

Anta Sports Brand Marketing Strategy Optimization Analysis

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Abstract. With the acceleration of globalization and the fierce competition in the sporting goods industry, Anta Sports, as a leading brand in China's sporting goods industry, is facing unprecedented market challenges. In order to maintain and enhance its market competitiveness, Anta Sports must constantly optimize its marketing strategy. This study aims to comprehensively evaluate the effectiveness of Anta's existing marketing strategy literature survey method and case analysis method and make suggestions for improvement. There are also some shortcomings in its marketing strategy. First of all, Anta has made some achievements in product differentiation, but it still needs to further explore the brand value difference, especially to highlight the social and cultural characteristics and brand personality in the product design. Secondly, Anta's channel expansion speed is too fast, resulting in insufficient penetration, which affects consumer's loyalty to the brand. In order to solve these problems, it is suggested that Anta Sports should enhance the intensity of brand building, especially by adopting the differentiation strategy in the domestic and foreign markets. In addition, Anta should continue to optimize its digital marketing and face to consumers (DTC) model and improve the efficiency of channels and supply chains through digital transformation, while using big data and consumer insights to drive commodity operations now from automation to intelligent advance. Through these measures, Anta can better meet the changes in market and consumer demand, improve internal innovation and efficiency, so as to maintain the lead in the highly competitive sporting goods market.

Keywords: 4P theory, marketing strategy optimization, digital sports marketing.

1. Introduction

In the global sports goods market, Anta Sports, as a leading sports brand in China, the optimization of its marketing strategy is crucial to maintaining the market competitiveness. Anta market competition environment is extremely fierce, with major global sports brands such as Nike and Adidas competing for market share, while Anta ranks third in market share in China's sportswear industry, second only to Nike and Adidas. In addition, the demand and changes of Chinese sports goods market consumers also put forward new requirements for Anta's marketing strategy. As consumers demand for personalized and specialized products increases, and the pursuit of a healthy lifestyle, Anta needs to constantly adapt to these changes to meet market expectations. This study reveals the competitive situation of the sporting goods industry and the rapid change of consumer demand, emphasizing the central role of marketing strategies in brand development. The research significance lies in that Anta can more effectively meet the market demand and enhance its brand value and market share by optimizing its marketing strategy. The research question focuses on how to address market challenges and consumer expectations by adjusting their marketing strategies. The research objective is to propose a feasible marketing strategy optimization scheme to support the continuous growth and market leadership of Anta Sports. The main content arrangement will be centered on the four key elements of the marketing strategy (Product, price, channel, promotion), combined with literature investigation and case analysis, discuss the current situation of each element and the improvement party in detail.

2. Case Introduction

As a leading brand in China's sports goods industry, Anta Sports has made remarkable achievements in product innovation, channel construction, and digital promotion, and these practices provide important enlightenment for the optimization of its marketing strategy. First of all, in terms of product innovation, Anta Sports has enhanced the core competitiveness of its products through technology research and development. For example, the application of "Anta nitrogen technology" in the design of sports shoes significantly improves the comfort and performance of the product, and injects technology content into its brand. In addition, Anta actively promotes the use of environmentally friendly materials to meet consumer demand for sustainable products. However, its product mix still needs to be optimized, especially there is room to meet the diversified needs of the high-end market. Secondly, in terms of channel construction and integration, Anta adopts the omni-channel strategy of combining online and offline. For example, Anta has successfully achieved a wide range of market coverage by setting up brand flagship stores in China and combining with e-commerce platforms such as Tmall and Jingdong. At the same time, its mode of "online ordering and offline delivery" not only improves the efficiency of inventory management, but also improves the shopping experience of consumers. However, there is still room for improvement in the user experience and supply chain response speed of online platforms during peak promotions. Finally, in terms of digital promotion, Anta makes full use of its social media platforms, such as MicroBo, TikTok, to interact with consumers to increase brand exposure and customer stickiness. In the "Double 11" and other promotional activities, Anta has greatly increased its sales through precise personalized recommendation and member preferential strategies. But its promotions still need to be further optimized in improving customer loyalty and long-term brand value. Through the analysis of the above practices, researchers can see the advantages of Anta in the core field, and also provide a clear side for the subsequent marketing strategy optimization.

3. Analysis on the Problems

3.1. Theoretical Framework

This study uses 4P theory and SWOT analysis as the theoretical framework. 4P theory is the basic framework of marketing strategy, which includes product, price, channel and promotion.

3.2. Product Strategy Analysis

The product strategy of Anta Sports is mainly reflected in the richness of its product line, the innovation of product differentiation, the investment in scientific and technological innovation and the accumulation of patents. Product strategy is an important component of the marketing portfolio, which involves the product design, development, branding, packaging and life cycle management. Anta Sports product line covers everything from sports shoes to clothing to accessories, meeting the needs of different consumer groups. In terms of product differentiation, Anta Sports has launched a series of competitive products through continuous technological innovation and patent applications. However, with the intensification of market competition, Anta Sports needs to further optimize the product mix to better meet the needs of different consumer groups.

Anta Sports has performed well in product innovation, but Anta Sports also faces some problems. The product series of Anta Sports are insufficient in some fields, especially in high-end outdoor sports and professional sports equipment. For example, although Anta has launched the "Olympic technology" mass product matrix represented by nitrogen technology, ice skin technology and hot technology, its product series is not comprehensive enough in high-end outdoor sports equipment, such as skiing, golf, triathlon and other professional sports fields. Some of Anta Sports technology products need to be upgraded to meet consumer demand for high-performance products. This includes improving the technological content of the product, such as the release of the midsole technology--

nitrogen technology, designed to provide better rebound and durability to meet consumer demand for lightweight, high-performance sneakers.

3.3. Price Strategy Analysis

The price positioning, price performance, and market competitiveness of Anta Sports are analyzed. Price strategy is one of the important factors affecting consumers purchasing decision. The price strategy of Anta Sports is competitive in the middle and low-end market, but the price positioning in the high-end market needs to be further clarified. In order to gain more market share in the high-end market, Anta Sports needs to develop more competitive pricing strategies, while maintaining the cost performance of its products.

The price strategy of Anta Sports is competitive in the middle and low-end market, but the price positioning in the high-end market needs to be further clarified. Anta Sports may be relatively low at the high-end market. For example, as the high-end brand of Anta Sports, its main price may be different compared with the high-end products of international brands such as Nike and Adidas. This may be due to the brand premium and different market positioning of Anta Sports in the high-end market positioning may not be accurate enough. Although Anta Sports has a layout in the high-end market through the acquisition of FILA and other brands, Anta Sports may need to further clarify the differentiation advantages and value proposition of its high-end products in the direct competition with international brands.

3.4. Channel Strategy Analysis

Research the channel construction, online and offline integration and supply chain management of Anta Sports. The channel strategy is an important component of the marketing portfolio, which involves the sales and distribution channels of the products. Anta Sports has achieved some results in channel integration, but it needs to further improve the user experience of online platforms and the response speed of the supply chain. With the rapid development of e-commerce, online channels have become one of the important channels for consumers to buy sporting goods.

Anta Sports has achieved some results in channel integration, but it needs to further improve the user experience of online platforms and the response speed of the supply chain. The problems in Anta channels are mainly reflected in the following aspects:

3.4.1 DTC Transformation Challenges

Since 2020, Anta Sports began to promote the transformation of channel model DTC, which involves the removal of traditional wholesale distributors, directly selling products to franchisees, and the company directly operates stores and faces consumers directly

This transformation process may encounter challenges, including the management and coordination of franchisees, as well as operations and operational efficiency of direct stores.

3.4.2 Requirements for Store structure optimization

While promoting the transformation of DTC, Anta Sports is also gradually increasing the proportion of the number of stores in high-line cities and shopping centers, which indicates that the company has further work to optimize the store structure to adapt to market changes and consumer demand.

3.4.3 Growth pressure of online channels

Although the e-commerce channel of Anta Sports developed earlier and maintained a fast growth rate, due to the intensified market competition, how to maintain the rapid growth of online channels is also a challenge. There is a gap between customer unit price and international brands: in terms of customer unit price of e-commerce platforms, the customer unit price of foreign brands is generally higher than that of domestic brands. Although Anta has the highest customer unit price among domestic brands, there is still a gap between the customer unit price and international brands.

3.4.4 Decline of digital channel user scale

The user scale of independent app channels owned by mainstream sports brands such as Anta Sports has generally declined, which may affect the brands online sales and user engagement.

3.4.5 Supply chain response speed and efficiency

Anta Sports needs to improve its response speed and efficiency in its supply chain management to adapt to changes in the market and consumer needs.

3.5. Analysis of Promotion Strategies

Analysis process: discuss the brand promotion, digital marketing, social media use and promotion activities of Anta Sports. Promotion strategy is an important part of the marketing portfolio, which involves activities to promote product sales through various means. Anta Sports is innovative in digital marketing and social media, but the effectiveness of promotions is supported by more accurate data analysis. With the rise of digital marketing, Anta Sports needs to make full use of the advantages of digital media to improve the effect of promotional activities.

Anta Sports is innovative in digital marketing and social media, but the effectiveness of promotions is supported by more accurate data analysis. Anta Sports problems in promotion activities, advertising, endorsement, co-branding and social media marketing are mainly reflected in the following aspects:

3.5.1 Unclear brand image

Anta has vague problems in brand image building. Compared with international brands such as Nike and Adidas, Anta lacks distinctive characteristics, which makes it difficult for it to form high user loyalty and consumer preference.

3.5.2 Low product innovation ability

Although Anta has a "national enterprise technology center" and more than 40 national patents, it has few revolutionary innovative technologies in product production and lacks its own characteristics in product design, which makes it difficult to highlight the brand image and attract consumers.

3.5.3 Negative effects of promotion activities

Anta once caused controversy over a poster of Taobao products, which was pointed out by some netizens to be suspected of playing pornography. This marketing dislocation and controversy reflect Anta's neglect of consumer value, which has brought a negative impact on the brand.

3.5.4 Social Media Marketing Issues

Although Anta's actions on social media strengthen links with users with the help of multiple communication channels, in some cases, such as the poster event, it shows that Anta's DTC transformation has only transformed the surface and failed to grasp the core of "consumer-centered", leading to marketing dislocation.

3.5.5 Joint product design problems

In terms of product design, Anta, whether independently or IP joint name, draws too much reference from international products, leading to the lack of its own characteristics in product design, failing to effectively create the theme of "China-fashion", and it is difficult to highlight the brand image to attract consumers [1].

The existence of these problems may have a negative impact on the brand publicity effect of Anta Sports, reduce consumers' goodwill and loyalty to the brand, affect the sales transformation, and cause controversy on social media and damage the brand image.

4. Suggestions

4.1. Diversification of Brand Building and Differentiation of Domestic and Foreign Markets

Anta Sports needs to implement a brand diversification strategy to meet the needs of different markets. In the domestic market, to raise awareness by sponsoring sports events and through partnerships with athletes. In the international market, Researchers should cooperate with popular sports teams to develop featured products. The process of globalization and the achievement of specific goals are accelerated and realized by the utilization of the acquired international brand resources, brand differentiation in domestic and foreign markets [2].

4.2. Improve Product Innovation Ability

Anta Sports should increase investment in research and development, and use high and new technology to improve product performance and design. Continue to develop innovative technologies such as "Anta Nitrogen Technology" to improve product comfort and performance. Cooperate with universities and scientific research institutions to launch new high-tech products. Pay attention to environmental protection materials, meet consumers pursuit of healthy life, improve the brand image, and attract high-quality life pursuers [3].

4.3. Optimize the Channel Strategy and Achieve Full Channel

Anta Sports can truly achieve all-channel coverage by strengthening the O2O (online to offline) mode. For example, more service modes of "online ordering, offline delivery" or "online booking and offline experience" will be developed to meet consumers shopping needs in different scenarios [1]. At the same time, the online platform is used to display store inventory to consumers in real time to improve purchasing efficiency and user satisfaction. Anta needs to improve its online channel experience. In the context of the rapid development of digitalization, Anta should focus on improving the user experience of online platforms. For example, optimize the design of official website and mobile APP to improve the operation convenience and page loading speed; and provide personalized recommendation service for consumers through AI algorithm. In addition, researchers can deepen cooperation with mainstream e-commerce platforms and make use of its big data capabilities to achieve more accurate traffic guidance and transformation [4]. Anta also needs to further intelligent supply chain management system to cope with the complex and changeable market demand. By introducing the AI prediction model and real-time data analysis.

4.4. Innovate Promotion Strategies to Enhance Customer Engagement

In order to improve the promotion effect, Anta Sports needs to deepen its data analysis capabilities and use big data and artificial intelligence technology to provide accurate insight into consumer preferences. For example, through consumers shopping records and browsing habits, they can design targeted promotions and recommendation content to improve the conversion rate and customer satisfaction [1]. In addition, subscription system services can be explored to provide consumers with regular discounts or limited products and increase the frequency of long-term consumption. Anta can use digital interaction and experience optimization, such as virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR) and meta-universe technology, to enhance consumers buying experience. For example, the "virtual fitting" function is introduced into the e-commerce platform to enhance consumers sense of participation and purchase desire [2]. At the same time, the cooperation with social media key opinion leaders (KOL) and key opinion consumers (KOC) will further enhance the depth of interaction between the brand and consumers. In the international market, Anta can learn from the practices of other brands in local community organizations and sports events cooperation, and shorten the distance with the target consumers with a more down-to-earth promotion strategy. For example, through joint marketing campaigns or social platform challenges, to attract the attention and participation of international consumers, while spreading the cultural value of the brand.

4.4.1 Channel construction and optimization

Anta Sports has established a huge physical sales network in the domestic market, including brand flagship stores and authorized dealer stores, covering first-tier to fourth-tier cities, successfully improving the market penetration rate of [1]. However, as consumers purchasing habits shift to online, offline channels still need to be optimized in terms of user experience and service efficiency. For example, inventory problems and customer service quality in some stores limit consumers shopping experience. Therefore, Anta needs to integrate offline channel resources more efficiently, and optimize its store layout and operation management.

4.4.2 Integration of online and offline products

In recent years, Anta has vigorously developed online channels, covering mainstream e-commerce platforms such as Tmall and Jingdong, as well as the official self-run mall [2]. However, Anta's implementation in the omni-channel integration is still inadequate. For example, the synchronization of online orders and inventory information in offline stores is not smooth enough, making it difficult for consumers to enjoy a seamless shopping experience. In the future, Anta can further strengthen the collaboration between online and offline, and provide consumers with a more convenient way to purchase through the O2O (online to offline) mode.

4.4.3 Supply chain management

Anta's supply chain management ability is an important support for its channel strategy. Although it has excellent performance in logistics timeliness and supply chain elasticity, there is still room for optimization of the response speed and flexibility of supply chain in the face of complex market demand. Especially during major promotions, delivery delays in some areas affect the consumer experience. Therefore, Anta should further improve the efficiency and accuracy of the supply chain through technological upgrades (such as intelligent storage system and AI prediction models).

4.5. Promotion Strategy Analysis

4.5.1 Brand publicity and image building

Anta Sports has significantly enhanced its brand awareness and market image among consumers by sponsoring large sports events (such as the Olympic Games) and signing up with well-known athletes. However, there is still room for [4] improvement in brand story and cultural communication compared to international brands such as Nike and Adidas. For example, in the international market, Anta's brand image is still regarded as a representative of "Made in China", lacking in international characteristics. Therefore, it is necessary to increase the global attraction of the brand through a deeper cultural implantation and brand narrative.

4.5.2 Digital Marketing and Social Media

Anta has begun to achieve effective results in digital marketing. It has successfully attracted young consumers through advertising on Weibo, TikTok and other platforms [5]. However, there is still room for engagement in its social media campaigns. For example, in major promotional activities, Anta can further use real-time data analysis to optimize advertising content and improve user experience. In addition, the exploration of the meta-universe and NFT fields can be increased to build deeper interactions with consumers through innovative digital content.

4.5.3 Promotion activities and customer relationship management

Anta has shown innovative ability in promotional activities, especially in the large e-commerce promotion festival is worthy of recognition. However, these activities are focused on short-term sales growth and limited improvement in long-term brand loyalty by [3]. In the future, Anta should pay more attention to improving the quality of customer relationship management through personalized membership services and loyalty programs. For example, the CRM (Customer Relationship Management System) can track consumer behavior and provide customized promotional solutions to further enhance customer trust in Anta.

5. Conclusion

As a leading brand in China's sporting goods industry, Anta Sports has demonstrated its advantages in the core areas such as product innovation, channel construction and digital promotion in the fierce market competition under the background of globalization. Through technology research and development and the application of environmentally friendly materials, Anta continues to improve product performance to meet consumers' demand for high-quality and sustainable products. However, in the high-end market and personalized design, Anta's product innovation still has a large room for improvement. In terms of channel strategy, Anta has successfully improved its market coverage and consumer experience through the integration of DTC mode and online and offline products. But with the rapid expansion, the optimization of store structure and supply chain efficiency remains a key challenge. In addition, digital marketing and promotional activities have brought short-term sales growth and brand exposure to Anta, but its brand image building and long-term customer loyalty construction still need to be further strengthened.

In order to consolidate its market position and achieve sustained growth, Anta Sports needs to pay more attention to the improvement of its brand value and the optimization of its marketing strategy in the future. First of all, product differentiation should be deepened to highlight social and cultural characteristics and brand personality, and further seize high-end market share. Secondly, through intelligent supply chain management and digital transformation, the channel efficiency and user experience can be improved to ensure the smooth operation of all-channel coverage. Finally, in terms of promotion strategy, Anta should establish deep customer relations through accurate consumer insight and innovative digital interaction, and at the same time, adopt differentiated brand strategies in the domestic and foreign markets to enhance the brand attraction in the international market.

By constantly adapting to consumer demand and market changes, strengthening internal innovation and efficiency, Anta will be able to maintain a competitive advantage in the global sporting goods industry and further consolidate its market leadership position.

Authors Contribution

All the authors contributed equally and their names were listed in alphabetical order.

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