

Problems and Countermeasures of "Internet plus" Marketing in Home Appliance Industry -- Taking Gree Electric Appliance as an Example

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Abstract. This study takes Gree Electric Appliance as an example to analyze the problems encountered in the implementation of "Internet plus" marketing in the home appliance industry and put forward corresponding countermeasures and suggestions. This article first points out the problems that Gree Electric has in terms of user experience on its official website, the contradiction between excessive personal IP traces and company development, structural drawbacks of its management, and insufficient appeal to young consumers. Then, aiming at these problems, this research proposes the following solutions: optimizing the official website structure, balancing personal IP and brand independence, and strengthening internet promotion. This paper believes that through these measures, Gree Electric can avoid the loss of its core competitiveness in the home appliance industry in the future, effectively improve the "Internet plus" marketing effect, enhance the brand image, increase the attractiveness to young consumers, promote the sustainable development of enterprises, and provide a certain reference value for the future development of the household appliance industry.

1 Introduction

In the era of rapid development of Internet technology, the network has become an indispensable position for marketing [1]. In March 2015, Li Keqiang, then Premier of the State Council, put forward the "Internet plus" strategy in the government work report for the first time which promoted the "Internet plus" marketing to the national strategic level [2-3]. Since then, "Internet plus" marketing has gradually occupied an important position in the marketing model of the household appliance industry. It breaks the shackles of offline retail models, directly reach more consumers, and significantly enhancing brand influence.

As a former leader in the household appliance industry, Gree Electric actively embraces digital transformation in the Internet era. Incorporate "Internet plus" marketing into the strategic plan is an important means to consolidate its leading position in the household appliance industry. However, although Gree was once the leader in the household appliance industry, it faced many challenges in the development and practice of the "Internet plus"

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marketing model. Gree Electric Appliances, like other home appliance industries, has a huge offline distribution network and overly relies on traditional advertising models. Adhering to the belief that "wine is not afraid of deep alleys", Gree Electric Appliances does not attach enough importance to online marketing channels, resulting in lagging behind other home appliance companies. In addition, the home appliance industry, taking Gree Electric as an example, has not invested enough in e-commerce platforms and social media marketing, which has led to the digital transformation not keeping up with the changes in the market in a timely manner. This lagging influence can not attract consumer groups of new generation, and cannot occupy a dominant position in the competition with emerging home appliance brands using the "Internet plus" marketing model.

This article will take Gree Electric as an example to describe the problems and countermeasures of "Internet plus" marketing in the home appliance industry, provide constructive suggestions for home appliance enterprises to achieve long-term and stable development of brands and enterprises in the future, and help enterprises achieve sustainable development.

2 Problems

2.1 Official website and poor user experience

Firstly, there is a competition between Gree's official website and its regional platforms for the first display position on search engine result pages. As is well known, the ranking of search results on engine pages will directly affect the visibility and traffic of a website [4-5]. Usually, users believe that websites with higher rankings are more authoritative and credible. So search engines will prioritize the official website over local websites. However, Gree Electric Appliances is different. For example, when users search for Gree Electric Appliances on search engines, the first thing they see are Gree's region platform, Gree's Taobao page, Gree's recruitment advertisements. The names of those websites are also varied and very messy. The main website is hidden behind it, making it difficult for users to search. Those decentralized entrances not only affect user access efficiency, but also lead to inconsistencies in brand information transmission [6].

Secondly, the integration of information on Gree's official website is insufficient, and the price system of different online sales channels is quite chaotic. The price of the same air conditioner can vary by thousands of yuan with huge price fluctuations. At the same time, there are price differences between official websites in different regions. It leads to frequent occurrences of "gray market trading". This phenomenon not only has a significant impact on the management of enterprise distribution channels, but may also trigger channel conflicts and price wars, ultimately harming the interests of the enterprise itself. If Gree fails to effectively regulate this phenomenon, the significant price difference will increase the attractiveness of most distributors to continue "gray market trading". This will infringe on the interests of other distributors and even lead to the termination of cooperation between the two parties. At the same time, significant price differences and mismatched products will gradually erode consumers' confidence in the brand and also affect users' brand image and product positioning of Gree [7-8].

2.2 Marketing personal IP traces

In the process of trying the "Internet plus" marketing model, Gree took a dangerous step to get rid of the brand image of a single air-conditioning seller, and deeply bound the "Dong Mingzhu" IP with the Gree brand. On February 13, 2025, Gree officially announced at the

2025 brand launch event that its stores in various regions will gradually be renamed as "Dong Mingzhu Health Home". Meanwhile, Gao Jie, Gree's Zhuhai General Manager, stated that the purpose of the renaming is to promote Gree's strategic transformation through scenario based experiences, data visualization, intelligent interactive services, and restructuring of the retail value chain. At the same time, it can achieve a brand revolution from product to service, from space to experience. However, this change has sparked mixed reviews from a wide range of consumers. For a long time, users have generally believed that Gree is synonymous with high-quality air conditioning. Renaming may confuse old users, let them misunderstand the core values of the brand, and even misunderstand that Gree is transferring corporate assets to Dong Mingzhu personally. More noteworthy is that Dong Mingzhu's live streaming sales have brought tremendous influence, even surpassing traditional advertising [9-10]. The deep binding between company directors and the company is a powerful brand strategy, but the appointment and resignation of directors based on this foundation will inevitably affect the external perception of the brand. So once Dong Mingzhu retires or leaves Gree, it may have a significant impact on the company, and investors and consumers will express concerns about the future brand development of Gree Electric.

In addition, there are also many problems with Gree's management team. In 2015, the use of Dong Mingzhu's portrait as the startup screen on Gree's first generation mobile phone caused a market uproar. In 2024, Gree's high priced "rose air conditioner" was considered very tacky by netizens. Integrating the personal aesthetic of managers into product design has raised doubts from the outside world about their "personal aesthetics surpassing market demand". It also reflects the current situation of excessive control by management. At the same time, the phenomenon of short sightedness among senior management is also reflected in the annual report. The following figure is a fluctuation image based on the vocabulary of short sightedness among managers in Gree's annual report collected by CNRDS China Research Data Service Platform.

From Fig. 1, it can be seen that the frequency of "within the year" has significantly increased since 2013. The "pressure" increased in the short term from 2013 to 2018, with relatively low volatility in the later period. This phenomenon reflects the management's increased attention to short-term market fluctuations and operational challenges after 2013, which may be a manifestation of managerial shortsightedness. Based on the 1 billion yuan bet made between Dong Mingzhu and Lei Jun, the founder of Xiaomi in 2013, it can be seen that Gree's management focused on profit growth from 2013 to 2018 in order to win the bet, which was reflected in more discussions on short-term issues in the annual report. Relying on the traditional offline dealer channels, Gree ignored the marketing role of online social media, allowing Xiaomi to take the lead in the "Internet plus" marketing channel. All the above shows that the management of Gree Electric may pay more attention to short-term goals and recent performance because of gambling, sacrifice the implementation of long-term "Internet plus" marketing strategy.

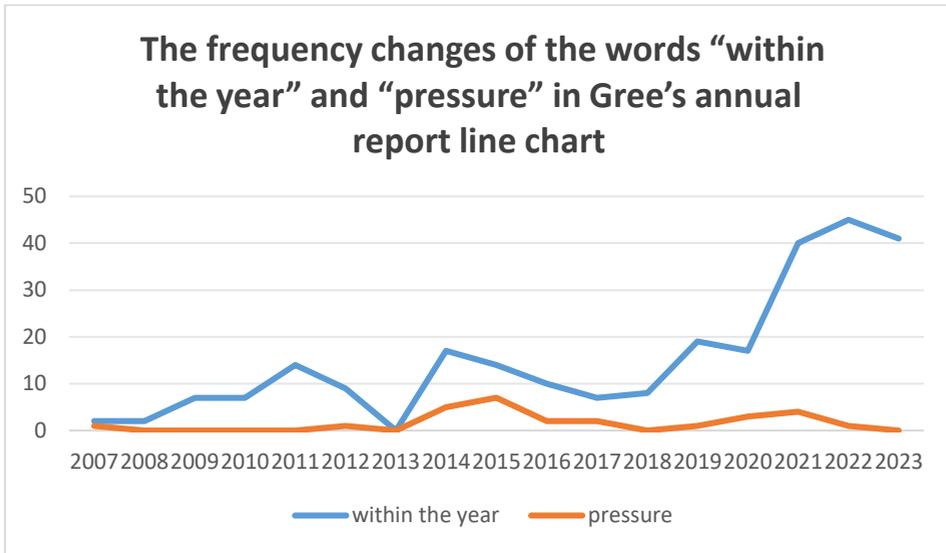


Fig. 1. Frequency changes of the words "within the year" and "pressure" in annual report

2.3 Lack of appeal to young consumers

In this era of the rise of young consumer groups, enterprises need to cater to the needs of young consumers more when carrying out "Internet plus" marketing, so as to achieve an effective link between the brand and the market. However, Gree Electric has shown a certain lag in this regard and lacks marketing strategies targeting young consumers. Taking Dong Mingzhu's promotional style as an example, she often uses a preachy tone in product promotion, similar to the guidance of elders to younger generations in the family. This is not in line with the personalized pursuit of young consumers, which can easily create a generation gap and fail to achieve emotional resonance. Afterwards, the air conditioning products designed by Dong Mingzhu also collided violently with the mainstream aesthetic of contemporary consumers. The design department of the company needs to be independent from the board of directors, and cannot become a one-man shop where the sales managers can influence design and elevate personal aesthetics above the market. The company needs to absorb fresh blood to make new products more "down-to-earth" and connect with consumers.

3 Suggestions

3.1 Optimize the official website structure

At present, Gree Electric's official website has problems such as information confusion and scattered regional platforms, resulting in poor user experience. This study suggests that Gree Electric can integrate its current regional platforms, strengthen the central position of its official website, and avoid unnecessary competition with the regional network. Gree can learn from Xiaomi's official platform experience to ensure that the official website remains at the forefront of search engines. Through concise interface design, customers can quickly find the information they need. Gree Electric's official website can further optimize the user interface, provide more convenient product search, filtering, and comparison functions, increase user feedback channels, and respond to user needs in a timely manner. At the same

time, in response to the insufficient integration of information on the official website and the phenomenon of price confusion, Gree needs to customize an official authoritative price for each model of product. Except for differences in delivery fees due to distance issues in different regions, the main prices should not have significant differences. This strategy is conducive to strengthening consumers' perception of Gree brand newcomers and avoiding negative impressions caused by opaque prices.

This study believes that through the above measures, Gree can effectively improve the user experience of the official website, enhance the brand image, and better adapt to the current "Internet plus" marketing market competitive environment.

3.2 Balance personal IP

Strengthening the personal IP of corporate directors can indeed assist brands in gaining massive attention and increasing sales in a short period of time, but this strategy is not suitable for all companies, especially listed companies with dispersed equity like Gree. From a long-term strategic perspective, personal IP should better serve the brand building of the enterprise, rather than elevating it above the status of the brand. Gree aims to make consumers realize that Dong Mingzhu is Gree's Dong Mingzhu, not Dong Mingzhu's Gree. This study suggests that Gree needs to cultivate a new generation of successors who can continue to serve as directors of Gree Electric Appliances, change the deeply rooted personal IP impressions in consumers' minds, and avoid a lack of effective brand transition strategies after Dong Mingzhu's resignation, which may cause consumers to have a brief vague understanding of the brand and affect the continuity and stability of the brand. In addition, Gree Electric also needs to change its concept of not using celebrity endorsements for products and it needs to cultivate diversified brand endorsers. By changing the name of "Dong Mingzhu Health Home" back to "Gree Health Home", gradually weakening the impact of Dong Mingzhu's personal golden brand on Gree Electric's sales performance.

This study points out that Gree's management department currently has many structural drawbacks, such as short-sighted management, centralized power, disconnection from consumers, and a shortage of talent. To fundamentally solve the problem, this study believes that Gree needs to make strategic adjustments, introducing leadership talents with long-term strategic vision, global perspective, and innovative thinking. The new leader can make sharp insights into complex market environments and promote the company's shift from short-term interests to sustainable development strategies. Through this means, Gree can optimize its decision-making mechanism and enhance the overall governance level of the enterprise.

3.3 Strengthen Internet promotion

In the context of "Internet plus" marketing, enterprises need to fully consider the characteristics and needs of young consumer groups. As mentioned above, Gree has not fully adapted to the trend of youth in the current "Internet plus" marketing. This study suggests that Gree needs to develop a more youthful content marketing strategy when promoting and selling its products online and offline. By recruiting young salesperson for promotion and creating emotional resonance with consumers, Gree can get rid of preaching style output. If Gree's Dong Mingzhu is more like an elder parent in her promotional style, then Xiaomi's founder Lei Jun is more inclined towards being a close friend of young consumers, emphasizing interaction and emotional connection. Therefore, Gree can learn from Xiaomi's marketing strategy, more in line with the psychology of young consumer groups, use social media to engage in long-term interaction with users, listen to their voices, rather than just staying at the introduction of products, the repetition of corporate honors, and self hypnosis that forces consumers to change their aesthetic concepts.

Through these measures, Gree Electric can gradually enhance its attraction to young consumers during the implementation of "Internet plus" marketing.

4 Conclusion

This study suggests that Gree Electric currently has scattered official websites and poor user experience, excessive personal IP traces and short-sighted centralization by management, lack of appeal to young consumers and issues with preaching and promotion.

These issues can be addressed by optimizing the official website structure and implementing unified pricing, cultivate a new generation of leadership talents, learn from successful experiences and enhance youth oriented marketing, strengthen the construction of Internet platform, promote the transformation of brand youthfulness, balancing online and offline interests, adhere to the core value of the brand.

Through these ways, Gree can effectively improve itself in the "Internet plus" era, enhance the brand image, enhance the appeal to young consumers, and promote the sustainable development of enterprises.

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