery Market

The Chinese baking market has grown rapidly in recent years, providing both opportunities and challenges for businesses. Rising disposable income among Chinese consumers has led to a greater demand for higher-quality and more diverse food options, including baked goods. (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2023). The younger generation of Chinese consumers, who have been exposed to Western dietary culture during their upbringing, also appreciate baked goods. Additionally, Western holidays such as Christmas and Valentine's Day have further fueled the growth of the baking market.

The preferences of Chinese consumers for baked goods are influenced by cultural factors, such as their associations of sweet foods with blessings and happiness. During the Mid-Autumn Festival, it is customary for Chinese families to come together and partake in the tradition of sharing mooncakes, which symbolize the spirit of reunion. Moreover, desserts and sugar are considered a source of happiness and stress relief, leading to a high demand for sweet baked goods among the Chinese population.

Tina is a bakery store that operates in this competitive market. However, according to Tina's 2022 annual financial report, the bakery store failed to meet its commercial expectations. Analysis of the 2022 financial report from the city of Shangqiu, where Tina is located, shows that the average consumer spending level is relatively low, which may have a negative impact on the sales of local high-end brands. Furthermore, the outbreak of the pandemic in 2019 has disrupted traditional sales models and increased the influence of online marketing.

1.2. Background Information on Tina Bakery

Tina Bakery is a mid-to-high-end bakery brand that was founded in 2008 as a subsidiary of Mingdai Company, a family-owned business established in 1998. Over the past two decades, Mingdai Company has steadily grown and expanded, with three brands, over 100 stores, and a factory. Today, Tina and Mingdai have opened stores in five cities around Shangqiu.

The company also has two other bakery brands, Mingdai and He Fa Xiang. Mingdai caters to a different customer group than Tina Bakery, with more affordable prices and a broader market focus. He Fa Xiang, on the other hand, specializes in traditional Chinese pastries and was launched as a new brand in 2022 after the trend for classical Chinese pastries had risen.

Tina Bakery's target demographic primarily consists of young female customers between the ages of 16 and 35, along with children and students. Despite competition from other bakery brands like So Sweet and the growing trend of social media-driven "internet celebrity" bakeries, Tina Bakery has established itself in a different realm. While "internet celebrity" bakeries rely on online popularity, Tina Bakery's success stems from its reliable product quality rather than dependence on online buzz. Tina Bakery has built a reputation as a trusted mid-to-high-end baking brand among local consumers by consistently delivering high-quality goods.

The company's management structure is led by the founder and CEO, Liu Wei, who is a technical expert with a strong understanding of product development. However, he lacks experience in internet marketing and staying up to date with trends. The company also has a professional management team that assists in the day-to-day operations of the business. Notable achievements include being a member of the China Baking Association and being named one of the top ten mooncake brands annually. Tina is also the designated mooncake supplier for the Tiananmen Square Flag Guard, a prestigious honor that underscores the high quality and reputation of the brand.

Despite its established reputation, Tina Bakery faces several challenges. The company's conservative image and lack of product innovation are hindering growth (Frenkel, 2003), and in 2022, Tina closed two stores while Mingdai opened three new stores. From both market share and the company's annual financial statements, Tina's performance is far below that of Mingdai, leaving plenty of room for improvement. To continue growing and meet its positioning, the company needs to address challenges such as low per capita consumption, a conservative image, and a lack of product innovation.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section provides a literature review that examines the significance of two key elements of Tina Bakery's brand strategy: effective brand positioning and digital marketing. The review incorporates relevant research and practical experiences to illustrate the potential benefits of these elements for the bakery.

Effective brand positioning is widely recognized as a crucial component of a successful brand strategy (Janiszewska, 2012). It involves the creation of a unique and memorable brand image in the minds of consumers. To accomplish this, Tina Bakery must have a deep understanding of its target audience and tailor its brand messaging accordingly. By effectively positioning its brand, Tina Bakery can differentiate itself from competitors, establish a distinct identity, and foster customer loyalty and brand awareness. It is important to note that brand positioning should be adaptable to changes in product updates and evolving consumer preferences. Therefore, Tina Bakery should stay attuned to industry trends and regularly update its branding to remain relevant and competitive.

The implementation of effective communication strategies plays a vital role in differentiating Tina Bakery from its competitors and expanding its customer base. By leveraging various marketing and communication channels, such as social media, online advertising, and influencer marketing, Tina Bakery can enhance brand awareness and reach new customers. Additionally, by creating compelling

content and showcasing innovative and unique products, the bakery can foster customer loyalty and stimulate positive word-of-mouth marketing (Sharp, 2001).

To thrive in this highly competitive market, Tina Bakery must establish a strong brand image, increase brand awareness, and attract loyal customers through innovation, product differentiation, branding, and digital marketing efforts. In this essay, we will delve into Tina Bakery's brand, examine the challenges and opportunities it faces, and explore potential strategies for achieving success in the Chinese baking market (Zhang, 2015).

3. PROBLEMS WITH TINA'S BRAND CONCEPTS

3.1. Inability to Meet Mid-To-High-End Consumption

Tina Bakery positions itself as a mid-to-high-end baking brand, but it has been struggling to meet this expectation due to the lower average consumption in its location. A well-executed positioning strategy can provide opportunities for market share growth and sales growth, but the bakery's inability to meet the needs of mid-to-high-end consumers can be attributed to several geographical limitations in the area.

Firstly, the local area where Tina Bakery is situated has a relatively low per capita income compared to other regions in the city. As a result, consumers in the area may prioritize spending on basic needs rather than high-end baking products. This limits the potential customer base for the bakery's mid-to-high-end products.

Secondly, the local culture and policies may not support a culture of luxury and high-end consumption, making it difficult for Tina Bakery to attract mid-to-high-end consumers. For example, the area may have a culture that values practicality over luxury, and therefore, may not see the value in purchasing high-end baked goods.

3.2. Conservative Brand Image

Tina Bakery faces several challenges related to its conservative brand image. The bakery struggles to stand out in a crowded market due to its lack of differentiation, making it difficult to capture customer attention and build brand loyalty. Without a distinctive brand identity, Tina Bakery finds it challenging to connect with customers on a deeper level. Additionally, its conservative image may limit its appeal to a wider customer base, particularly those seeking unique and innovative bakery options. Furthermore, the bakery's brand awareness may be insufficient, necessitating investment in marketing and advertising efforts to increase visibility and reach a broader audience. By addressing these challenges, Tina Bakery can overcome its conservative brand image and position itself more effectively in the market.

3.3. Digital Promotion

Tina Bakery's previous lack of emphasis on digital promotion has posed several challenges for the business, hindering its ability to thrive in the digital age. The absence of a comprehensive digital marketing strategy has limited the bakery's reach and prevented effective communication of its brand message, resulting in reduced brand exposure and diminished competitiveness.

One of the primary consequences of neglecting digital marketing channels is the missed opportunity to tap into a vast potential customer base online. In today's digitally connected world, consumers heavily rely on online platforms and social media for information and recommendations. By not actively engaging in digital promotion, Tina Bakery has failed to connect with this online audience, restricting its visibility and constraining its customer base.

Moreover, competitors who have embraced digital promotion strategies have gained a significant competitive advantage over Tina Bakery. While the bakery may have relied on traditional advertising and word-of-mouth marketing, competitors who have leveraged online platforms and digital advertising have successfully reached a larger audience, attracted new customers, and established a strong online presence. This has allowed them to overshadow Tina Bakery's brand image and position themselves as prominent players in the market.

Furthermore, the absence of digital promotion has hindered Tina Bakery's ability to effectively communicate its unique selling points and showcase its product offerings. Online platforms provide opportunities for storytelling, visual representation, and interactive engagement, enabling brands to create a compelling narrative and engage with consumers in dynamic ways. Without a strong digital presence, Tina Bakery has been unable to leverage these tools effectively, limiting its ability to differentiate itself from competitors and convey its brand value to consumers.

Additionally, the lack of digital promotion has made it challenging for Tina Bakery to gather valuable customer insights and feedback. Online platforms offer valuable data and analytics that can inform business decisions and improve customer satisfaction. By neglecting digital channels, Tina Bakery has missed out on the opportunity to gather real-time feedback, understand consumer preferences, and adapt its offerings accordingly.

Furthermore, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and the growing convenience of online food delivery services in China, neglecting online promotion can lead to significant loss of sales for Tina Bakery. As more consumers rely on online platforms for ordering food and bakery products, businesses without a strong online presence may miss out on a substantial portion of the market. Neglecting digital promotion not only hampers Tina Bakery's growth potential but also exposes it to the risk of losing sales opportunities to competitors who have embraced online channels and catered to the evolving consumer preferences for online shopping and delivery services.

To overcome these challenges and stay competitive, it is imperative for Tina Bakery to adapt and prioritize digital promotion as an integral part of its marketing strategy. By embracing digital marketing channels, engaging with the online audience, effectively communicating its brand message, and gathering customer insights, Tina Bakery can expand its reach, differentiate itself from competitors, and capitalize on the online sales potential in the bakery market.

4. PROPOSED STRATEGIC PLAN

4.1. Brand Positioning

Tina Bakery's current brand positioning lacks a clear definition as a mid-to-high-end bakery brand. To rectify this, the bakery should undergo a brand refresh that includes updating its logo, store design, and marketing materials to reflect the new brand positioning and create a more upscale image for the bakery.

A brand refresh will help communicate the new brand positioning to customers effectively and establish Tina Bakery as a premium brand in the minds of its target customers. Along with a brand refresh, the bakery needs to improve its service quality and store atmosphere to create a more high-end customer experience. This involves training staff to provide exceptional customer service and creating a welcoming and stylish store environment that appeals to its target customers.

To justify its mid-to-high-end pricing strategy, Tina Bakery needs to offer high-quality products that cater to the needs of its target customers. The bakery can achieve this by introducing new and innovative bakery items that are unique to the bakery, using high-quality ingredients, and experimenting with new flavors and designs. Offering a wider variety of products that meet the quality standards of a mid-to-high-end bakery will help the bakery establish itself as a premium brand and differentiate itself from its competitors.

Moreover, Tina Bakery needs to develop a strong brand identity that reflects its unique value proposition and creates a clear distinction from competitors. Engaging a professional branding agency could be a potential solution for Tina Bakery. The agency could work with the bakery to develop a brand identity that is aligned with its unique value proposition and creates a clear distinction from competitors. This may include creating a new logo, color scheme, packaging design, and product naming conventions that better reflect the bakery's brand values and message.

Overall, a strong brand positioning is important for conveying the ideas that a brand wants to express, and it can help shape the image of the brand in the minds of consumers. By improving service quality, store atmosphere, and product supply, Tina Bakery can create a more high-end customer experience and establish itself as a premium brand in the market. Doing so will help the bakery attract a wealthier customer base and increase sales. (Fayvishenko, 2018)

4.2. Product Innovation

To improve the product quality and increase customer satisfaction, Tina Bakery should focus on innovating its product offerings to better align with its brand image and unique value proposition. This could involve developing new and innovative bakery items that differentiate the bakery from its competitors and better appeal to its target customers. By experimenting with new flavors, designs, and ingredients, Tina Bakery can create a unique product line that caters to the specific tastes and preferences of its customers.

In addition to launching new products, Tina Bakery should also consider offering seasonal specialties during specific times of the year. This may include special holiday-themed foods or limited edition products available for a limited time. Tina can incorporate some specific Chinese elements into its brand as people in the Chinese market tend to identify with local culture. Cultural identification can encourage consumers to purchase local brands. By offering seasonal specialties, the bakery can create a sense of urgency and excitement among customers and increase demand for its products. (He, 2015).

To ensure the success of these initiatives, Tina Bakery should conduct market research to better understand customer preferences and develop products that cater to those preferences. This may involve gathering feedback through surveys or focus groups to identify specific flavors, designs, and ingredients that customers are most interested in. For example, with more and more young people becoming interested in traditional culture, this will be an aspect that we need to pay attention to when researching and developing packaging for mooncakes. By using this information to inform its product development process, the bakery can increase the likelihood of creating products that resonate with its target customers. (Qin, 2019).

Innovating its product offerings and introducing seasonal specials can help Tina Bakery improve the quality of its products, increase customer satisfaction, and differentiate itself from competitors in the marketplace. Conducting market research and gathering customer feedback can help ensure that the bakery's product line is aligned with customer preferences and effectively communicates its unique value proposition.

4.3. Improve its Online Promotion

To improve Tina Bakery's online promotion strategy, the company should focus on creating high-quality and visually appealing content that showcases its products and engages with its target audience. This could include creating high-quality images and videos to highlight the bakery's products, as well as informative blog posts and social media updates that provide value to customers.

In addition, Tina Bakery should explore new online advertising channels such as influencer marketing and paid social media advertising to reach a wider audience and increase brand awareness. Influencer marketing involves partnering with individuals who have a significant online following to promote

the bakery's products to their audience, while paid social media advertising can help the bakery reach potential customers who may not be familiar with the brand. (Jin, 2019).

To ensure continued growth and success, Tina Bakery should regularly analyze its online performance and adjust its online marketing strategies accordingly. This may involve tracking website traffic, social media engagement, and other key metrics to determine what is effective and what is not. Additionally, I encourage the company to engage more with customers on social media sites. Interactions can not only help the company gain a more direct understanding of customers' true opinions, but also make customers feel that the company cares about them, which can create a better impression. Based on this information, the bakery can make data-driven decisions and adjust its online marketing strategy to improve performance. (Zhang, 2017).

By focusing on high-quality content creation, exploring new online advertising channels, and regularly analyzing online performance, Tina Bakery can increase its online visibility, attract new customers, and build a strong online presence to support its overall brand strategy. (Alves, 2016).

5. CONCLUSION

Tina Bakery is currently facing several challenges, including brand positioning, product innovation, and online promotion. Despite being positioned as a mid-to-high-end brand, the bakery struggles to meet the expectations of its customers due to several factors, including low per capita consumption in its location and a lack of creativity in product design. As a result, it is important for Tina Bakery to undertake a brand refresh to clearly define its brand positioning and address these challenges.

The presenter recommends updating the logo, store design, and marketing materials to better reflect the new brand positioning. This will require the bakery to re-evaluate its current branding strategy and develop a new approach that aligns with its target customers. Additionally, improving service quality and offering more high-end products will help the bakery to meet the needs of its customers and differentiate itself from competitors.

Developing a robust online promotion strategy is also crucial for Tina Bakery to succeed in the current market. This includes creating high-quality content and exploring new online advertising channels. Regular analysis of online performance is recommended, which will enable the bakery to adjust its online marketing strategies accordingly and ensure continued growth and success.

In conclusion, developing a strategic plan in accordance with the brand concepts is essential for Tina Bakery to overcome its current challenges and build a strong brand that is positioned for success in the future. By adopting the suggested recommendations, Tina Bakery can align itself with its target customers, achieve brand differentiation, and establish a competitive advantage in the market. The bakery should continue to analyze its performance regularly and adjust its strategies to ensure continued growth and success.

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