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The Application of Integrated Marketing Communication in the Marketing of the Game Industry

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Abstract:The mobile game market in China is growing fastly in recent years. Among all the mobile games, a game operated by Tencent called Arena Of Valor is a typical and most profitable one. This paper studies the integrated marketing communication strategies during the selling period of a skin called Bai HuZhi as the example. The study analyzes the marketing strategies of the Arena Of Valor from the 4Cs' perspective, which includes customer, cost, convenience, and communication. The study investigates how game companies should play a role in marketing, and tries to provide reference for other similar companies.

1. Introduction

The popularity of the Internet has brought huge development space to mobile games. Mobile games have developed into one of the important entertainment methods in people's lives. According to data from IiMedia Research, "the scale of China's mobile game market is growing year by year, but the growth rate has increased. It will reach US$185.03 billion in 2020 and is expected to reach US$202.11 billion in 2021." So many mobile games are produced by the game companies. There are many kinds of games. Some games need to pay for download if the people want to use it, while others are free to use. In the game market ,most of the games are not popular and the companies can not make money, which are closed because of no enough money to operator. In this field, a game called Arena Of Valor which researched and developed by Tencent becomes more and more popular. Arena Of Valor has been online for as long as six years (from 2015 to 2021) and it firmly grasps the needs of users which is very successful in game marketing. Take February 2021 as an example, the glory of Kings ranked first in various mobile games with 89.96 popularity.

The business model of Arena Of Valor is a typical representative of mobile games. The cost of playing this game is very low. Because downloading this game and getting the most role do not cost anything, they only need a mobile phone can play the game. So here comes the question, how does the Tencent company make money? The company makes money by selling skins. The roles in this game have a skin which is ordinary when it was produced. And then the company will design other skins for the roles, which are fascinating and special. If the customer want to get use the skins in the game, they must pay for it. By this way, the company can make money. However, it is not easy for the company. Many customers would not like to pay for it, they only pay games for free. For

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example,Onmyoji, Identity V and so on games like this also free to play and make many special skins to sale, but they are not as popular as Arena Of Valor .

All kinds of skins are being released by Arena Of Valor all year round, this studying takes a skin called Bai HuZhi ,which online for eight hours, sales exceeded 320,0000 as an example. This studying will analysis the Bai HuZhi's integrated marking communication(IMC)of Arena Of Valor by the customer, cost, convenience and communication (4C theory). Arena Of Valor is a well-developed leading game in the Chinese game market, and its source of profit mainly relies on the sale of skins. The Arena Of Valor has been profitable for five years since it was developed. Studying its skin sales model and sales strategy has many uses for the development of other game companies and online sellers, and can be used for their reference and learning.

2. Literature Review

As the market competition more and more fierce, the customer becomes more and more important .At this background, integrated marketing communication was proposed by American scholar Robert Lanterborn in *New Marketing Litany:Four Ps Passé:C-Word Take Over* in 1990. It contains the customer, the cost, the convince and the communication four parts. This theory is consumer-oriented and puts consumer needs in the first place. This is the inevitable choice of consumer orientation. Prior to this, most marketing theories were analyzed and researched from the perspective of enterprises. Among them, the most famous is the 4p theory proposed by Jerry McCarthy in *Marketing*.4p theory is a marketing theory namely: Product, Price, Place, Promotion. Some scholars believe that IMC is like playing basketball. All kinds of marketing spread the field of defenders, forwards, and center forwards, each performing their duties. Some scholars believe that IMC is to coordinate and integrate all aspects of the brand communication package to meet the different needs of consumers at various stages of contact with the brand. And Some scholars believe that the basic idea of IMC is to unify all communication activities, that is, on the one hand, all communication activities such as advertising, promotion, public relations, direct sales, cl, packaging and new media are included in the scope of advertising activities; On the other hand, it enables companies to communicate information to consumers in a unified manner. In short, it is "Speak with one voice[1]."

Jiang Yuxin's research on M*arketing strategy based on mobile games—take "*Arena Of Valor " as an example. In the article, "Propose that the consumption of mobile game items is the main way of consumption in the game. Purchasing items to enhance their own strength [2]." He believes that the idea of a game Profit is not just about selling skins online, but doing offline marketing is also extremely important. It is necessary to segment the user population according to different needs, which can make advertising more valuable and lower the company's operating costs. Geng Haodong made *Corresponding marketing research and analysis specifically for the "Five-five-five-year-old Black Festival" set by the glory of the king.* In the study of festival marketing from the perspective of communication rituals—Taking the "Five-five-five-five-day black festival" of the game "Honor of Kings" as an example, he proposed that." In 2017, the "five-five-five-five black festival" [3] was regarded as the exclusive "Game Festival" came into being. There are many differences and innovations between this online game festival marketing and traditional e-commerce festival marketing. The current "open black festival" is no longer just a festival exclusively for players, it has gradually evolved into an online game. Festival marketing conference for games." He believes that "Five-five-five-five-day black festival" of the game "Honor of Kings" promotes the brand of Honor of Kings to form its own IP, so that Honor of Kings can gain a higher reputation in the game field. More customers. The essence of "Five-five-five-five-day black festival" is from the perspective of customers. First, let more customers know about this game,

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and secondly, online skins and offline peripheral products are parallel. Pay attention to the needs of customers to form your own IP and earn more profits.

3. Analysis of Bai HuZhi's campaign from 4Cs' perspective

Taking 4Cs as the theoratical framework, this research analyzed Ba Huzhi's intergrated marketing communication campaign by Customer, Cost, Convenience and Communication.

3.1. Customer

The important part of 4c is the customer which mainly refers to the needs of customers. So that, studying the marketing campaign is certainly need. We will analysis the customer with three ways.

3.1.1. Time and economy

This skin of game is sold two times totally. It was first time sold is in the New Year. After all, the customer has plenty of time during the New Year, and there is time to pay attention to the game. In addition, during the New Year, the customer will consume more than usual, so Arena Of Valor chose this. During the Chinese New Year, students can get lucky money, and adults get some year-end bonuses. This allows customers to spend more money on entertainment and can pay for their skin.

The choice of the time for the second sale is the October 25, 2020, when the Arena Of Valor 's fifth anniversary. This is not only an important event for the Arena Of Valor, but also before Double Eleven. Because during Double Eleven customers will buy plenty of things,so that they cannot afford to the skin .But before Double Eleven, people don't have this question. They have already prepared enough money for Double Eleven, so they can afford to the skin. Choosing the time before Double Eleven is an excellent choice.

3.1.2. Hunger marketing and consumer psychology

Arena Of Valor has adopted the "hunger marketing" approach, that is, "hunger marketing is a common marketing method, which refers to businesses that deliberately control output in the sale of goods, attract consumers to participate in snap-buying activities, and bring enterprises [4]." In the sale ofArena Of Valor, this method was adopted, limited time, to stimulate the audience's desire to buy. Limited time means the costumers can only buy this skin for five days (2020.10.28-11.1).So many costumers think that if they miss this chance of the skin, they will never buy it in any way and they buy it as rapidly as they can.

3.1.3. How to make customer know (Publicity and promotion)

There is the marketing choice of returning. The official chose the method of letting players vote on their own, and chose the top three with high popularity to return. In this way, they listened to the suggestions of players to a large extent, and the return sales became popular. High skin is easier to get benefits. The activity is informed by a plenty of ways, such as Weibo , Douyin, Bilibili and so on. The customers can join in the activity according the different ways to choice the best skin which they like.

When the skins which get the most votes are going to be sold, Arena Of Valor broke the news on Weibo in advance, so that customers can know in advance that the skin is going to return to the market, so as not to miss it without knowing it .And on Douyin or others the anchors are promoting, complimenting, and using this skin. Customers can see through the video that the special effects of this skin are very beautiful, which can arouse customers' desire to buy.

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3.2. Cost

The cost is that the customers are willing to pay and the cost of the product. In this part we will analysis the customer with two ways.

3.2.1. Customers

There is a discount for the first few days when it is just launched. This can reduce the financial burden of the players, and it can also make people feel that it is very affordable and want to buy it. This skin can be purchased with coupon discounts when returning to the show. During holidays or game anniversary events, there will be discounts for usually very expensive products. In name, it is to give back to users, but in fact it is a means to stimulate user consumption [5].

The price of this skin is 178 yuan. The consumer group of Arena Of Valor Skin is mainly young workers and college students, and this price is generally acceptable to these customers. For elementary and middle school players who want to buy, it is relatively easier to save enough for this price or find what their parents want. Because it is a virtual game skin after all, if the price is several thousand dollars, no one may buy it.he price of the skin returned to the factory is not too different from the price when it was first limited in 19th, which will ensure the player's psychological balance. If it is cheap at the beginning, and then it becomes a lot more expensive, some people will feel that it is not cost-effective and do not want to buy; if it is cheaper to return to the factory later than at the beginning, it will cause the players who bought at the beginning to feel very imbalanced and will not buy again in the future .The new skin is not conducive to the subsequent healthy development of the game.

3.2.2. Producer

The skin is a virtual product. It does not need to be made with tangible materials, but is made through the Internet. First, the art design draws the skin manuscript, and after repeated modifications, the basic picture is obtained; Then, the modeler designs the special effects of the model construction on the picture, and they create the appearance and special effects of the game skin; Finally, the skin is sold through the game mall of Arena Of Valor . Customers can purchase the skin to get the right(权利) to use it and use this skin in the game. The cost of this skin is mainly to pay the labor costs of art designers and others involved in skin production, that is, the payment of wages, to pay for their art works.

3.3. Convenience

The convenience means the convenience of customer. In short, the product should consider how to facilitate the use of customers. “4Cs marketing theory” that when companies formulate distribution strategies, they should consider the convenience of customers more than the convenience of the company itself. Through good pre-sales, in-sales and after-sales services, customers can enjoy convenience while shopping. Convenience is an integral part of customer value. We will analyze the “Convenience” through three ways.

3.3.1. Ways to purchase

If you want to buy this skin, you can go to the mall to buy it directly, or you can give it to each other between relatives and friends, or go to the 4399 game box or get a discount coupon with a knight card, and then diversify the channels for purchase, which can be better Make it easy for viewers to buy. For example, customers did not intend to buy this skin, but their friends gave him this skin through the gift function of the mall, or some customers received rewards or discounts in

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the 4399 game box, and they would think they would not buy it. I missed the offer, so I bought the skin. This greatly stimulated customers' desire to buy and increased skin sales.

3.3.2. Simple payment process

You can purchase directly within the app, and you can pay with various third-party software such as WeChat and Alipay. When the game is recharged, click the game directly, click the recharge button to recharge, and you can directly use WeChat or Alipay to pay; the Apple system can also pay directly through the app store, which greatly facilitates the player's purchase, no need to go A lot of cumbersome processes. Because in today's society, WeChat and Alipay payment methods have become very popular among customers, and most people's payment methods have become WeChat payment and Alipay payment. The mall of Arena Of Valor can allow customers to directly use WeChat and Alipay to pay, instead of having to bind a bank card or use other systems to pay separately, which reduces the trouble in operation and simplifies the payment process, so that customers can easily buy skin. It is avoided that some customers give up buying skins because they can't operate or are troublesome to operate.

3.3.3. Good consumer experience

"The optimization of consumer experience must start from the details. The Internet age has a large amount of information. Only by abandoning homogeneity and paying attention to the diverse and personalized needs of consumers can we achieve the success of online marketing [6]." Both iOS and Android systems can use third-party payments such as WeChat, Alipay or bank cards. This makes the purchase channel of players very convenient to start from the subtleties and optimize the consumption experience.

3.4. Communication

It is very important to implement marketing communication with customers as the center. Through interaction and communication, the internal and external marketing of the enterprise are continuously integrated, and the interests of both customers and the enterprise are invisibly integrated.

3.4.1. Gift giving function

First of all, this skin can be given to each other, which can shorten the relationship and distance between friends. Maybe some people did not intend to buy it, but his friend not only bought it for himself, but also gave it to others. Increase skin sales. The gift of skin care can increase the intimacy between friends. In the game, a logo can be tied between friends, which can be shown to others during the game, and there is a record of sending gifts that will let people know who sent the skin, which will better close the relationship. Increase intimacy.

3.4.2. Couple anchors give each other gifts

This hero is mostly played by male players, and some female anchors will give this skin to boyfriends. This kind of publicity will cause some female players to follow suit after seeing it, and are influenced by herd psychology. Give this skin to your boyfriend. Herd mentality: Under the influence of the surrounding environment, without firming up one's own opinions and following other students to make choices, it is commonly known as "follow the trend". The most obvious of these is the class and dormitory effect. After freshmen enroll, the various behaviors and choices of class and dormitory members have become the most direct references. For example, learning

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attitudes, methods, and the usual use of learning time have an impact on individuals, even if they retain their original choices, Will also tend to the masses to a certain extent [7]. There are many stories about this skin on the Internet. The two heroes of Baili Xuance and Yao are playing together, and the girl playing Yao hangs on Xuance's head. It seems that the two players are very affectionate, so the return of this hero skin is inevitable. Will cause many couples to buy.

3.4.3. problems

However, the skin of Arena Of Valor pays too much attention to anchor points and does not pay attention to innovation. It forms a prolific and fast-selling model, and it ignores quality through assembly line production. This approach caused dissatisfaction among customers, but the planners were dictatorial and reluctant to listen to consumers' opinions. Some consumers were unwilling to pay for the skin.

Some time ago, customers of Arena Of Valor left a message on the official Weibo of Arena Of Valor expressing their dissatisfaction with the skin of Arena Of Valor. Customers have requested to change the plan Guan Feifei, and expressed their dissatisfaction with her "anchor" theory, and asked her not to continue to be a planner, and Arena Of Valor officially changed the plan. Arena Of Valor officially stated that it would optimize the skin, but did not make a clear response to this matter. Many players expressed their disappointment and will no longer buy skins. It is important to pay attention to sales and profit, but the quality of the skin also needs to be paid attention to. Only by strengthening innovation and continuously improving product quality can it develop for a long time.

4. Conclusion

In this studying, we analyzed the marketing strategy of King Glory, taking the marketing strategy of Skin Bai huzhi as an example. The skin marketing of Arena Of Valor is not all very good, and there are some skins that few people buy. For example, Zhen Ji's Frozen Waltz, Da Qiao's White Snake, Xiao Qiao's Green Snake, etc. These skins have not been popular with players due to various problems, and not many people buy them. But Bai Huzhi's marketing is indeed very successful, so this studying took the marketing of this skin as an example for analysis, and it also has a certain reference significance.

The 4C theory includes four aspects of marketing: customer, cost, convenience, and communication. This study analyzes the four aspects of marketing strategies in the case of Arena Of Valor The first is customer, we analyze the customer with three ways, which are Time and economy, Hunger marketing and consumer psychology and How to make customer know. From this we can see that Arena Of Valor attaches great importance to skin sales time selection, is good at analyzing the psychology of customers, that is, stimulates their desire to buy in publicity, and at the same time pays attention to publicity. A channel to ensure that most customers can know that this skin is going to be put on the shelves.

The second is cost, we will analyze the customer with Customers and Producer. By balancing the relationship between cost and selling price, Arena Of Valor sets the skin's "price-performance ratio" very reasonable, so most customers are still willing to pay for it.

Next is the convenience. We analyze the Convenience through three ways. It is that ways to purchase, simple payment process and good consumer experience. Whether Arena Of Valor is easy in the purchase channel and payment process, so as to avoid the consumer's inability to operate or feel The operation process is troublesome and the purchase is abandoned.

The last is communication. On the one hand, Honor of Kings attaches great importance to the communication between players, such as Gift giving function, Couple anchors give each other gifts and so on; On the other hand, Honor of Kings also communicates with customers. However, there

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are many problems in communication, such as untimely communication, improper handling of customers' opinions, and poorer skin quality.

In general, the marketing of Honor of Kings is worth learning from other game companies or companies selling online virtual products.

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