

Research on Women's Care Marketing Strategy of Proya

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Abstract: As Chinese women's needs for skincare grow and domestic cosmetics brands develop, they are gradually shifting their focus from products from abroad to domestic products because of the relatively lower price and the same ingredient. Proya stands out of those domestic cosmetics brands, and it can be seen obviously that it invests much money and effort in marketing to target women group. This paper intends to analyze how the marketing strategy of Proya works and how women consumers react to it. The method used to analyze this marketing strategy is mainly 4P Strategy which represents product, price, place, and promotion to deeply observe Proya's key to success: how Proya has made their business choices in terms of product classification, pricing, location, promotion with marketing, set the brand apart from other skincare brands and become famous in China. Then the paper compares the success of Proya with other brands in the same industry, and finds its outstanding advantages and disadvantages. Finally, It can be concluded that the marketing of Proya is so concerned with the female group. Instead of spreading anxiety and forcing consumers to buy, Proya promotes and builds its products from the perspective of women, and becomes a brand centred on the female group, which greatly contributes to its business success.

Keywords: Proya, marketing, 4P Strategy, women, feminism

1. Introduction

Pureness, Nature, Safety, and Effectiveness are the four main descriptions for Proya's products, and its sales have been among the top domestic cosmetic brands in recent years. Besides the intention of product research and development, it also attaches great importance to marketing. The concept of female equality has always been emphasized by the brand, and this concept is reflected in the brand's marketing strategy, and the care for female groups eventually brings the loyalty of the target group of the brand, achieving a win-win situation. This is the progress of domestic brands and what other brands need to learn. The 4P Strategy is applied to look at the difference between Proya and other brands taking price, product, place, and promotion into consideration, to find out why it can be listed at the top of the domestic cosmetics brands. Additionally, it examines the benefits and drawbacks of integrated brand marketing from the standpoint of consumers, how these should be viewed in light of Proya's theoretical operation, realistic adjustment, and the relationship between brand and consumers, and how these can be referred to in order to improve the entire developing domestic market.

2. 4P Strategy

2.1. Product

Proya seeks the concept of making skin more natural and healthier, thus, it pays much attention to the effectiveness and safety of product ingredients. It has continuously enhanced its innovation capability. Xuefei Hu and Yijun Chen mentioned that by the end of 2020, the company has a total of 185 patents, including 75 state-authorized invention patents, 30 utility model patents, and 80 appearance patents [1]. It adopts cutting-edge marine biotechnology and adds safe marine ingredients from all over the world into its products. They insist on the philosophy that the infinite vitality of the ocean can also add new strength to the skin. One of its star products is firming essence which has retinol which is a popular ingredient in these years because it can help with anti-ageing. Based on the increasingly mature product life cycle digital management, the brand upgraded the existing popular product and expanded its category, and launched a new series of products, it upgraded the ingredients, formula, and packaging of anti-ageing products, and launched version 2.0, and introduced other new products such as repair serum and sunscreen. These popular items can further shape the sense of technology and youth of the brand, while new items can show brand innovation, Proya continuously grabs the attention of customers, increases the rate of customer unit price, and repeat purchase, and enhances the brand stickiness [2].

2.2. Price

The price of products is basically between 200 RMB and 300 RMB since Proya is positioned as a mid-end brand. The price of brand products will be differentiated according to the efficacy of different products. Among many products, the price of moisturizing products will be cheaper than that of anti-ageing products because antiaging products mainly target the women group who are above 30 years old and have a need for anti-ageing. A toner could be even less than 200 RMB, and the most expensive is the essence and cream containing anti-ageing ingredients, but also around 300 RMB. The group of women who are above 30 years old have jobs, and they are able to spend much more on skincare products than those students who have not had the ability to make money. In general, the price of all its products is acceptable. What's most important, even young customers are powerful. With the increase of the domestic cosmetic base and the improvement of consumption level, the domestic cosmetic market will continue to expand, "the post-90s" and "the post-00s" will become the main body of cosmetic consumption, they have their personality and consumption ability [3].

2.3. Place

Proya now focuses on consumers in third- and fourth-tier cities and towns in China. But to a certain extent, sales channels can determine whether a brand can survive in a fiercely competitive environment. With the development of the Internet, e-commerce channels have become the main channels in China's consumer market, and online channels have become an important sales channel for Proya to increase revenue. It has shifted its focus from the original stores to e-commerce channels to achieve coordinated online channels and offline channels [3]. As Guoqing Chen commented about this model that it achieves timeliness and ease of sale, offline channels are responsible for differentiated management, mainly providing customers with brand experience, while online channels make more detailed use of each platform to improve user experience, activity, and brand loyalty [4].

Customers who are used to buying offline can directly go to the stores and communicate with the sales so that they can more closely learn the story of the brand. The relationship built with the sales can bring a great experience to the customers as well. And other customers who like buying online

more can have multiple choices. They can buy Proya's products at Taobao, Tmall, Jingdong, Vipshop, and other platforms. Jie Qiu and Shijie Wang analyzed that the outbreak of the Coronavirus has further promoted the development of online sales platforms. In 2020, online retail sales of physical goods are increasing, and the development of online retail is also accelerating [5]. Looking at the data, in 2020, online revenue accounted for 70%, and in the first half of 2021, that share increased to 80.82%. The percentage of revenue from offline channels has been decreasing year by year, but Proya still does not give up managing offline channels and chooses to work with young artists since their fans can support them and buy the products [6]. This combination of sales channels has continuously improved so that customers can buy their products in any way. That means it greatly promoted the growth of sales.

2.4. Promotion

Promotion should be the part in which Proya spends a lot. It has invested heavily in mainstream platforms, known as Redbook, TikTok, Weibo, Taobao, and Kuaishou. As Guoqing Chen said that it has targeted content marketing based on the nature of users on different platforms [4]. In the Tmall store, the strategy of popular products was implemented to create star products, and the life was carried out a fine operation to improve the sales proportion of life. The operation of members' recruitment and re-purchase was comprehensively upgraded which improved the store's recruitment ability and the proportion of store members and the store's customer quality and customer price and comprehensively upgraded the vision, content and service experience. On the platform of TikTok and Kuaishou, Proya captured short videos and live broadcasts, emphasized brand self-broadcast, and self-broadcast sales exceed those of talent. It also works with high-quality and popular hosts from these platforms. What's more, Proya optimized product structure, improved product divination, improved gross profit and net profit, paid attention to fans' operation and improved operational quality. For JD's platform, it further strengthened the refined operation management mode, innovated the operation and played method, optimized the product structure, successfully created a number of popular products in various categories such as sets, essence and eye cream, optimized the delivery cost rhythm, and promoted the sales of those popular products and new products. Other platforms are to optimize the operation content, adjust the product structure, and strengthen the matching degree between the goods and the customers that correspond to a specific platform, refine the operation to improve the daily sales ratio, and cooperate with head KOLs in depth, strength content promotion and recommendation, and guide word-of-mouth communication [2]. For example, users on Redbook concern more about the topics of beauty and fashion. Proya then focuses on advertising the ace ingredient in its products and how effective is that ingredient in helping people achieve what they want. It asks some head KOLs to try their products and then recommend them to their followers. When people search 'Proya' on Redbook, they see a lot of positive experiences shared by other users, they will become interested in this brand, and then they will buy the products.

4P theory is a theoretical framework built around producing, pricing, distribution, and promotion, but this theory ignores the influence of the external environment. Such a marketing mix is enterprise-centred and pays more attention to the enterprise's product development, pricing strategy, channel laying, and promotion methods, ignoring consumers to a certain extent [7]. However, Proya makes up for this lack by caring much about the consumers. It is worth noting that the direction of its propaganda is more and more toward the younger generation of women's thinking. Today, women pay much more attention to their own development, explore their own value as an individual, appreciate themselves and discover their potential rather than being good wives and good mothers. In 2022, the brand launched a campaign with the theme "Gender is not a boundary, prejudice is" [7].

In addition, they continue to produce high-quality videos to convey the theme of fighting gender bias and breaking stereotypes of women in society. The videos of these campaigns would be released

depending on various holidays. For International Women's Day Proya made a video in which women did lion dancing. The lion dance is a traditional Chinese dance in which people would wear lion costumes and imitate the lion's movements to celebrate Chinese holidays. Traditionally lion dancers are men, however, Proya's video focuses on the rare female performers. The video shows the strength of the female performers, the high skill of performing the lion dance and how much effort they must take to do so. In the meantime, the narrator narrates the stories of these female performers for the audience to hear. The video constantly emphasizes Herstory instead of History that a lot of females are invisible and they should be seen. Proya not only shows women's physical strength but also pays attention to women's emotions. In today's high-pressure environment, the brand encourages women not to fall into emotional shame, dare to speak out their inner thoughts, care more for themselves and accept themselves no matter it is positive or negative [8]. In fact, this marketing strategy is very consistent with agile marketing as Lin Wantong summarized, the adjustment of an agile marketing plan should always focus on customer needs and carry out marketing work from the perspective of customers, so as to gain more customers recognition and love, so as to become a popular brand in such a fierce market [9].

Proya has been insisting on the behaviour of the "Spirit of Discovery", treating the public with a sincere attitude, continuing to pay attention to social hot spots and output their own clear views of love and equality, and taking the social responsibility that has been doing public welfare actions as a well-known domestic beauty brand [2]. Plus, high-quality advertising and the concept of keeping up with the times all make Proya stand out from other domestic cosmetics brands and create a brand image that truly cares about women.

Proya's marketing is its strength, however, it also poses some potential risks for the brand. Its R&D expenditure in 2020 was 72.2 million RMB, a decrease of 3.22% compared with that in 2019, but its investment in image publicity and brand promotion increased by 387 million RMB, an increase of 46.71%. That means it takes up a large proportion of brand online promotion costs, while the investment in R&D decreased [6]. It is unable to accurately predict whether this kind of promotion can be sustained and accepted by people while the products are not useful to the consumers anymore. The most important thing is that the core of the brand is always the product, brand image is crucial, but the loyalty of consumers to the brand is basically about their experience of the product.

3. Competition

The competitors of Proya are mainly other domestic cosmetic brands. Among them, One Leaf mask has a high market share, Herborist appeared earlier and had success in the domestic cosmetics market [3]. Take Marubi as an example, this brand is mainly based on skin science and biological science research, focuses on the anti-ageing of eyes, and positions itself in the middle and high-end that its products mainly target the women group aged between 25 and 45 years old [10]. Different from Proya, Marubi focuses more on inviting consumers to go to their stores to experience and buy their products, while shopping malls are also a big marketing challenge for Porya [3].

As Proya is good at online marketing, it is more willing to cooperate with younger celebrities who have a lot of young fans respectively. Young people spend much more time on social media than it uses social media to increase their exposure, and with the celebrity effect, sales will increase immediately. They utilize the popularity of those celebrities to promote their products and be known by younger fans. Instead of inviting young idols who have a large number of fans to cooperate, Marubi prefers choosing artists with higher national popularity to represent it as it positions itself as a middle and high-end brand. In the process of cooperation with artists, these two brands can integrate each other's advantages in the facet of promotion, Proya can timely see social hot spots and transmits them to the outside of the audience in its own way, which is the most understandable mode for young people nowadays, and it may try to consider inviting artists with a high national reputation to

cooperate just like Marubi did. After all, those artists are well-known, and Proya can gain wider recognition through this, rather than just young people. Just like the success of online channels, it can also better manage offline channels and improve customer experience to increase their love for the brand.

4. Conclusion

For so many years, the product effect of Proya is stable. It is friendly to the young group, and even the price of high-end products, will not be set particularly high; people can buy the products from both offline stores and online platforms, and even online channels bring great convenience to consumers the most. What's more, Proya spends huge amounts of money to present its products in various mainstream media according to the characteristics of these platforms such as cooperating with KOLs and penetrating various groups. But what makes Proya really stands out from other domestic skincare brand is its care for women. Proya's women's care is a long-term project, not just once a year, with female-related advertising campaigns, and public service. It has been existing since they were announced. In such a misogynistic environment where women are easily stuck in beauty and become more and more anxious, Proya is willing to listen to women's voices and use its fame to speak for more people, which is something that many other domestic brands have yet to do. Only Proya can focus more on products and have more creative ideas for offline stores to let more consumers buy them or become loyal to the brand. In general, Proya's marketing strategy is quite friendly and full of love for women as a Chinese cosmetic brand. Most of the other cosmetic brands have been always delivering an emotion of anxiety to women and a message that their products are to give female identity, thus, they should realize that the products are existed to serve people instead of controlling them.

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