

The Impact of Marketing Channel Changes on Brand Loyalty in the Digital Era

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Abstract

With the rapid development of information technology, the wave of digitalization has profoundly changed the marketing landscape. Traditional marketing channels are facing challenges, and emerging digital marketing channels such as search engine marketing, social media marketing, content marketing, email marketing, and short video and live streaming marketing have become an important way for enterprises to build their brands and connect with consumers by virtue of their precise, interactive and efficient features. The purpose of this paper is to discuss the types and characteristics of marketing channels in the digital era, and to analyze the measurements and influencing factors of brand loyalty and its new changes in the context of digitalization. On this basis, it focuses on analyzing the influence mechanism of digital marketing channels on brand loyalty, including enhancing brand awareness, promoting emotional connection, improving purchase convenience and realizing precision marketing. Finally, combining theoretical analysis and practical insights, we put forward strategic suggestions such as optimizing digital marketing channel combinations, strengthening brand-consumer interactions, improving the quality of digital marketing content, and utilizing data-driven marketing decision-making, with a view to providing theoretical references and practical guidance for enterprises to enhance brand loyalty in the digital era.

Keywords

Digital Era; Marketing Channels; Brand Loyalty; Influence Mechanism; Marketing Strategy

I. Introduction

The rapid development of digital technology has profoundly reshaped the business model and marketing landscape. Traditional marketing channels are facing challenges, and digital marketing channels relying on the advantages of the Internet and big data are rapidly emerging, opening up new horizons for brand communication and value delivery. Brand loyalty, as a core intangible asset of an enterprise, is crucial to obtaining a sustainable competitive advantage. Under the background of information explosion and product homogenization, effective use of digital channels to

enhance and maintain brand loyalty has become a key issue for enterprises. By virtue of its interactivity, precision and efficiency, digital channels not only reshape the communication between brands and consumers, but also profoundly influence consumers' cognitive, emotional and even purchasing decisions, which plays a significant role in the formation and consolidation of loyalty. In this paper, we will systematically sort out the types and characteristics of digital marketing channels, discuss the measurement and influencing factors of brand loyalty, deeply analyze the influence mechanism of digital channels on brand loyalty, and put forward corresponding marketing strategies, aiming at providing theoretical references and practical guidance for enterprises to enhance brand loyalty in the wave of digitization.

2. Types and Characteristics of Marketing Channels in the Digital Era

The wave of digitalization has completely overturned the map and operation mode of traditional marketing channels. The way of communication between enterprises and consumers, the path of brand value transmission and the scene of transaction behavior have all undergone profound changes. In this context, a variety of digital technology-centered marketing channels have emerged, each with its own characteristics, which together constitute the current complex and efficient marketing ecosystem. Understanding and mastering the characteristics of these channels is the key for enterprises to win the market in the digital era.

2.1 Search Engine Marketing (SEM)

Search engine marketing (SEM) through search engine optimization (SEO) and paid search advertising (PPC) two core means to help enterprises in the user's active search to enhance the visibility of the brand or product services, in order to achieve business objectives. SEO is committed to optimizing the internal and external factors to enhance the natural ranking of the site, to attract high-quality free traffic, the effect of long-lasting but slow to see the effect; PPC through the key word bidding PPC is a keyword bidding system that purchases advertising space to achieve immediate and precise promotion, the effect can be measured quickly but faces cost and competition pressure. SEM as a whole has the main advantages of precise targeting and high measurability, but also puts forward higher requirements for professional skills and cost control.

2.2 Social Media Marketing

Social Media Marketing (SMM) is an activity in which enterprises utilize various social network platforms (e.g. WeChat, Weibo, Jittery, Facebook, etc.) for brand building, user interaction, product promotion and sales promotion. It operates in a variety of ways, including content creation and dissemination, community operation, real-time interactive communication, precise advertising and cooperation with opin-

ion leaders (KOL/KOC). The core advantage of social media marketing lies in its strong interactivity and communication power, which can quickly reach a wide range of users and build communities, but it also faces the challenges of rapid information iteration, high pressure on content creation and high risk of negative public opinion.

2.3 Content Marketing

Content Marketing (CM) is a strategic approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistently consistent content to attract and retain target audiences and ultimately drive profitable behavior, with a core focus on building trust through the exchange of value rather than direct selling. Content formats range from blogs, reports, infographics, short videos, podcasts and more. Its distinctive features are non-intrusive and value-oriented, and it is committed to building brand trust and professional image, cultivating potential customers and enhancing stickiness, but it usually has a long cycle of results measurement and high requirements for content quality and insights.

2.4 Email Marketing

Email Marketing, as a direct marketing method, achieves brand promotion, customer relationship maintenance and information delivery by sending emails to target user databases, and still occupies an important position in the digital marketing mix by virtue of its cost-effectiveness, high degree of personalization and automation, and direct contact with users. Its main forms include newsletters, promotional emails, personalized and automated emails (e.g. welcome, cart abandonment reminders) and transactional emails. Their effectiveness is highly dependent on the quality of the mailing list, subscriber permission and creative design of the content, while taking care to avoid subscriber backlash.

2.5 Short Video & Live Streaming Marketing

Relying on platforms such as Jittery Voice, Shutterbug and Taobao Live, short video and live marketing attract users through dynamic, intuitive and interactive visual content, and are marketing channels that have developed rapidly in recent years. Short video marketing is used to showcase and interact with brands through the creation and release of short, creative videos; live marketing interacts with viewers through real-time video streaming, showcasing products online, answering questions and leading to instant purchases. This channel is characterized by high engagement, strong immersion and instant conversion ability, but it also faces the challenges of high requirements for content creativity and anchor ability, as well as increased traffic costs and homogenized competition.

3. Brand Loyalty Measurement and Influencing Factors

Brand loyalty is a key element for enterprises to build core competitiveness in the fierce market competition, and is a direct reflection of brand value and market vitality. It reflects consumers' deep trust, emotional attachment, and willingness and behavior to continue purchasing a specific brand. An in-depth understanding of the composition of brand loyalty, its measurement and its influencing factors is crucial for companies to develop effective marketing strategies, especially in the rapidly evolving digital era.

3.1 Brand Loyalty Metrics

Brand loyalty measurement is a multidimensional process that is usually assessed comprehensively on both behavioral and attitudinal levels. Behavioral loyalty metrics focus on actual purchase actions, such as repeat purchase rate, customer share, customer lifecycle value (CLV), brand switching behaviors and recent purchases and frequency in the RFM model. Attitudinal loyalty metrics, on the other hand, explore the internal psychology of consumers, including brand preference, willingness to recommend (NPS), brand promise, price tolerance and brand trust. The combined use of these two types of indicators can provide a more comprehensive and accurate insight into the true state of brand loyalty and avoid one-sided judgments.

3.2 Factors Influencing Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty is driven by a variety of factors, traditionally including: superior product/service quality (cornerstone), high levels of customer satisfaction, positive brand image and reputation, superior perceived value, deep brand trust, effective customer relationship management (CRM), and high switching costs. These factors interact with each other and together constitute the key drivers for consumers to develop and maintain loyalty to a brand, prompting them to establish a long-term stable brand relationship.

3.3 New Changes in Brand Loyalty in the Digital Era

The digital era has profoundly changed the connotation and maintenance of brand loyalty, which is mainly reflected in the following: consumers are empowered by the transparency of information, and have higher expectations for brands; loyalty is dynamic and perishable, and the diversification of choices makes it more difficult to maintain loyalty; personalized experience has become the core demand, which drives the brand to provide customized services; the importance of social interaction and sense of belonging to a community is highlighted, and the influence of UGC and KOL is enhanced; the connotation of brand trust is expanded; and the brand trust is expanded. The importance of social interaction and community belonging has increased, with the influence of UGC and KOLs; the connotation of brand trust has expanded to include data privacy and social responsibility; and loyalty programs have innovated to be interactive, entertaining, and instantaneous. These changes

require companies to pay more attention to in-depth interaction, personalized value creation and multiple trust maintenance on the basis of quality.

4. The Influence Mechanism of Marketing Channels on Brand Loyalty in the Digital Era

The wide application and deep penetration of digital marketing channels have not only changed the communication medium of brand information, but more importantly, they have profoundly influenced and reshaped the complete path of consumer brand loyalty formation, maintenance and development through a series of complex and sophisticated mechanisms. These mechanisms interact with each other and together constitute the core driving force of brand loyalty construction in the digital era.

4.1 Enhancing Brand Awareness: Laying the Foundation for Loyalty

Brand awareness is the first prerequisite for the formation of brand loyalty, and digital marketing channels provide strong support for the construction of brand awareness by virtue of their broad scope of dissemination and efficient reach. Search engine marketing (SEM) through SEO and PPC instantly shows the brand when users are actively searching, social media platforms utilize their user base, viral communication and algorithmic recommendation to achieve “breaking the circle”, content marketing shapes the professional image and deepens the cognition through the delivery of value, and short videos and live broadcasts strengthen the brand memory with their vivid and intuitive forms, which all work together to cultivate the subsequent loyalty. Short videos and live broadcasting strengthen brand memory in a vivid and intuitive form, laying the foundation for subsequent loyalty cultivation.

4.2 Promote emotional connection: deepen brand relationship

Deep brand loyalty stems from consumers' emotional identification, and interactive and experiential digital channels provide opportunities for this. Social media builds communities through two-way communication, content marketing tells brand stories and conveys values to trigger resonance, live streaming draws consumers closer through the charm of anchors and real-time interaction, and personalized email marketing makes consumers feel valued through care. Together, these approaches promote the emotional bond between brands and consumers, enhancing attitudinal loyalty and brand resilience.

4.3 Enhance the convenience of purchase: optimize the consumer experience

The convenience and smoothness of the purchasing process is an important factor affecting brand loyalty, and digital marketing channels have greatly simplified the

shopping process through technological means. E-commerce platforms, social e-commerce functions, and the seamless connection with payment and logistics systems break the time and space constraints, shorten the purchasing path, and realize the “instant gratification” shopping experience, which not only improves the initial conversion rate, but also effectively promotes the formation of behavioral loyalty by increasing user satisfaction and lowering decision-making costs.

4.4 Precision Marketing: Meeting Personalized Demands

The powerful data insights of digital channels enable brands to deeply understand consumer needs and achieve highly personalized precision marketing, which has a profound impact on brand loyalty. By tracking user behavior, building user profiles and effectively segmenting users, brands can push highly relevant marketing messages, product recommendations and customized services. This “know you better than you do” marketing approach makes consumers feel understood and respected, enhances the sense of value of information and user stickiness, and ultimately leads to more solid brand loyalty.

5. Marketing Strategy Recommendations

Based on a deep understanding of the characteristics of marketing channels and their impact on brand loyalty in the digital era, companies need to adopt a series of precise and synergistic marketing strategies if they want to effectively enhance and consolidate consumers' brand loyalty. These strategies should focus on four core dimensions: channel optimization, interactive deepening, content upgrading and data empowerment, in order to adapt to the dynamically changing market environment and increasingly mature consumer demand.

5.1 Optimize digital marketing channel mix: achieve synergy

Enterprises should build a synergistic, complementary and dynamically optimized digital marketing channel matrix, firstly, selecting channels based on the target audience's media contact habits and information preferences; secondly, clarifying the strategic positioning of each channel in loyalty building (e.g., SEM to capture intent, social media to promote interactions, content marketing to build trust, and email marketing to maintain relationships), and ensuring that the message is consistent and the experience is seamless in order to form a synergy; and finally Establish a dynamic adjustment mechanism based on performance evaluation, continuously optimize budget allocation and strategy mix, and focus on the potential of emerging channels to maintain the vitality and efficiency of the marketing system.

5.2 Strengthening brand-consumer interaction: building deep emotional connections

In order to cultivate emotional loyalty, companies need to transform one-way com-

munication into two-way or even multi-way interaction, establish the concept of user-centeredness, and actively listen to and sincerely respond to the voices of consumers at all touchpoints. At the same time, they should encourage and make good use of user-generated content (UGC) to enhance trust, carefully design and operate brand communities to enhance user stickiness and sense of belonging, and integrate interaction into the whole process of products and services to let consumers feel the importance of themselves as co-creators of brand value.

5.3 Enhance the quality of digital marketing content: convey core values and charms

High-quality, high-value content is the core vehicle for cultivating brand loyalty. Enterprises need to gain a deep insight into user needs and ensure that the content is relevant and valuable, rather than simply selling; strengthen the brand storytelling and value transmission, and trigger emotional resonance through real stories with temperature; pursue diversification and innovation of content forms, and flexibly use various forms such as graphics, video and live broadcasting; and set up a rigorous content quality control and optimization system, and continue iterating according to user feedback and data to maximize the value of the content. Maximize the value of content.

5.4 Utilize data to drive marketing decisions: realize accurate cultivation and efficient management.

Enterprises should make good use of data analysis to make brand loyalty cultivation more scientific and efficient. First, they should build a perfect user data collection and integration system to form a comprehensive user profile; second, they should set clear loyalty measurement indexes (KPIs) and keep tracking them; third, they should use data analysis tools to gain insights into users' behaviors and preferences, which will provide a basis for differentiated strategies; and lastly, they should incorporate data insight into the whole process of formulating, executing, and iterating marketing strategies. Finally, data insights are integrated into the entire process of marketing strategy formulation, execution and iteration, forming a closed-loop optimization mechanism to ensure the accuracy and effectiveness of resource investment.

6. Conclusion

This paper systematically explores the profound impact of marketing channel changes on brand loyalty in the digital era. The study shows that diverse digital channels, such as search engine marketing, social media, content marketing, email, and short video and live streaming marketing, are effective in building and maintaining brand loyalty through the four core mechanisms of enhancing brand awareness, promoting emotional connection, improving purchasing convenience, and re-

alizing precision marketing, by virtue of their unique advantages. In the face of new changes brought about by digitalization, such as consumer empowerment, enhanced loyalty dynamics and personalized demand, enterprises should adopt an integrated strategy: optimize channel combinations to achieve synergies, deepen user interactions to build emotional connections, improve content quality to deliver core values, and use data-driven decision-making to achieve accurate cultivation and efficient management. In this way, they can win and maintain the lasting trust of consumers in the fierce market competition and realize the sustainable development of their brands.

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