

Brandy Melville 's Social Media Marketing Strategy-Taking Girls in Generation Z as an Example

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Abstract: A fast fashion brand that has become topical and popular in recent years, it must be Brandy Melville. In the era of fast fashion dying out, BM really has a big market. People never see their advertisements because they don't advertise. Brandy Melville used social media marketing strategies to successfully create concepts such as BM girl, BM style, etc. Make the brand a representative of American style clothing. Brandy Melville is especially popular among Gen Z girls. This article analyzes the success and controversy of BM's social media marketing strategy by studying the relationship between BM and z-generation girls, the BM brand's 4P marketing strategy, and the social issues brought about by the BM brand.

Keywords: Brandy Melville, Gen Z, social media, body anxiety

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Based on the *Digital 2022: Global Overview Report*, there are 4.62 billion social media users around the world in January 2022 [1]. Social media marketing is a marketing method that uses digital marketing methods to promote products or services on social networks or platforms. Because of the increase of social media users, some brands operate social media account to reach more Generation Z (Born in 1997-2012) consumers.

Although Generation Y (also called Millennials, born in 1981-1996) recognizes the main force in the consumer market, now Generation Z is gradually leading the consumption trend in certain fields [2]. According to research, Gen Z make up 26% of the global population [3]. Generation Z grew up in a comfortable economic environment with abundant supplies. They live in a world where the Internet, social media and mobile devices are the main sources of communication, information dissemination, entertainment and self-expression. Z-era consumers are no longer just about products, they are more about "feeling".

1.2. GenZ and BM

A survey of 105 members of Gen Z conducted by Research found that more than half said they get most of their clothes from fast-fashion brands [4]. Brandy Melville is a fast fashion brand was founded in 1970 in Italy by Silvio Marsan and his son Stephan Marsan. It opened its first store in the United States in 2009 and has become increasingly popular. This brand now has 3.31 million followers on

Instagram(@BrandyMelvilleUSA). In September 2019, Brandy Melville entered the Chinese market and gained a large number of fans. So far it has more than 396,000 followers on a Chinese social platform called The RED Book.

Brandy Melville's successful marketing strategy on social media, such as Instagram and The Red Book, has attracted a large number of young Gen Z girls. The report will examine Brandy Melville's marketing strategies on various social platforms and the impact these strategies are having on the brand and Generation Z consumers.

2. Gen Z Girls and Brandy Melville

Gen Z girls have three consumer motivations, social intercourse, persona, and pleasure themselves.

Consumption allows Gen Z girls to meet like-minded people, and at the same time, can better become a common topic with friends. Gen Z girls are willing to buy fashion items that reflect their own taste and attract the attention of others. They have the opportunity to deepen their self-awareness and deepen their interest through consumption, continuous exploration and experimentation. This forms their persona, and they show their unique charm to the outside world. Consumption brings instant gratification to Gen Z and makes them feel happy in life.

Girls who wear item from Brady Melville are called “BM Girls” or “Brandy Girls”. “Everybody knows the quintessential “Brandy girl”: effortlessly beautiful, always in style, but most importantly, she is thin” [5]. The BM girl is a popular style of Gen Z girls. They are happy to be called BM girls. The BM style is dominated by the American casual style that is both sunny and sweet. A common combination is a navel-baring dress with a hip skirt or loose wide-leg jeans. The main features are: short, tight, and very revealing, creating a pure and lustful girly feeling.

Brandy Melville has brought along a new style of clothing to create a style of expression, which makes it easier for consumers to form memories. When people see a floral short T-shirt, even though it's not from Brandy, they immediately think BM style.

3. Brandy Melville’s Business Model Analysis

3.1. Product

Brandy Melville is an Italian teen clothing brand. Simple design, simple style clothing in black, white, gray main colors, floral, stripes and ethnic prints. The e prints of each season have their own character. One of its main features is that it only comes in "one size" - size S. Because there is only one size, the girls who buy the clothes in the store focus on the style and focus on the matching.

“It is interesting to note that Brandy Melville’s product research team consists of teenage employees starting at age 15 in an attempt to keep the company’s styles relevant and contemporary” [6].

3.2. Price

Brandy Melville is fast fashion brands. The products are mostly \$10-50. However, because it only produces one size of clothing, it reduces a lot of management and other costs, and the profit space is still relatively large.

3.3. Promotion

“Brandy Melville does not employ traditional advertising techniques. However, they depend heavily on social media for their advertising” [6]. Brandy aimed at social media platforms such as The RED Book and Instagram. This approach is in line with the trend dominated by contemporary social media, and it has successfully screened the consumer group of young girls who are the target of the brand.

First, Brandy Melville's clothing is worn by many celebrities, driving the fan economy. like Hailey Bieber "wore a pair of \$40 jeans from Brandy Melville with a white tank" on her date night [7]. "Even with all the money in the world, Kendall Jenner still chooses to shop at Brandy Melville" [8]. In the Chinese market, celebrities such as Nana Ouyang and Mi Yang have appeared in private clothes of Brandy Melville. The appearance of these female celebrities is followed and learned by young girls. So when they wear BM's clothes, it helps to leverage the fan base to pursue the same style, which increases brand exposure and sales.

Second, Brandy Melville creates very eye-catching public visibility. People often imitate behaviors around them, which psychologists call "social proof". Part of the reason why people behave in such a herd is that they feel more secure when others provide them with reference information [9].

On Instagram, the hashtag #brandiyusa has 257,000 posts. When search for "Brandy Melville" on The RED Book, a popular social media in China, will turn up more than 310,000 posts. It cooperates with a large number of KOLs (Key Opinion Leader) and KOCs (Key Opinion Consumer) who are suitable for wearing BM clothing, including models, outfit bloggers, and normal people. When their photos appear tiled on the Internet, they are subtly attracted to consumers.

Third, Brandy Melville focuses on cultivating KOS (Key Opinion Sales). When you approach Brandy Melville, you can see that all the sales are tall and thin beauties. They are exactly what the brand describes as the most standard BM girls. Almost all posts on their Instagram accounts are tagged to people who in this picture. Some of the models in these photos are also their sales. They expose their accounts through Brandy Melville to attract more fans. They promote the brand through the influence of their sales on social media. On The RED Book, There are almost 3000 post sharing their experience of working in Brandy Melville which showed their beauty are certified by Brandy Melville. It also help better manage their social accounts.

3.4. Location

There are a total of 34 Brandy Melville locations in United States as of April 21, 2021 [10]. Almost all major cities in the United States have BM offline stores. Brandy Melville's online store can shipping over 13 countries over world. It's easy to buy a clothes from Brandy Melville.

In China, only the two largest cities, Beijing and Shanghai, have Brandy Melville offline stores. It aims at target customers and open stores in prosperous and young business districts, attracting young and fashionable girls. Except Brandy Melville's official website, The RED Book online store is also a platform that customers can buy their products. The RED Book is one of the main marketing social platforms of Brandy Melville.

4. Controversy on Social Topics

Brandy Melville's various marketing methods not only brought them customers and attentions, but also triggered discussions on social issues. For example, discussions about body anxiety and about hunger marketing. All negative problems and discussions created topics and disputes for this brand. Controversies bring attentions to the brand.

4.1. Body Anxiety

Today's rising status of women and women's counterattack against traditional concepts. Huffington Post article in 2014 called out Brandy Melville's labeling of their aesthetic as "young, white, skinny, and long-legged." Five years later, conversations about diversity of race, size, gender identity, and sexuality are becoming more common within fashion, yet the girls featured on Brandy Melville's Instagram are still the same young, skinny, long-legged, white girls [11].

Extremely small and one-size clothes created body anxiety, Brandy Melville over-marketed and touted girls with thin frames. There is also a "BM girls 'height and weight comparison table" circulating on Chinese social networks, which makes Brandy Melville the target of public criticism. This brand conveys the costumes that people who can't wear their clothes is because they're not skinny enough and not perfect. On social media, BM girls are in the same camp, promoting their self-identity by sharing their outfits and interacting with other BM girls. Girls are inevitably drawn to comparisons and anxiety.

All sales in Brandy Melville are typical BM girls. Some customers complained about the unprofessionalism of their sales because of their inability to help and poor attitude. Insider report claimed that Stephen Marsan, the CEO of Brandy Melville, only allow girls who are thin and pretty work in his stores. Insider also reported multiple women were fired for their physical appearance and race. Marsan has fostered an atmosphere that promotes misogyny and racism [12]. The sales in Brandy Melville are not to serve customers, but to market the concept of Brandy Melville, a concept of pursuing white, young and thin. They walked in the store wearing Brandy Melville's clothes, making everyone think that wearing Brandy Melville's clothes can also become a white, young, thin girl who meets the standard in the eyes of others.

4.2. Hunger Marketing

Brandy Melville has been criticized for its hunger marketing since it entered the Chinese market in 2019. Hot-selling products in BM's physical stores and offline stores are often sold out as soon as they are new. In fact, they are deliberately reducing the supply, creating a phenomenon of short supply.

It is precisely because of the illusion that Brandy Melville's products is in short supply, which stimulates consumers' panic buying. When search "Brandy Melville Replenishment" on The RED Book, there are more than 3 thousand posts. When people browse information about the replenishment of BM products, they also go to the official website to place an order. Although people don't really want to buy this product, they will buy it first because they are afraid of being sold out. For girls in this age group of Gen Z, wearing a "scarce" piece of clothing is also a way to show their personal uniqueness.

In addition, the strategy of new and replenishment from time to time also allows consumers of the brand to enter the store many times or enter the official website to check. This is called "Variable rewards" in marketing. Consumers will unconsciously spend time and energy on squatting products. When the new product release, the cost of time invested will increase the possibility of impulsive consumption.

5. Conclusion

Brandy Melville's social media marketing strategies allow them to expand brand awareness in the industry and foster customer loyalty. Also, Brandy Melville shaped the delicate image of BM girl, making BM style popular. There is no denying that Brandy Melville's marketing strategy is successful.

On the other side, Brandy Melville's social media marketing strategy has also caused a lot of controversy and brought a lot of discussion about social issues. They screen their customers and target users with detailed and precision. Although some groups are not Brandy Melville's audience, BM girls who can wear Brandy Melville's clothes will be more loyal to Brandy Melville.

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