

# Analysing the successful reasons of Time Fengjun entertainment based on marketing mix theory

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**Abstract.** This study examined the operational strategies of Beijing Time Fengjun Entertainment in the Chinese market. Using the Marketing Mix Theory, it analysed Time Fengjun's promotion, product, and place strategies. Effective promotion, high-quality products, and diverse marketing channels were found to positively influence consumer purchasing intent. The research focused on understanding the factors driving Time Fengjun's success. It provided valuable insights for entertainment companies operating in China, aiding in the formulation of effective strategies. Multiple sources, including academic papers, industry reports, and case studies, support the research findings. The analysis confirmed that Time Fengjun's success stems from its effective promotions, high-quality products, and diverse marketing channels. They serve as a roadmap for other companies seeking success in the dynamic Chinese entertainment industry. The study's implications were relevant to entertainment companies aiming to enter or expand in China. Understanding the identified success factors enables the development of strategies to navigate the market and increase the likelihood of success. In conclusion, this study unveils the operational strategies of Beijing Time Fengjun Entertainment and highlights the key factors driving its success. It offered actionable insights for entertainment companies operating in China.

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Research background

From 2013 to 2023, the South Korean entertainment market had a significant impact on the Chinese idol training market, also called cultivation system, mainly due to the rise of South Korean popular culture, which greatly inspired and influenced the Chinese idol training market. South Korean music, TV dramas, variety shows, and other entertainment content gained immense popularity in China, leading to Chinese audiences developing an interest in South Korean stars, idol groups, and their training systems. Establishing their own cultivation systems and debuting apprentices and idol groups, Chinese entertainment companies began to imitate the Korean experience. In addition, the enthusiasm of Chinese audiences for the South Korean cultivation system indirectly contributed to the development of China's entertainment industry. Incorporating Korean training models and operational concepts, Chinese entertainment companies began to train and launch idol groups on a massive scale. These idol groups interacted with audiences through music, variety shows, and social media platforms, attracting many fans and attention.

Against this backdrop, Beijing Time Fengjun Entertainment became the first Chinese artist management company to adopt the South Korean artist training model, pioneering the cultivation system for

stars [1]. On August 6, 2013, Time Fengjun Entertainment introduced its first idol training group, "TFBOYS," and officially announced its debut through a music video called "Ten Years [1]." Due to the successful debut of TFBOYS, Time Fengjun gained recognition and became well-known as the talent agency behind the group.

### 1.2 Research gap

Due to the rise of cultivation systems, an increasing number of programs and companies have started to emulate this model. This phenomenon has garnered widespread attention and has attracted many experts and scholars to conduct related research, exploring various aspects of talent development systems.

Firstly, the swift success of Time Fengjun has raised the interest of researchers in the company's operational model. As a case study, Gu et al. analysed Time Fengjun's existing customer relationship management using the IDIC model [1]. According to the research, Time Fengjun encounters certain difficulties and obstacles in customer identification, segmentation, and interaction [1]. To address these issues, the authors propose optimization suggestions such as establishing a large database, enhancing complaint mechanisms, and enhancing forum management [1].

Secondly, the relationship between cultivation system idols and their fans has disrupted the traditional idol-fan dynamic. Researchers have also explored the

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relationship between idols in the cultivation system and their fans. Previously, fan models were based on fan-object relationships, but as Wenjing Yu suggests, cultivation system idols differ from traditional idols as their debut and fame processes depend on the empowerment bestowed by their fans [2]. In Lu Chen's study, it is mentioned that fans are empowered for three reasons: consumption empowerment, media empowerment, and self-empowerment [3]. For instance, in idol survival shows, an idol's ability to secure a debut opportunity depends not only on the judgment of the mentor panel but also on the support and consumption contributions from fans [3]. According to Lu Chen, these three forms of empowerment directly strengthen the bond between fans and idols, resulting in a sizable fan base for cultivation system idols and ensuring steadfast and enthusiastic support from fans [3].

Due to the success of TFBOYS, which has made the Time Fengjun Entertainment well-known, many researchers have been curious about the impact of TFBOYS' success on society. Xueyi Yang conducted a study with fans as the study subjects, concentrating on the monetization of popularity for various brands and products, revealing the diversity of phenomena observed in this field [4]. Additionally, TFBOYS's prominence has had negative effects on mainstream media and the fan economy. Wu and others stated that when fans significantly invest in TFBOYS, it can cause mainstream media outlets to disregard the qualifications of the idols themselves in favor of economic interests [5]. In addition, mainstream media may report selectively on positive aspects of idols with a large fan base and high economic value, such as TFBOYS, in order to attract attention [5].

As an important participant in the Chinese entertainment industry, Time Fengjun has demonstrated sustained success over the past decade, maintaining a prominent position among China's economic companies even in the face of unfavourable factors such as the pandemic. However, despite extensive research on Time Fengjun and its cultivation system, there is a research gap regarding the underlying reasons for its success and replicability. Thus, this paper will fill this research gap and set up the research question as follows: What are the reasons for the success of Time Fengjun Entertainment's cultivation system? Exploring this question is of great theoretical and practical importance because it can provide a more comprehensive theoretical explanation for the cultivation system field, provide practical guidance and strategic recommendations for related industries, and promote industry development and economic growth. By conducting in-depth research into the success mechanisms of the Time Fengjun Entertainment's cultivation system, new insights can be gained into the theoretical and practical domains, thereby fostering the growth of related research fields.

### 1.3 Fill the gap

There are several issues regarding the reasons behind the success of Time Fengjun and its replicability. Despite achieving sustained success in the Chinese entertainment

industry, there is currently a lack of in-depth research on its success. The resolution of these issues is of critical importance. First, undertaking in-depth research on the reasons for Time Fengjun Entertainment's success can reveal the distinguishing factors in the Chinese entertainment industry. Understanding these factors can provide valuable lessons and guidance to other businesses and practitioners, aiding their success in an extremely competitive market. Second, determining if Time Fengjun Entertainment's success is replicable can provide valuable references and insights for the entire industry. If their success is attributable to particular circumstances or random factors, it may not be prudent for other businesses to replicate their model. However, if their success is based on replicable strategies, management practices, or business models, other businesses can learn from these elements and attempt to implement them in their own operations, thereby enhancing the industry's overall level of development.

Based on a thorough analysis of these issues, the following suggestions and solutions can be considered: This study highlights the key success factors and business model of Time Fengjun in the entertainment industry. It provides insights for other talent agencies to innovate their strategies and cultivate young artists based on their own market demands. Collaboration within the industry is crucial for exploring better business models and market opportunities.

## 2 Case description

Founded in 2009, Beijing Time Fengjun Entertainment is a renowned Chinese entertainment company known for its adoption of the trainee cultivation system [6]. When the company was established, China's entertainment industry was still in its infancy, and there was a lack of specialized nurturing systems and idol training institutions in the market. Therefore, the company recruits trainees and has established the TF Family brand, gaining pre-debut popularity through new media promotion [6]. Their notable success came with the launch of TFBOYS, the first teenage idol group in China, in 2013, propelling them to become one of the most famous idol groups in the country and pioneering internet star creation [6]. Within just one year of their debut, TFBOYS received the "Most Popular Group of the Year" award from iQIYI, a well-known entertainment company in China. In 2019, Time Fengjun utilized the same cultivation system to launch their second boy group "Teens in Times".

After the successful launch of TFBOYS, Time Fengjun quickly rose to prominence as a major player in the Chinese entertainment industry and achieved tremendous success. Despite adverse conditions such as the COVID-19 pandemic, Time Fengjun remained among the top five companies in the Chinese economy. During the difficult year of the pandemic in 2020, Time Fengjun was recognized as one of the most outstanding economic enterprises at the Beijing International Audio Exhibition of 2020 [7]. In addition, according to the Chinese Academy of Management Sciences' Industry

Management Development Institute's TOP 50 list of artist management companies published in 2021, Time Fengjun was included [8]. Despite the Chinese government's constraints on the entertainment industry, which impeded the growth of many companies' cultivation systems, Time Fengjun's cultivation system remained resilient. The Chinese government initiated the "Clean and Bright" campaign in 2021 with the intention of cracking down on blind idol worship in fan culture and regulating the public image of idols in the entertainment industry [9]. In the same year, the production of the cultivation-themed reality show "Produce Camp 2021" by Wa Ji Ji Wa was suspended due to fans' unethical behavior, and the cultivation-themed program "Youth with You 3" by iQIYI was taken down due to a contestant's participation in illegal activities. Since then, no other company in the Chinese entertainment industry has been able to successfully replicate Time Fengjun's cultivation system to cultivate stars, while Time Fengjun continues to use its successful cultivation system to produce idols.

Despite the tremendous success of Time Fengjun Entertainment after the launch of TFBOYS and its rapid rise in the Chinese entertainment industry, it is surprising that there is a lack of in-depth research on the reasons behind the company's success and its replicability. The current issue is why scholars have not conducted thorough research on the success of Time Fengjun Entertainment and why there is a lack of research on its replicability. The importance of addressing these issues lies in providing a more comprehensive theoretical explanation and practical guidance for the academic and practical fields. In-depth research on the success of Time Fengjun Entertainment can help reveal the underlying mechanisms and key factors behind their success, contributing new insights and breakthroughs to the theoretical development of the entertainment industry. Simultaneously, studying the replicability of their success can provide practical guidance and strategic advice for related industries, promoting sustained industry growth and economic development.

### 3 Analysis on problems

This paper aims to demonstrate the utilization of the 4P marketing mix in addressing the research questions. The marketing mix, commonly referred to as the "4Ps" (Product, Price, Place, Promotion), is a conceptual framework that helps translate marketing plans into practical implementation [10]. McCarthy first introduced the "marketing mix" in the 1960s [10].

Product refers to tangible goods or services that are offered to consumers and hold value for which they are willing to pay [10]. Price is widely recognized as a critical element of the marketing mix, and numerous researchers emphasize its importance in driving both profitability and market share [10]. Place, also known as distribution, encompasses the processes and strategies involved in delivering products or services to customers [10]. Promotion, the final element of the 4Ps marketing mix, plays a crucial role in enhancing consumer

awareness, driving sales growth, and fostering brand loyalty [10]. Many academics have used the marketing mix theory of the 4Ps to investigate the success factors of various businesses. Ma et al. applied the marketing mix theory of the 4Ps to analyze the current successful online fashion brand, identifying the new characteristics of the influencer model [11]. Ma explored how the fashion brand "Equalizer" became the only one to transition from obscurity to massive success using the marketing mix theory of the 4Ps [12]. The application of the marketing mix theory of the 4Ps is not limited to the fashion and entertainment industries. Zhang and Wang employed the marketing mix theory of the 4Ps to study how the Agricultural Bank of China successfully issued the first domestic preferred stock in China [13]. The significance of the marketing mix theory of the 4Ps is evident in its widespread application across different industries. Scholars have utilized this framework to analyze the success factors of various companies, ranging from online fashion brands to financial institutions. The marketing mix theory of the 4Ps provides insights into market dynamics, consumer behavior, and effective marketing strategies.

#### 3.1 Successful promotion strategy

The success of Time Fengjun Entertainment can be analysed from the perspective of promotion, which is one of the elements in the 4P marketing theory. Effective promotion strategies can enhance consumers' purchasing desires, and Time Fengjun has implemented a series of marketing strategies that further contribute to its success.

Firstly, Time Fengjun enhances fans' understanding of their idols by releasing daily life videos and other related content. When fans get to know more about their idols' personal lives, they develop a stronger liking for and willingness to purchase and support them. By showcasing the authentic lives of their idols, Time Fengjun strengthens fans' sense of identification, thus stimulating their consumption desires.

Secondly, Time Fengjun uses a voting system in which supporters can purchase voting rights to support their idols. The more ballots an idol receives, the greater his or her ability to acquire resources. Through this mechanism, followers feel obligated to support and contribute to the success of their idols. They assert that if their idols fail due to a lack of resources, it may be because of their lack of support. As a result, fans are more willing to purchase associated merchandise, which increases the idols' likelihood of success. This voting mechanism increases fan engagement and consumption desires. Research conducted by Shen et al. confirms the positive impact of effective marketing strategies on consumers' purchasing desires [14].

Time Fengjun's efforts and strategies in the promotion aspect have been successful. By fostering a close relationship between fans and idols and employing diverse promotional methods, Time Fengjun ignites fans' willingness to consume. In summary, Time Fengjun Entertainment's success can be attributed, in part, to its effective promotion strategies. By showcasing idols'

authentic lives and implementing a voting-based mechanism, Time Fengjun strengthens fans' sense of identification and responsibility, thereby stimulating their consumption desires. Theoretical and empirical research backs up these marketing tactics, laying a strong foundation and offering useful advice for Time Fengjun Entertainment's success.

### 3.2 Successful product strategy

Time Fengjun focuses on providing high-quality products. In Chen Guoqing's study on the Jianlibao Company, he found that one of the key reasons for Jianlibao's success was its high product quality [15].

The success of Time Fengjun can also be attributed to its commitment to creating high-quality music, stage performances, and entertainment programs during the cultivation and promotion of its idols. They carefully select and train their idols to ensure they possess outstanding musical talent, stage presence, and entertainment skills. Time Fengjun collaborates with professional music producers, choreographers, and directors and invests significant resources in production and promotion to ensure that their products meet high standards of quality. The high-quality music generated by Time Fengjun captivates listeners, while the impressive stage performances and engaging entertainment programs attract the attention of audiences. The professionalism and remarkable performances displayed by Time Fengjun's idols in music, stage, and entertainment earn them the love and support of a large fan base. This high-quality product offering attracts a substantial number of fans and earns recognition and a positive reputation in the market.

In addition, Time Fengjun is constantly improving the calibre of its idols. Keeping up with market demands and changes, they invest in professional training to improve the musical abilities and stage performance skills of their idols. Time Fengjun closely monitors developments in the music and entertainment industries, continuously innovating and enhancing its products to maintain its competitiveness and market position. This unrelenting pursuit and improvement of product quality are the cornerstones of Time Fengjun's success. Therefore, the success of Time Fengjun can be attributed to the company's emphasis on product quality and its dedicated efforts.

By providing high-quality music, captivating stage performances, and engaging entertainment programs, they have won the support and recognition of a large fan base. Simultaneously, their continuous investment and improvement in product quality enable them to maintain an advantage in a fiercely competitive market.

### 3.3 Successful place strategy

Time Fengjun fully utilizes multiple channels for product promotion and brand publicity, not limited to traditional television and radio but also online channels such as the Internet and social media. Chen Sijie proposed that building diversified marketing channels

can lay the foundation for expanding the market and improving profitability [16]. By showcasing idols' music works, performances, and entertainment programs on various channels, Time Fengjun is able to reach a broader audience and increase brand awareness and exposure.

Firstly, Time Fengjun excels at using social media platforms to interact and communicate with fans. They establish official accounts and release idols' photos, videos, and messages to establish a close connection with fans and respond promptly to their comments and messages. This level of interaction and timeliness makes fans feel valued and enhances their identification and loyalty toward the brand and idols.

The offline activities organized by Time Fengjun also play a crucial role, especially large-scale events like concerts, which bring fans and idols closer. Time Fengjun regularly holds these offline interactive activities, providing fans with the opportunity to communicate with idols face-to-face, thereby enhancing their sense of participation and loyalty. At the same time, these activities serve as important channels for promoting the brand and its products, attracting more attention and support.

In addition, Time Fengjun actively engages in cross-industry collaborations with other well-known brands and program groups. By launching joint activities or participating in variety shows with partners from different platforms, Time Fengjun can attract a broader audience and consumers from various fields, further expanding its market share and brand influence.

By fully utilizing multiple channels, including social media, offline interactive activities, and cross-industry collaborations, Time Fengjun successfully extends its product promotion and brand publicity to a wider audience. These strategies not only strengthen the interaction with fans but also enhance brand awareness, loyalty, and market share. Time Fengjun's marketing channel strategies have laid a solid foundation for the company's success.

## 4 Suggestion

### 4.1 Suggestion on promotion strategy

In the future, Time Fengjun Entertainment can implement several marketing strategies to enhance its company's development. Firstly, increasing interaction with fans is crucial. While offline concerts are already popular, Time Fengjun can further engage fans by organizing a variety of online and offline interactive activities. Fan meetings, autograph sessions, and live online interactions provide platforms for fans to directly communicate with their idols. Such opportunities foster deeper connections between fans and idols, allowing fans to experience the joy and value of these interactions first-hand.

Secondly, Time Fengjun can capitalize on the creativity and participation of admirers through fan engagement marketing. Time Fengjun enables fans to actively contribute to the creation and promotion of



products and events by hosting contests for fan-designed merchandise and fan-composed music. This approach not only strengthens fans' sense of belonging and responsibility but also motivates them to purchase related products and advocate for Time Fengjun among other potential consumers. By involving fans in the creative process, Time Fengjun cultivates a loyal fan base that is emotionally invested in the brand's success.

Thirdly, Time Fengjun can investigate cross-promotional partnerships with renowned intellectual properties. Partnering with well-known brands, films, animations, and games affords Time Fengjun the opportunity to launch co-branded merchandise and conduct collaborative events. These joint initiatives attract the interest of a larger audience, including existing admirers of the intellectual property, and assist Time Fengjun in expanding its brand influence and recognition beyond its current fan base. Through strategic partnerships, Time Fengjun can access new markets and attract consumers who may have been unfamiliar with the brand previously.

By implementing these marketing strategies, Time Fengjun can further strengthen fan interactions, foster higher levels of fan engagement and loyalty, and capture the attention of potential consumers. Building a strong and dedicated fan base while expanding brand reach through collaborations will contribute to the continued growth and success of Time Fengjun in the industry.

#### **4.2 Suggestion on product strategy**

Time Fengjun can consider cultivating all-around development when nurturing idols in order to cater to the preferences and needs of different fan groups. Currently, idols may specialize in specific areas such as dancing and singing, but in the future, it would be beneficial to expand their capabilities in other domains. By fostering idols' skills in multiple fields, Time Fengjun can attract a wider audience and expand its market share.

Additionally, Time Fengjun can collaborate with more renowned music producers, choreographers, and singers to create high-quality musical works and stage performances. The involvement of professional teams can bring about richer creativity and elevate the overall quality of production.

The fans of Time Fengjun are highly engaged in the process of idol development. Therefore, Time Fengjun can actively gather feedback and opinions from fans, including evaluations and suggestions regarding product quality. Listening to the voices of fans and making corresponding improvements will help better meet their expectations and needs, thus further enhancing product quality. Lastly, it is important for the artists of Time Fengjun to pay attention to their academic development. As many idols in the entertainment industry are still in junior high or high school, they should balance their pursuit of fame with their academic responsibilities. This is to prevent negative publicity due to poor academic performance or the loss of fans.

Moreover, excelling in academics and gaining admission to prestigious universities can also attract more recognition from the audience.

By adopting the aforementioned development strategies, Time Fengjun can further enhance product quality, meet fan expectations, maintain a competitive edge in the market, and achieve sustainable growth.

#### **4.3 Suggestion on place strategy**

Time Fengjun can optimize its "place" aspect by implementing various strategies. Firstly, it can focus on developing region-specific sales channels. By understanding the unique characteristics and consumer preferences of different regions, Time Fengjun can tailor its distribution strategies accordingly. This may involve setting up physical stores or dedicated counters in densely populated areas to provide easier access for fans to purchase products. Additionally, the company can investigate partnership opportunities with local retailers and distributors to expand its presence in particular regions.

Secondly, collaborations with well-established platforms can significantly increase brand exposure and audience reach. To publicize its music and performances, Time Fengjun can forge partnerships with popular online platforms and streaming services. This would not only increase their idols' visibility but also attract new fans who discover their content on these platforms.

Furthermore, collaborating with event organizers and participating in music festivals and concerts can provide Time Fengjun with valuable opportunities to interact directly with fans and bolster its brand presence. Thirdly, strategic alliances with complementary brands and organizations can amplify Time Fengjun's influence and reach. By forming partnerships with fashion brands, beauty companies, and lifestyle platforms, the business can investigate cross-promotional opportunities and reach new customer segments. This may involve co-branded merchandise, combined marketing campaigns, or even collaborative events combining music with other forms of entertainment.

Moreover, Time Fengjun should consider expanding into international markets to broaden its customer base. This can be improved through partnerships with international distributors, collaborations with foreign artists or producers, and actively promoting their idols' works on global streaming platforms. Investing in localization efforts, such as providing multilingual content and organizing overseas tours, can also help establish a strong international presence and cater to the preferences of international fans.

By implementing these strategies, Time Fengjun can optimize its "place" aspect by effectively reaching target markets, expanding its distribution networks, and maximizing brand exposure. This would ultimately contribute to increased sales, fan engagement, and overall business growth.

## **5 Conclusion**

In conclusion, this article has explored the operational strategies of Beijing Time Fengjun Entertainment against the backdrop of Korean entertainment companies venturing into the Chinese entertainment market. The aim was to unravel the reasons behind Time Fengjun's success by examining its operational methods. Utilizing the Marketing Mix Theory, the analysis delved into Time Fengjun's promotion, product, and place strategies. The findings indicate that Time Fengjun's triumph can be attributed to its effective promotional endeavours, provision of high-quality products, and utilization of diverse marketing channels, all of which have positively impacted consumer purchasing intentions.

However, it is important to acknowledge certain limitations indicated in this study. Firstly, the analysis neglected to delve into the aspect of price within the framework of the Marketing Mix Theory. This omission prevents a comprehensive understanding of the complete marketing mix of Time Fengjun. Secondly, the article's findings are based on a limited dataset, lacking substantial quantitative analysis to support the arguments. In future studies, it would be advisable to incorporate robust quantitative analysis to substantiate the claims and adopt a more multifaceted approach to comprehend the factors contributing to Time Fengjun's success.

By addressing these limitations, future investigations can provide a more thorough analysis of Time Fengjun's operational strategies, leveraging a wider range of data and incorporating a quantitative perspective. This would enable a more nuanced examination of the company's accomplishments and shed further light on its competitive positioning within the dynamic Chinese entertainment market.

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