

A Strategic Model to Strengthen the Brand of Senior Sports

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, with the rapid development of social economy, the country has paid more and more attention to the development of sports industry, and along with the arrival of aging society, the quality of life of the seniors has also received more and more attention from the society. With the increase of the seniors population, the seniors have become a force to be reckoned with in the sports market. Senior people have free time, pay attention to health, have a fixed income, and senior people buy sports products affordable, safe and convenient. With the development of sports industry, senior sports have gradually become a "sunrise industry" in the development of sports industry, and the development of participatory and healthy sports products and the health needs of the seniors are being paid more and more attention to, so the research on the strengthening of senior sports brands has important theoretical and practical significance.

Keywords- strengthening brands; senior sports brands; strategic models

I. INTRODUCTION

The senior sports market, i.e., the market dedicated to providing sports products for senior people (generally over 60 years old), is known as the "silver hair sports market" (Luo, 2007). According to the survey, the seniors population is highly motivated to participate in sports products, and, at present, the seniors in China have strong potential purchasing power, and the large seniors exercise group and strong potential purchasing power cultivate a huge seniors sports market (Yang and Hou, 2015). However, the seniors sports goods are monotonous, the fancy varieties are scarce, there is a lack of sports goods uniquely needed by the seniors, and the seniors do not receive due respect and warm service when purchasing goods, etc. (Zhang, 2022). Today, many companies are racking their brains to find new business opportunities, yet a large untapped sports market is lost to them.

In late 2019, a new coronavirus outbreak occurred in China, an epidemic that caused severe social and economic disruption worldwide and plunged the global economy into the biggest recession since the Great Depression of the 1930s. Many educational institutions and public areas were partially or completely closed, many events were cancelled or postponed, and the spread of the outbreak had a dramatic impact on global aviation, tourism, entertainment, sports, oil markets, financial markets, and more (Sheng et al., 2020). After the gradual stabilization of the epidemic, the importance of seniors people for physical health is becoming more and more obvious, which brings huge business opportunities to the seniors health market and seniors sports market, therefore, it is important to study the main consumption characteristics of seniors sports and the strengthening of sports brand marketing strategies to expand social sports consumption, enhance the competitiveness of sports brands and improve the vitality of the sports market.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Sporting Products

Sporting goods is the collective term for all items used in the course of physical education, competitive sports and physical exercise (Braunstein et al., 2005). In an economic sense, the term sport product describes a sport product or service that is provided to meet the needs of consumers for sport, whether they are spectators, spectators, active participants, or sponsors. Sport products have a unique set of characteristics that make them distinctly different from products in other fields of activity. For each of these specific characteristics, there are a series of recommendations for marketing activities to better adapt the product to the needs and demands of the sport consumer (Grssler and Hkelmann, 2018). Sporting goods are closely linked to the health and recreational pastimes of our people and play an irreplaceable and important role in promoting physical health, cultivating moral character, and developing high moral character (Ewen, 2010). But sports product is complex, not only because it has different levels, but also because of the level of co-production required (Ibsen, 2007). Interestingly, although marketing as a discipline has evolved considerably over the past 20 years, sports marketing has generally focused on commodity-driven logic. As a result, traditional sports marketing theory is product-centric and ignores constant development and innovation (Caruso and Di ,2019).

Sports brand for the senior

Leisure time for the seniors is the time voluntarily spent on physical and mental enjoyment and personal development. As they grow senior, the seniors gradually withdraw from the productive field and no longer need to run around every day for their career and life, the pace of life slows down and there is plenty of leisure time. Ample leisure time is one of the important necessary conditions for participation in sports activities. senior people's participation in sports products activities gradually replace their former labor roles and provide a rich motivation and source for a better life in the future. The life of seniors people after retirement is getting better and better, and more and more of them are able to receive monthly pensions and pension insurance payments and have a more stable source of income. As a result, senior people will live with more confidence and mental happiness in their later years, and their happiness index will be higher (Zhou, 2003). In addition, most seniors people have frugal living habits when they were young and generally have accumulated long-term savings. As they grow senior, most of their children have grown up, which makes the financial burden of the seniors greatly reduced, and the proportion of the seniors using their savings for their own consumption increases significantly. Research on the characteristics of seniors sports consumption behavior shows that seniors consumers pay

more attention to the economy, durability and quality of the sports products they buy when they consume sports. As a result, their consumption is sensible and their purchase decisions are made over a longer period of time (Gao, 2019).

Meanwhile, a survey of the "silver-haired market" found that with the development of the economy and the improvement of people's living standards, the consumption concepts of the seniors are changing, and they not only begin to "focus" on clothing, but also tend to prefer fashion when it comes to fitness and sports. As with the "fitness fever" among young people, the senior sports goods market has huge market development potential. In addition, the seniors are generally "empty nesters", more lonely and eager to communicate with and be respected and recognized by those around them. Individuals participate in the popular jungle by choosing sports consumption behavior in order to obtain the corresponding guarantee of consumption behavior and to prove to the people around them that they are conforming to the wishes of the group and are choosing the same consumption behavior as others, for example, people buy sports clothing to a large extent in order to become a member of the sports group (Wang, Dong and Liu, 2009). Especially after the outbreak, senior people are more concerned about physical health and the safety performance of products (Zhang and Wen, 2022). Healthy life concept Healthy body is the essence of human life, and aesthetic enjoyment is the most valuable treasure in life. Through sports product activities, the seniors can greatly improve the function of the body's circulatory system, enhance lung capacity, optimize their respiratory system, prevent the chances of common age-related diseases, better regulate the body's immune system and emergency response to diseases, and maintain indicators such as elasticity, toughness and firmness of bones, muscles and joints. Therefore, senior sports brands can design their marketing strategies based on these characteristics in order to strengthen their brands and improve their competitiveness.

Consumer behavior

Customer loyalty can be defined as the degree to which a customer holds a positive attitude towards a brand's product, the degree of commitment and the willingness to continue purchasing in the future (Grssler and Hkelmann, 2018). For a company to be invincible in the competition, it is most important to have a group of loyal customers. A loyal customer will remain loyal to the product, the brand and even the company, thus bringing both tangible and intangible benefits to the company on the one hand, the customer increases the company's profits through repeat purchases on the other hand, the customer's verbal communication can expand product awareness and enhance the company's image.

The most basic way to retain customers is to make them satisfied, however, all enterprises can not

always make all customers are 100% satisfied, there are always some customers will feel dissatisfied for various reasons. Customer dissatisfaction is fed back through two types of behavior, namely "exit" and "complaint" (Lubans and Sylva, 2009). "Withdrawal" means that the customer stops buying products from the company, which is essentially a way to get rid of something they hate. "Complaining" is an expression of the customer's dissatisfaction with the company, which is an effort by the customer to make the company change its business practices, improve the quality of its products or services, and seek some form of compensation. In essence, it is a will to change. The purpose of paying attention to customer complaints is to turn dissatisfied customers into loyal customers. Companies should encourage their customers to complain and improve their business situation by solving the problems they complain about. If a company succeeds in doing this, customer retention will increase and revenue will increase. On the contrary, if customer complaints are not handled properly and the complaints are left unresolved for a long time, customers will lose confidence in the company and will be more

inclined to leave the company (Lei et al., 2010). Empirical evidence shows that paying attention to customer complaints not only makes customers more loyal and valuable, but also generous compensation for customer complaints can lead to good reputation and unpredictable economic benefits. In addition, paying attention to customer complaints can be an effective motivation for companies to design products or quality control (Crader and Santomier, 2016). Therefore, continuous innovation in the marketing approach of senior sports is necessary to meet the needs of the society.

III. RESEARCH METHOD

After reviewing relevant literature and papers, the study then analyzed the current reality and problems of the senior sports market through interviews with randomly encountered senior consumers, with the aim of innovating a marketing model for sports brands in the senior branding.

Model Analysis

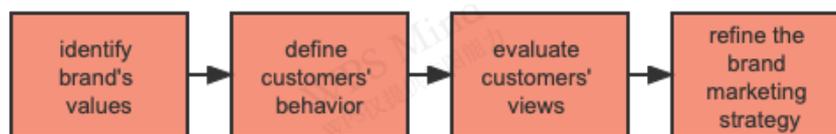


Figure 1: The framework was build depend on De Chernaton's research (2010)

Identify brand's values

There is no doubt that companies are actually seeking the value of loyal customers. Loyal customers are usually extremely satisfied with the product, and a high degree of satisfaction can develop a sense of emotional dependence on the brand, not just a rational preference. In fact, customer satisfaction is a sense of pleasure after the customer's needs are satisfied, which is a psychological activity, and loyal customers show a purchase behavior, and it is a purposeful and thoughtful purchase behavior (Ying, 2005).

Excellent sports products will play a very good role in cultivating the interest and feelings of the senior in the process of their sports activities. Today, many operators engaged in sports products do not consider the senior sports product market as an important development space, and fail to take into full consideration factors related to the physical condition, psychological needs, and sensitivity to travel prices of senior adults when designing sports product offerings (Ratten, 2016). The number of sports product products designed that are truly suitable for the senior is too small and far from meeting the needs of the growing number of senior sports product enthusiasts. Therefore it is important to determine the value of the brand and better identify the target customers of the brand.

Define customers' behavior

Motivation is the cause of behavior, the inner force that stimulates and motivates a response and gives a specific direction to that response (Shnaars, 1991). Therefore, studying the motivation of senior consumers is the basis for analyzing their behavior.

The economic basis for the formation of senior people's consumption motives is relatively strong and authoritative (Szymanski and Kuypers, 1999; Tobin and Begley, 2004). The senior are mostly sensible in their purchases, and they are most likely to form effective demand once they have formed a purchase motive. Because children have become independent and their financial burden has been reduced, most of the senior have the habit of saving, and most of them have saved money when they retired, so most of them are not in financial difficulties and have a certain economic foundation. After their children become independent adults and their economic burden is reduced, some senior consumers have a strong psychology of compensation, trying to compensate for their unfulfilled consumption wishes due to past conditions (Grossmann and Dietl, 2009). Therefore, in the face of the unprecedentedly broad market of sports products for the senior, the development of diversified special sports products for the senior is an inevitable trend for the development and growth of the sports products market for the senior.

Evaluate customers' views

Senior adults are susceptible to multiple influences of natural and human factors, technical and equipment factors, and physical and psychological characteristics of senior adults in the process of physical activity (Smith and Stewart, 2010). Most sports products do not arouse the curiosity and sense of favor among senior sports enthusiasts, which greatly affects the development speed and prospects of senior sports products in China.

The purchase motivation of senior consumers is formed by the pursuit of comfort and convenience (Rein and Shields, 2006). These products can make up for certain physical defects and deficiencies of the senior, help them to be healthy, and bring more convenience and comfort to their lives.

Refine the brand marketing strategy

Seniors are knowledgeable and experienced, and tend to exhibit high levels of self-confidence and self-

esteem. Seniors have formed more stable attitudinal tendencies and habitual behaviors in their long-term consumer life (Stotlar, 1993; Sung and Mondello, 2019). In order to attract more senior consumers, companies should pay attention to the promotion of "old" and traditional brands, and it is not wise to change trademarks and store names frequently. To attract senior consumers to buy sports products, it is also necessary to determine the distinctive image created by sports products and provide promotional materials for sports products that are detailed and meet the needs of senior consumers. Make full use of mass media such as newspapers, television and radio, as well as additional sports product fairs, to advertise well and deliver the message of senior sports products to as many potential viewers as possible (Foroughi et al.,2016).

4P in Branding Analysis



Figure 2: 4P in branding analysis

Product Strategy

Senior sports are a way to promote physical and mental health and meet the needs of senior adults for fitness and recreation, i.e., emphasizing relaxation and fun activities (Hu, Li and Zheng, 2020). Therefore, senior sports are characterized by the low professionalism of most programs, low requirements for technology and venue facilities, a feeling of freedom and relaxation, and an emphasis on the freedom and fun of activities. Going on hiking excursions, cycling and hiking with friends and relatives has become a necessary part of the holiday life of the seniors (Ying, 2005). Therefore, the product design should focus on the practicality, convenience and safety of the product.

Personal comfort becomes more and more important as we age, and avoiding arguments and troubles are the primary life principles. senior adults are less concerned with the comments of their peers and their

appearance; they are more concerned with comfort. Comfort can be positioned through advertising and services. For example, some banks have seating where customers can rest and socialize while conducting business. Honda car ads emphasize space and comfort rather than speed and performance. Comfort can also be psychological. Personal computers and home theaters are not selling well among the seniors, and Sharp Electric is developing a home theater that can talk to the user while in use. Technology products can only attract senior consumers if they are more user-friendly, in other words, more comfortable to use (Huang, 2013).

Price strategy

Due to the high development of social productivity and the increasing consumption level of the seniors, in order to achieve the purpose of participating and watching sports activities, it is necessary to make the necessary economic expenditure to meet the demand for

fitness, entertainment, leisure, socialization and other services during sports activities (Zhang, 2013). This service supply caused by the development of the senior sports brand is a product of certain socioeconomic development.

Currently, most seniors people do not have high income levels and cannot afford to buy certain goods although they have a demand for them. This determines that an important characteristic of the seniors consumer market is that the goods provided for the seniors must be inexpensive and good quality. Expensive goods will not be easily accepted by the seniors. Senior people have been through a lot of hardships and know that money is not easy to come by, so even if they have money on hand, they will not spend it indiscriminately. Therefore, the price of the goods becomes an important factor in whether the seniors have the desire to buy them as a purchase behavior (Xie, 2009).

Place strategy

For senior adults and other consumers, having easy access to goods is an important way to add value to a product (Ind, 2013). Transportation is therefore a key area of convenience targeting. Home delivery has a large market among senior adults. Even if some products or services are not available for home delivery, smart marketers make them easily available to senior customers. Some supermarkets offer shoppers a free bus ride from home to the store, while others allow customers to order large items through specially designed TV monitors. Direct marketing may be a good way to locate convenience (Yuki, 2022). But for those who have left the workforce, direct marketing is not the best way to provide convenience. Many retirees prefer to go to the store. Likewise, for seniors, time-saving convenience is not important. In addition, stores should be located in residential areas with high concentrations of seniors. In-store facilities should be automated as much as possible, with more rest areas; in-store services should be meticulous and attentive, enthusiastically providing product introduction and shopping advice for seniors with limited mobility. Door-to-door service, telephone reservation shopping, after-sales service, etc. Channel strategy in the brand construction should be to increase the convenience of the seniors, as close to the main line of consumers. Since the price of products needed by the seniors is relatively low, companies must choose the right distribution channels to reduce costs. In order to reduce the cost, the distribution channel should be short and moderately wide (Varadarajan, 2019).

Promotion strategy

Promotion is an important part of the marketing mix. It is a business activity that conveys information about a product to consumers, arouses their interest and gets them to buy. After retirement, people still want to make a difference to society. Marketers who position their products and services in a way that provides opportunities for self-growth are the ones who make money (Xu, 2022).

Senior adults hate being dependent on others in their daily lives, but aging forces many to rely on others, and many products help senior adults escape dependency. Many of the health problems faced by senior adults can often be solved by exercise, (Sun, 2022). For example, major sports brands are actively thinking about how to design sports products to be easier to put on and take off, which can not only increase sales, but also gain more attention from senior customers (Strode, 2011).

In terms of advertising, the theme of advertisements should try to reflect the value of senior people's existence in society and maintain their self-esteem. Advertisements made for senior sports consumers should be more introductory, suggestive and persuasive, while avoiding bragging, exaggerated ads and celebrity ads. In terms of the choice of advertising media, we found that audio-visual advertising and newspaper advertising are the two more important media. At the same time, we should also pay attention to the various psychological stereotypes formed by the seniors during their long-term life experiences, and move people with emotions and think of them at all times (Kringstad, 2018).

In terms of public relations. Enterprises can show the public their urgent desire to serve the seniors through media campaigns, exhibitions, free services, etc. For example, special health-themed lectures for seniors customers; free simple medical examinations; displays of sports products needed by the seniors and promotion of senior sporting goods stores or counters. Senior people have complex psychology and high self-esteem. Sales staff should communicate more with the seniors from the perspective of their interests and provide some free samples of sporting goods (Vargo and Lusch, 2016).

IV. CONCLUSION

In the current sports market, as long as enterprises have the vision to seize the opportunity to seize the demand of the senior sports market and continuously strengthen the brand, enterprises will have a great harvest. There is no disadvantaged market, only disadvantaged brands; there is no disadvantaged consumption, only disadvantaged goods.

The way of thinking and behavior of the senior citizens is different from that of the young people. The older they are, the greater the differences. In order to successfully target products in the senior market, it is necessary to position the market. The senior market can be segmented based on demographic characteristics, socio-economic characteristics, geographic location, psychosocial, health status, behavior, media preferences, and other factors. However, these segments can also be less effective, and savvy marketers always bypass age and approach the factors that influence purchase directly. Successfully targeting the senior market should be done with an emphasis on comfort, safety, convenience, value

for money, social involvement and traditional values as motivators, and then these factors can be used to develop proven marketing strategies to reinforce brand effects and achieve expanded market reach.

With the change of consumption concept of the senior citizens, senior sports products have become an emerging product in the sports market and a hot spot for the future consumption of the senior citizens. Seizing the historical opportunity that the senior sports goods market has just emerged, timely adjust the brand management strategy, develop targeted and first-class sports goods and strengthen the sports brand effect, which will make the senior sports brand become a new highlight and growth point of the sports industry.

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