

Using social media to promote products and help alleviate poverty- Taking Yanchang County in Shaanxi Province as an example

*Mengqi Zou**,

Mercer Island High School, Mercer Island, Washington, 98040, United States of America

Abstract. China has adopted many poverty alleviation policies in the past decade and has achieved some results. This study takes Yanchang County, Shaanxi Province, as an example to provide reference suggestions for poor areas on how to use social media to promote products. This study combines the local characteristics of Yanchang County and recommends that the local government strengthen the promotion and popularization of social media, strengthen infrastructure construction, create courses to teach how to use electronic products, and actively seek cooperation with high-traffic Internet celebrities and live broadcast rooms to increase product awareness. Finally, it is necessary to actively interact with customers on social media, publish content, pay attention to customer feedback, and modify and improve products and services in a timely manner. It is hoped that other poor areas can improve economic conditions for local people through this study and combine local characteristics.

1 Introduction

Poverty has always existed in the world. In 2020, there were 38 countries in the world with a poverty rate of more than 18% [1]. Poverty is caused by many factors: from the lack of personal ability to the country's economic status in the world, the distribution of global resources, and even war. Since 1990, the world has been committed to reducing poverty. Poor countries are mostly distributed in Asia, the Pacific and Africa. The United Nations launched the "STAR" poverty reduction plan to provide a broader approach to poverty reduction, from maintaining political stability, targeted poverty alleviation, regular inspections of poverty alleviation results, and revitalizing rural areas. Over the past decade, the plan has also been quite effective. Poverty has been significantly reduced in Asia and the Pacific: between 1990 and 2017, 1.22 billion people around the world have escaped poverty. In China in particular, the poverty rate dropped from 66.3% to 0.5% between 1990 and 2016 [1]. This data is enough to prove the effectiveness of China's poverty alleviation policy after the reform and opening up. With the development of science and technology, China's poverty alleviation policy is also changing accordingly. In the past, poverty alleviation policies focused more on on-site publicity and development, expanding the local market, promoting the popularization of new technologies and knowledge, and developing

* Corresponding author: mengqi.zou@misd400.org

local advantageous industries. However, these projects lack connectivity to social media networks, leading to problems such as limited publicity scope. Now, the Internet and social platforms are used to carry out the work, which greatly increases the speed of information dissemination and has achieved certain results. This article takes Yanchang County, Shaanxi Province as an example to study how the county uses social platforms to carry out poverty alleviation. Through this study, it is hoped that it can provide a reference for more poor areas and help more places get rid of poverty.

2 Case Analysis

Yanchang County, Shaanxi Province is located in the north of Shaanxi Province, in the middle reaches of the Yellow River. Most of the area is rural, and most of the long-term residents are farmers. According to statistics in 2017, about 80% of the world's poor are rural residents who make a living from agriculture [2]. Yanchang County is very representative and referenceable. Due to its remote geographical location, backward infrastructure, lack of labor force after urbanization and other problems, the county has a low economic level and a generally poor population. It is a national poverty-stricken county. Within the scope of the national targeted poverty alleviation policy, the county has generally improved the economic conditions of the poor through poverty alleviation measures such as identifying the poor, developing characteristic agriculture, and rural tourism. The causes of poverty in the county are very typical, and through specific poverty alleviation policies, the improvement of local poverty has begun to show results, which can provide reference experience for other poor areas. This development method of utilizing local natural resources and adapting to local conditions also provides a good reference for many other poor areas and is very representative. Therefore, this study chose this county for analysis.

3 Poverty Alleviation Plan

The main product promoted by Yanchang County, Shaanxi Province is Yan'an apples. Almost all farmers in Yanchang County grow one or several apples, and the most common variety is Red Fuji. Currently, the local government cooperated with futures companies to implement the "Insurance + Futures" poverty alleviation policy, helping farmers sell apples to large apple delivery warehouses, buying insurance for apples, and then selling them on the market to ensure farmers' basic annual income. This policy seems to have achieved initial results. In order to implement the "Insurance + Futures" poverty alleviation policy, the Seagulls Society and other charitable organizations and enterprises officially established the "Inclusive Finance for the Underrepresented farmers" in August 2022, referred to as the IFU project. In October 2022, it began to publicly raise funds on multiple online charity platforms such as Tencent Charity and Alipay Charity. By February 2023, the total amount of funds raised reached more than 50,000 yuan [3]. Through financial subsidies to help poor farmers buy product insurance, popularize risk awareness for farmers, and set up learning and research scholarships to ensure that farmers have a basic understanding and learn to use insurance for risk management, and protect farmers' basic income. In October and November 2022, IFU Executive Committee determined the preliminary assistance list of about 200 households in Yanchang County, Shaanxi Province through field visits and income data comparison. 100,000 yuan of insurance premiums and incentives were issued, and insurance promoters were dispatched [3]. It is understood that most of the farmers assisted are individual farmers who lack labor and are mainly elderly. The labor force over 51 years old accounts for 84% of the main labor force. The assistance of IFU successfully

guaranteed them an income of 20 million yuan, greatly improving the living standards of farmers. At present, there are still many farmers in Shaanxi Province who have not received “Insurance + Futures” assistance for various reasons. IFU needs to expand the scope of subsidies in the future.

4 Problems

4.1 Rarely using the Internet and social media to promote products

4.1.1 Low education level, most of the labor force is elderly

Due to long-term poverty, Yanchang County is relatively short of resources, and educational resources are even scarcer, resulting in most farmers only having primary school education, only a few reaching junior high school levels and most of the labor force being older people over 50 years old. They are not used to using social media, and rely more on traditional media channels such as face-to-face or telephone for communication and transactions. Because of their low education level, many farmers do not have access to information on how to use social media, and do not know how to effectively use major platforms to seek resources for themselves or promote their products. Low education level will also lead to low trust in the Internet and social media among farmers, who do not understand the potential value of social platforms, believe that using these methods will not get good results, and refuse to use social media because of concerns about potential risks, such as online fraud.

4.1.2 Lack of understanding of electronic products

Due to long-term poverty, Yanchang County has incomplete infrastructure construction, and many places in the city do not have smooth Internet access. Not to mention that many farmers choose to live in the mountains for more convenient farming and economic conditions, and it is not convenient to use electronic products. In addition, farmers can also promote and trade through traditional contact methods such as face-to-face or telephone, and most of the time they do not have the opportunity to access social media and the Internet. This has led to a considerable number of people not understanding how to use electronic products. Even if some people want to try sales and marketing on social platforms, few people can find resources to learn and receive guidance.

4.2 Small scale

Based on the level of agricultural industrialization, incomplete information infrastructure, and low willingness of farmers to participate, individual farmers can only use small-scale sales such as WeChat applets. Although the Yan'an government and securities companies have built live broadcast rooms and online platforms, the scale is very small and can only attract a small number of audiences. At present, the Shaanxi government and the securities trading company have established an online sales platform dedicated to selling apples, "I Have an Apple Tree in Yan'an". Buyers can adopt an apple tree in Yan'an and receive 6 boxes of apples every year as a reward. In this way, the platform attracts people to adopt Shaanxi apple trees for charity and donate to poor mountainous areas. The securities trading company has also built a small number of live broadcast rooms for Yan'an apples. However,

due to the unfamiliarity of the live broadcast room marketing techniques and the small scale, the effect has been mediocre and has not reached the potential effect of the Internet.

5 Suggestions

Although the "Insurance + Futures" policy has been able to initially guarantee the basic income of farmers, the farmers' customers still stay within the scope of Shaanxi Province, and the promotion scope is limited. Social media can solve this problem. There are many surveys that prove that social media and the Internet can greatly expand the marketing audience area, which is very helpful for farmers' income [4].

5.1 Enhance social media awareness and training

5.1.1 Improving Internet acceptance

In order to solve the problem of low social media usage due to low education, the government and relevant institutions can organize volunteer projects, organize more than 100 volunteers and publicity personnel to go deep into the fields, promote the advantages of the Internet to farmers face to face, share successful social media marketing cases, especially small business cases that are similar to farmers and have reference value, and show farmers the huge potential commercial value of social networks [5]. Let farmers believe that the Internet can bring them unimaginable profits and attention, and start actively trying to use social media platforms. The government and relevant agencies can also set up incentives or subsidies. If a farmer tries to use social media for sales, the farmer can get a reward of 1,000 yuan or more. This will more effectively encourage poor people to try the Internet and reduce their concerns about losing money.

5.1.2 Teaching courses and building infrastructure

To solve the problem that farmers do not know how to use electronic products, each community center or village committee can offer free digital literacy courses to teach how to use computers, mobile phones and other necessary electronic devices, as well as how to browse and use major social platforms. The course is recommended to be held in the evening or in leisure time to avoid farmers having no time to participate because they have to work on the farm. The government can also organize about 100 volunteers and publicity personnel to provide one-on-one assistance to farmers in each village, especially the elderly and those with low education levels, to ensure that they learn how to use electronic products. This study also recommends increasing government investment in infrastructure construction. Ensuring smooth network access is also an inevitable step in using the Internet and social software [6].

5.2 Expand scale

5.2.1 Limited resources

In order to solve the problem of limited resources, farmers should screen and identify the target audience when marketing. First, the main product of Yanchang County should be the local dominant industry Red Fuji apple, which has a large output and has a greater impact on the local economy [7]. Secondly, the Red Fuji apple is a lifestyle product suitable for all

ages. It is recommended that the target customers be set as middle-aged people aged 30-50. Most of these people have children and the elderly at home and have a certain economic consumption capacity. When promoting on social platforms, farmers can set marketing strategies based on the preferences and needs of such customers to improve the effect. For example, based on the characteristics of middle-aged people who value health, we can promote the characteristics of Yanchang Apple, which is free of additives and purely green, to increase sales efficiency.

5.2.2 Marketing methods

In order to solve the problem of insufficient influence of live broadcast rooms and low brand awareness of products, the Shaanxi government and related enterprises can actively seek cooperation with popular Internet celebrities or live broadcast rooms, so that live broadcast rooms with traffic and great influence can promote Yan'an Red Fuji Apple, carry forward the spirit of poverty alleviation, and encourage viewers to actively participate in poverty alleviation projects by purchasing poverty alleviation products, so that every poor family can live a good life [8]. Internet celebrities and live broadcast rooms should choose those with similar content or those who have sold similar products and have a good reputation. Influential people can help farmers market on a large scale, and it is more efficient and cost-effective than one-to-one marketing by individual farmers or companies [9]. The popularity of traffic live broadcast rooms can greatly increase the popularity and sales of Shaanxi apples, allowing farmers to not only sell apples to large distribution warehouses and fruit companies, but also earn considerable income through a large number of individual purchases. At the same time, it is also important to choose a suitable social platform. Live broadcast rooms should first use platforms with large traffic for promotion, rather than independently creating a separate, unpopular platform. This study recommends creating accounts on social platforms such as Douyin, WeChat, Twitter, Instagram, etc., which are used by the target audience of middle-aged people, especially in China, and frequently creating some videos or content that can impress people and call on the public to pay attention to the national poverty alleviation policy, and at the same time promote the health, organic, nutritious, sweet and delicious nature of Yan'an apples. Build a user group through traffic heat and high activity. While promoting, apple sellers must also ensure that they provide good customer service and after-sales service, and ensure that they can communicate with sellers in a timely and effective manner. Establishing good customer relationships can greatly improve customer loyalty and word-of-mouth communication. It is also very important to pay attention to customer feedback, improve products and services based on customer feedback on time, and meet customer needs to a greater extent. Good customer feedback can also attract more potential hesitant customers to buy [10].

5.3 Expanding the use of apples

Farmers can also expand the scope of use of apples, just like during the epidemic, apples from apple distribution warehouses were donated to frontline medical staff. Yan'an apples are also used as gifts and giveaways by trading companies, increasing their value through packaging. Apple farmers or companies can hold some charity events or sponsor local community events to increase brand awareness and favorability, while also raising the price of apples and increasing farmers' income to a greater extent.

6 Conclusion

This study found that the current poverty alleviation policy in Yanchang County, Shaanxi Province mainly focuses on offline physical goods transactions, such as apple delivery warehouses buying apples directly from fruit farmers. However, due to the lack of use of social media and the Internet, the customer range is very limited, and a large part of potential income is lost. There are two main reasons for this problem. First, many poor farmers rarely use social platforms to market their products due to their low education level, generally older age, and inability to use electronic products. This study recommends increasing the publicity of the benefits of social media, increasing people's acceptance of the Internet, and at the same time offering courses on how to use electronic products, face-to-face counseling activities with volunteers, and strengthening infrastructure construction to completely reduce the obstacles for farmers to use the Internet. Secondly, the marketing of existing poverty alleviation projects on social media platforms is not well-known and small in scale, and cannot achieve profitable results. This study recommends that the Shaanxi government can actively seek cooperation with Internet celebrities or live broadcast rooms with traffic to increase brand awareness, effectively spread the concept of participating in poverty alleviation, and attract more customers to buy. In addition, farmers or companies can frequently post content about poverty alleviation, public welfare, and product promotion on social software that the target population is accustomed to using on a daily basis to build customer and fan groups. At the same time, it is also important to ensure a good service attitude and attach importance to feedback. With the development of science and technology, social networks will become more and more important. Future poverty alleviation development also needs to combine science and technology, policies, environment and other aspects to achieve sustainability and ensure real effectiveness. This study takes Yanchang County, Shaanxi Province as an example to provide references for poor areas on how to use social media to promote products. It is hoped that other poor areas can build better and richer homes for local people through this study.

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