

Research on Disney's Marketing Strategy

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Abstract. Disney, leveraging its profound cultural foundation, diversified product matrix, and global operational model, has built a global entertainment empire spanning multiple sectors, including film, theme parks, and consumer products. This paper delves into five core elements of Disney's marketing strategy: brand extension, content innovation, global expansion, emotional resonance marketing, and the process of digital transformation. The aim is to explore how Disney maintains its leading position in the highly competitive global market while flexibly adapting to rapid changes in the market environment. Additionally, this paper examines the challenges and shortcomings Disney faces in its marketing efforts and offers a series of suggestions for optimizing strategies and improving outcomes to help Disney continue to shine in its future development.

Keywords: Marketing Strategy; Brand Extension; Content innovation; Global Expansion; Emotional Resonance Marketing.

1. Introduction

In the vast landscape of global entertainment and media, Disney undoubtedly stands as a brilliant star. With its unparalleled creativity, deep cultural roots, and exceptional marketing strategies, Disney has transcended time, connecting countless dreams and childhoods (Byun, 2012). From the creation of Mickey Mouse to the construction of the Marvel Universe, from the dreamlike world of Disneyland to the boundless exploration of streaming platforms, Disney has not only shaped iconic intellectual properties (IPs) but also built an entertainment empire that spans age, geography, and culture. However, behind its impressive achievements, Disney faces several challenges and issues that not only affect its market position but also influence its future direction.

This paper aims to explore Disney's current marketing strategies and how it maintains a leading position amidst intense market competition while addressing existing challenges. We will thoroughly analyze Disney's brand influence, diversified marketing strategies, creative innovation, consumer demand fulfillment, and efforts in digital transformation. At the same time, the paper will not shy away from issues such as over-commercialization, limited creativity, insufficient personalization, and increased competition from social media and streaming businesses. Based on these challenges, this paper will propose corresponding improvement suggestions. Only by doing so can Disney continue to lead the global market, bringing more joy and surprises to its audience while creating a more prosperous future for the company. Through this discussion and analysis, we hope to provide useful insights and inspiration for Disney's future development.

2. Disney's Marketing Strategy

2.1. Five Core Marketing Strategies

With its deep cultural influence, diverse product portfolio, and global operational approach, Disney has successfully established a globally renowned entertainment empire spanning multiple industries. This paper analyzes Disney's marketing strategy from five key aspects: brand extension, content creation, globalization strategy, emotional marketing, and digital transformation, exploring how it maintains strong competitiveness in the global market while adapting to an ever-changing environment.



Firstly, Disney's brand extension strategy is one of its core success factors. Through a series of strategic acquisitions, Disney has not only expanded its brand influence but also significantly enriched its content portfolio. By acquiring companies like Pixar, Marvel, Lucasfilm, and Fox, Disney has integrated various types of content under its banner, from classic animation to superheroes and sci-fi adventures. These acquisitions have not only broadened Disney's audience base but also given its brand a wider cultural significance. Pixar's innovative animation technology and storytelling ability, Marvel's superhero universe, Lucasfilm's Star Wars series, and Fox's diverse content have all enhanced Disney's brand appeal and helped it secure an even larger share of the global entertainment market.

Secondly, content creation and innovation have always been the core competitive strengths of the Disney brand. Since its inception, Disney has ensured its leadership in the entertainment industry by continuously producing classic animated works, expanding story universes, and investing in technological innovations. From early animated films like Snow White and The Lion King to recent hits like Frozen and the Marvel Cinematic Universe, Disney has consistently captivated audiences of all ages worldwide by staying at the forefront of creativity. Moreover, Disney achieves cross-media promotion through various channels, including films, television, theme parks, music, and merchandise, creating a highly interactive and immersive brand experience. This comprehensive content layout not only strengthens Disney's brand influence but also expands its market reach on a global scale.

In terms of global market expansion, Disney leverages its strong brand influence by adopting a refined localization strategy to ensure success in different global markets. Although Disney's brand image remains globally consistent, when entering emerging markets like China and India, Disney emphasizes integrating and respecting local cultures. By adapting content, creating stories that resonate with local culture, and offering products that cater to diverse cultural needs, Disney ensures that its brand maintains global consistency while achieving sufficient local adaptability. For instance, in the Chinese market, Disney introduced a localized Disneyland and created animated works tailored to Chinese audiences, such as Mulan, enhancing its brand penetration in the Asian market (Zhen, 2021).

Emotional marketing is also a vital part of Disney's brand strategy. Disney's stories and brand convey universally appealing values like family, friendship, and dreams, creating emotional connections that have garnered Disney a vast, loyal consumer base worldwide. Through iconic characters like Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck, Disney continually reinforces its brand image and fosters highly loyal consumer groups through interactive experiences across theme parks, merchandise, movies, and more. Each Disney production is not just an entertainment product but also establishes a deep emotional bond with audiences through storylines that resonate emotionally. This emotional brand experience effectively boosts brand loyalty, making Disney's consumers not only content viewers but also ardent supporters of the brand.

Facing the challenges and opportunities of digital transformation, Disney successfully transitioned from traditional media to digital entertainment by launching the Disney+ streaming platform. As global competition in the streaming market intensifies, Disney has quickly secured a place by leveraging its vast content library and continuously releasing original content. Disney+ not only provides consumers with a convenient content-viewing platform but also enhances the user experience through digital technologies, fostering closer interactions with consumers. Through the streaming platform, Disney directly reaches global consumers and further strengthens its brand influence and market position through personalized recommendations and exclusive content.

By employing strategies such as brand extension, content innovation, global expansion, emotional marketing, and digital transformation, Disney has successfully built a leading global entertainment empire. In a rapidly changing market environment, Disney continues to maintain its leadership in the global entertainment market thanks to its brand's flexibility and adaptability. These strategies have

not only helped Disney address market challenges but also laid a solid foundation for its future development.

3. Industry Environment Analysis and Existing Challenges

3.1. Industry Environment Analysis

In the expansive arena of international brand competition, Universal Studios has emerged as a formidable competitor to Disney with its unique movie-themed parks and innovative ride designs. Universal Studios not only recreates many iconic movie scenes but also cleverly integrates movie elements into its attractions, offering visitors an unprecedented immersive experience. For example, the successful opening of Universal Beijing Resort not only garnered widespread attention from domestic and international tourists but also set a new benchmark in the global theme park industry with its exceptional operational management and rich entertainment content, demonstrating strong market competitiveness.

Meanwhile, globally renowned theme park brands like Legoland and Six Flags are also actively seeking breakthroughs. Each boasts unique rides and brand characteristics and continuously introduces innovative projects to attract more visitors. These brands compete fiercely with Disney on a global scale, contributing to the overall prosperity and development of the theme park industry.

In the Chinese market, the rise of local brands has injected new energy into this competitive landscape. Domestic theme park brands like Chimelong Group and Happy Valley have quickly gained popularity by leveraging local cultural advantages and a deep market foundation. Through continuous innovation in attractions, improvements in service quality, and enhanced brand promotion, these brands have gradually expanded their market share, posing a strong challenge to foreign brands like Disney. Although Disney occupies a significant position in the global theme park market due to its strong brand influence, rich operational experience, and vast intellectual property resources, the influx of emerging competitors and the strength of local brands have put some pressure on its market share.

3.2. Existing Issues

First, Disney faces the risk of over-commercialization. In the pursuit of maximizing profits, an excessive focus on merchandise sales and product promotion could unintentionally sacrifice the pure experience for consumers. When the brand becomes closely tied to merchandise, consumers may feel overwhelmed by a commercially-driven atmosphere, which could alienate them from Disney's warm, magical brand image. This might even lead them to question the authenticity and depth of the values and stories behind the brand. This commercialization could not only affect customer loyalty but also weaken their emotional connection to Disney's narratives.

Second, as Disney expands globally, its characters and stories have increasingly become commodified, which to some extent limits creative freedom. Creators may feel constrained by the need to cater to market demands or adhere to established brand frameworks, making it difficult to explore novel and unique content. This pressure can stifle innovation and potentially diminish Disney's reputation as a "dream factory" known for its creativity.

Another significant challenge Disney faces is its insufficient focus on personalized services. In a globalized context, consumers from different regions and cultural backgrounds have unique preferences and needs. If Disney cannot fully understand and meet these personalized demands, the gap between the brand and its consumers may widen, which could impact its global influence. Thus, how to offer services that cater to local cultures and consumer habits while maintaining brand consistency is a key question Disney must consider.

In the realm of social media marketing, Disney also struggles with a lack of innovation. As social media platforms rise in popularity, younger audiences increasingly turn to these platforms for information and entertainment. However, Disney's marketing strategies on social media tend to be more traditional, lacking the creativity and appeal necessary to fully engage these younger audiences.

This may prevent Disney from effectively leveraging the interactivity and outreach potential of social platforms, making it harder to attract younger consumers.

In the streaming business, while Disney has achieved some success, it still faces challenges from formidable competitors like Netflix. As the streaming market matures and competition intensifies, user growth and profitability have become critical indicators of success. To secure its market position, Disney needs to implement diverse strategies to address these challenges and promote its sustainable development.

4. Disney's Marketing Improvement Strategies

To address the existing issues, Disney should first reassess and reinforce its brand story, emphasizing the values and depth of its stories through emotionally-driven marketing campaigns while reducing overreliance on merchandise sales. Disney could design consumer experience-centered activities, such as immersive themed exhibitions and interactive events, to enhance emotional connections with consumers rather than focusing solely on product promotion. By highlighting the emotional and value-driven aspects of its stories and characters, Disney can foster deeper emotional resonance with its audience. Additionally, Disney should establish more effective customer feedback channels, listen to consumer opinions about brand experiences, and adjust its business strategies accordingly to maintain its warm and magical image.

Second, Disney should provide more creative freedom to its creators, encouraging them to explore innovative content without being overly restricted by market demands. A special fund could be established to support innovative projects and ideas, allowing teams and individuals to propose original concepts and providing them with the necessary resources and support. Bringing in creative talent from diverse backgrounds and cultures could also promote varied perspectives, helping Disney explore new content frontiers. At the same time, it's essential to regularly evaluate the effectiveness of innovative initiatives and adjust strategies based on market feedback, ensuring Disney remains competitive in a rapidly changing market environment. An internal reward system for innovation could also be implemented to encourage employees to contribute fresh ideas and solutions, boosting the company's overall creative capacity.

Furthermore, understanding the unique needs of consumers from different regions and cultural backgrounds is crucial. Regular market research, such as offering personalized services and experiences at theme parks and online platforms, can be valuable. By utilizing data analysis tools to gain insights into consumer behavior and preferences and conducting regular market research, Disney can better tailor its products and services to meet these individualized demands.

Fourth, Disney should develop more innovative and interactive social media marketing strategies. Collaborating with influencers and content creators on social media platforms can leverage their influence to promote Disney's brand and content, which can meet the demands of younger audiences while increasing brand appeal. Additionally, investing more in original content and offering diverse programming to attract audiences of different ages and interests will be key. Strengthening the emotional connection between the brand and consumers through storytelling and emotional resonance can also help increase brand loyalty.

Disney should also engage in community participation by organizing events to enhance connections with local consumers. Increasing investments in short-form video platforms such as TikTok and Instagram Reels by creating content that attracts younger viewers can help boost Disney's influence on social media. Lastly, enhancing the brand's social responsibility and public impact will further strengthen its global reputation (Cao et al., 2021).

By implementing the above measures, Disney will not only preserve its core brand values but also adapt more flexibly to market changes, enhancing its competitiveness and achieving sustainable development. Strengthening the brand story and emotional connection will allow consumers to once again feel the warmth and magic that Disney conveys, thereby increasing brand loyalty. Additionally,

by fostering creativity and promoting diverse original content, Disney can continually release unique works that attract audiences of different ages and cultural backgrounds, securing its leadership in the creative industry.

Moreover, improving personalized services will enable Disney to better meet the unique needs of consumers worldwide, shortening the distance between the brand and its customers and enhancing its global influence. At the same time, innovative social media marketing strategies will help Disney more effectively reach younger audiences, leveraging the interactivity and reach of social platforms to increase brand appeal and market penetration. Finally, establishing a mechanism for continuous innovation and evaluation will ensure that Disney can swiftly adjust its strategies in response to the rapidly changing market environment, maintaining flexibility and adaptability.

Through the implementation of these comprehensive measures, Disney will not only strengthen its core brand values but also continuously evolve in the dynamic market environment, ensuring its continued success and development in the global entertainment industry.

5. Summary

As one of the giants in the global entertainment and media industry, Disney's marketing strategy not only highlights the unparalleled global influence of the brand but also, through a diversified approach, successfully bridges the gap between tradition and modernity, reaching the hearts of billions of viewers worldwide. From classic animations to live-action blockbusters, from theme parks to streaming platforms, every aspect of Disney exudes a unique charm, constructing an entertainment empire that transcends age, geography, and culture.

However, behind these achievements, Disney also faces unprecedented challenges. As market competition intensifies and the market environment rapidly changes, maintaining the brand's vitality and innovation has become an indispensable task. In this process, Disney must remain cautious about the negative impact of over-commercialization, ensuring that in the pursuit of profits, it does not lose respect for artistic pursuit and consumer experience. This means Disney must continuously explore and balance the boundary between commerce and art, ensuring that every creative output resonates emotionally rather than merely becoming an accessory to merchandise.

At the same time, as consumer demands become increasingly personalized and diverse, Disney must deepen its understanding and meet the needs of every audience member. Through big data analysis and market research, Disney can more accurately grasp consumer preferences and trends, providing more personalized and tailored products and services. This consumer-centered approach will help Disney stand out in a highly competitive market, winning more consumer love and loyalty.

Furthermore, the rise of social media and the intensifying competition in the streaming business present both new opportunities and challenges for Disney's marketing efforts. In this digital age, Disney needs to continuously innovate its marketing tactics, fully utilizing emerging platforms like social media to strengthen interactions and connections with consumers. Through creative social media campaigns, engaging live-stream interactions, and precisely targeted ad content, Disney can further close the gap with its audience, enhancing its brand influence and reputation.

Disney's future is filled with both challenges and limitless possibilities. Only by maintaining a steadfast pursuit of innovation, keen insights into consumer needs, and flexible responses to market changes can Disney continue to lead in the global market, bringing more joy and surprises to its audience while writing an even more brilliant chapter for the company's future.

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