

Exploring the Long-Term Impact of Marketing Strategy and Consumer Emotional Resonance: Jellycat as an Example

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Keywords: Jellycat, Marketing Strategy, Consumer Emotional Resonance, Brand Loyalty.

Abstract: In today's market, Jellycat brand produces novel plush dolls, and stands out with its unique marketing strategies, which has become the focus of research. Taking British high-end gift brand Jellycat as an example, this study explores how to combine its marketing strategy with consumer emotional value to achieve long-term brand influence and market success. The study found that Jellycat successfully built an emotional connection with consumers through anthropomorphic design and emotional marketing strategies, especially among adults, to form a "healing economy". The study emphasizes the role of brand stories and social media in establishing consumers' emotional connection and provides practical guidance for brand management in emotional marketing, aiming at enhancing brand loyalty and market competitiveness.

1 INTRODUCTION

Jellycat is a high-end gift brand from the UK, it was founded in 1999, it is quickly known worldwide for its cute, unique and high-quality plush dolls, and the brand became popular with many consumers through its warm overall atmosphere, anthropomorphic depiction and its connection with human emotions. Today, Jellycat has shown strong competitiveness in the plush toy market, its unique product positioning and excellent quality assurance have made it stand out in the fierce market competition and become a leader in the market. As global consumers increasingly pursue a high-quality lifestyle, Jellycat has successfully attracted a large number of loyal fans through its emotional marketing strategy, with monthly sales of multiple products reaching tens of thousands.

In the field of advertising, emotional marketing strategies are widely recognized as effective tools for building deep connections between brands and consumers (Mathur & Smith, 1997). As a prominent case in the plush toy market, it is particularly important to study the long-term impact of Jellycat's marketing strategy and emotional connection. Studies have shown that brands can significantly enhance consumers' sense of identity and loyalty through emotional resonance (Chitturi, 2009). Bao (2022) points out in his research that with the development

of social economy and the increase of life pressure, adults' love for plush toys has surpassed that of children, forming a kind of "healing economy". This suggests that the emotions provided by dolls are long-lasting. However, most of the existing literature focuses on the short-term effects of marketing strategies, and there is insufficient discussion on the long-term effects and their effects on the evolution of consumer emotional resonance (Zawisza-Riley, 2019).

The purpose of this study is to fill in the gaps of the existing research, and to analyze the marketing strategy of Jellycat in detail, how it maintains the emotional connection with consumers in the long term, and how this connection translates into brand loyalty and market advantage. The research will focus on two core issues: first, how Jellycat continues to resonate with consumers through its marketing strategy. Secondly, how the long-term marketing strategy shapes Jellycat's brand loyalty and market influence. Through this analysis, this study not only enriches the understanding of the long-term impact of emotional marketing on brands, but also provides practical guidance for brands to achieve sustainable growth through emotional marketing strategies.

2 THE FOUNDING OF JELLYCAT AND ITS CHARACTERISTICS

2.1 Brand History

Jellycat was founded in 1999 in London, England, and quickly gained market recognition for its luxurious fabrics combined with cool designs. In 2001, the brand crossed the Atlantic and entered the US market, marking the beginning of its global expansion.

By 2006, Jellycat was focusing on the children's market and introducing its signature product, the Shy Bunny. At the same time, the brand has further enhanced its brand image by connecting with celebrity children such as Tom Cruise's daughter Suri and Beckham's daughter Little Seven through the Star Two customer group marketing strategy.

With the expansion of its brand influence, Jellycat opened its Tmall overseas flagship store in China in 2015, further expanding its influence in the Asian market. In 2019, Jellycat opened a branch in Shanghai, China, to expand its market to young people, not just children.

By December 2024, Jellycat's sales revenue has reached 200 million pounds, and its gross profit margin has remained above 60% for many years, demonstrating its strong profitability and market competitiveness (Feng & Sun, 2024). The brand has a global market in 77 countries.

2.2 Unique Design and Quality Assurance

Jellycat dolls adopt a series of high-end materials such as wool, rabbit hair and coral velvet to ensure the safety and comfort of the product. Its product line covers a variety of animal, plant, fruit and other lines, and launches new products every year to keep the brand fresh and competitive in the market. Through unique design concepts and high-quality product quality, the brand occupies a place in the plush toy market, satisfying consumers' pursuit of quality of life, and gradually showing a trend of branding and high-end.

2.3 Market Positioning

Jellycat is positioned as a high-end plush toy brand that not only appeals to children, but also specifically targets teenagers and adults. Because of its applicability and ubiquity, Jellycat has been purchased by a subset of adults who give it as a gift or buy it for themselves to satisfy their need for

emotional sustenance and psychological comfort (Xiao, 2022). The brand becomes an emotional companion for consumers of all ages by providing products that provide warmth, companionship and healing.

3 ANALYSIS OF MARKETING STRATEGIES

3.1 Brand Personality

Jellycat's dolls convey a warm and friendly brand image. From the perspective of product design, Jellycat pays attention to every detail, whether it is the scientific selection of colors, the careful selection of materials, or the creative shaping of forms, striving to achieve a perfect fusion of aesthetics and practicality, ensuring that toys not only exhibit a high degree of recognition, but also have unique and distinctive characteristics. This design is not only easy to identify, but also able to touch consumers' emotions, providing a sense of visual comfort and companionship. Through this design, the brand has successfully transformed the product into an emotional carrier to meet the needs of consumers for emotional sustenance.

3.2 Anthropomorphic Strategy and Emotional Link

Through its innovative anthropomorphic strategy, Jellycat gives plush toys human expressions and features, such as beanie eyes and a smiling mouth, to make them appear vivid and emotionally engaging. For example, "Shy Bunny" has soft and expressive eyes and gentle gestures, creating a sense of innocence and calmness, making it an ideal emotional sustenance for consumers. This design not only makes the doll look more intimate and attractive, but also effectively promotes the emotional connection between the consumer and the doll (Yize, 2024). Consumers often see these dolls as everyday companions and may even become emotionally dependent on them, viewing them as family members or close friends. This connection cultivates long-term emotional needs.

The brand further deepens this emotional connection by setting activation rituals for the doll, such as shaking, touching and sharing happiness. These rituals increase the interactive and fun of the dolls, allowing consumers to experience a special emotional exchange during the participation process.

As a result, consumers strengthen their loyalty to the brand.

The tag message “Please look after me” further connects the brand’s story to the consumer’s personal stories. This story-based marketing strategy allows consumers to feel valued and emotionally satisfied in the process of buying and owning dolls. In this way, Jellycat not only meets consumers’ demand for high quality, emotional value, and personalized products, but also establishes a deep connection with consumers on an emotional level, enhancing the emotional appeal and market competitiveness of the brand.

3.3 Sales Channels

Jellycat’s sales strategy skillfully integrates online and offline channels and realizes the seamless coordination between physical stores and e-commerce platforms, which greatly facilitates the purchasing experience of consumers. Through cooperation and co-branding with well-known brands and designers, such as Thebast and Roseonly. These partnerships not only expand sales channels, but also enhance the visibility and appeal of the brand (Yang & Qiao, 2023).

3.4 Social Media Marketing

Jellycat also uses social media platforms such as Instagram and Tiktok to promote its brand and establish emotional connections with consumers, while cooperating with KOL to attract potential customers through authentic word-of-mouth recommendations.

In addition, Jellycat has enhanced brand’s popularity among consumers of all ages by hosting offline experiences and family-oriented activities, such as limited-time co-flower shops and themed afternoon teas. The brand encourages consumers to share their dolls and personal stories on social media, bringing people with the same interests together through the network, and this sense of community further strengthens consumers’ emotional connection with the brand (Varadarajan, 2015). Consumers’ interaction and sharing in the community not only enhance the visibility of the brand, but also make consumers feel involved in the brand narrative. This sense of participation and belonging becomes an important source of brand loyalty and market competitiveness.

By combining these strategies, Jellycat not only meets the needs of consumers on the material level, but also establishes a deep emotional connection with

consumers. The durability of this connection is key to the brand’s long-term success. Jellycat has managed to carve a place in the hearts of consumers by providing experiences that transcend material value, fostering an emotional engagement that underpins the brand’s enduring market success and consumer loyalty.

3.5 Establishing a Sense of Ritual

Jellycat has implemented a series of themed pop-up stores around the world, skillfully transforming everyday spaces into fantastical and immersive experience venues, such as cafes, cake shops, breakfast shops, and fish and chip shops. These pop-up stores not only surpass the scope of traditional plush toy sales platforms, but also become a sacred place for consumers to explore unique shopping experiences and rituals. From the selection of decorative styles to the creation of atmosphere lighting, the choice of background music, and even the aroma in the air, every detail has been carefully designed to create a dreamy and welcoming consumption scene for customers.

In these pop-up stores, Jellycat launched a highly creative marketing strategy, “simulated cooking” performances. The staff dressed in professional chef costumes and treated the Jellycat dolls as real food, performing a wonderful show from ingredient selection, cooking and stir-frying to exquisite presentation. This entertaining performance not only greatly enriched the shopping experience of customers, but also demonstrated Jellycat’s high emphasis on creative marketing and customer interaction. In this process, Jellycat skillfully combines the shopping experience with emotional resonance, allowing customers to enjoy the fun of shopping while also feeling the warmth conveyed by the brand.

In addition, Jellycat has also shown great creativity in the packaging of plush toys. For example, the cake doll is vividly simulated as a real cake, not only with an exquisite and attractive appearance, but also with a beautiful packaging box, elegant ribbons, and a beautiful greeting card with wishes written on it. This packaging method, imbued with a sense of ritual, not only elevates the product’s added value but also allows customers to experience the profound emotions and humanistic care conveyed by the brand the moment they receive the gift.

In this process, Jellycat fully leveraged the power of emotional resonance, enhancing the brand’s attractiveness and influence through a shopping experience that connects with consumers’

emotions through a sense of ritual. This not only helps to enhance the brand's visibility and reputation, but also brings sustained and stable commercial returns to the brand.

4 PRACTICAL SIGNIFICANCE

4.1 Brand Management Inspiration

In brand management, the integration of emotional marketing and anthropomorphic strategies is essential to establish a deep connection between consumers and brands. By doing so, Jellycat has managed to find a place in the minds of consumers. Similarly, Disney's cartoon characters, such as Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck, create an emotional bond with consumers through rich emotional expression and personality (Yao, 2017). Hello Kitty of Sanrio creates an emotional connection with consumers through cute design and lifestyle products and enhances this connection through social media and community activities.

These brands increase the attractiveness of products through anthropomorphic strategies and enhance the market competitiveness of brands through emotional marketing. By providing an emotional experience that transcends material value, brands have succeeded in gaining a place in the hearts of consumers.

With the improvement of brand management strategies, it is particularly important to further explore the long-term impact of emotional marketing, which provides deeper insights for the sustainable development of brands.

4.2 Long-Term Impact of Emotional Marketing

The long-term impact of emotional marketing is an area worth exploring in depth. It reveals how emotional marketing shapes consumer attitudes and behaviors and how such emotional connections develop or shift over time. In addition, this research can provide brands with insights on how to maintain and enhance their emotional connection with consumers, especially in a rapidly changing market environment. Through long-term impact analysis, the study can not only better understand how emotional marketing affects consumers' loyalty, word-of-mouth communication and brand recommendation behavior, but also understand how brands remain relevant and attractive in a highly competitive market and enrich

the academic understanding of brand management and achieve sustainable brand growth and market leadership.

5 CONCLUSION

This study explores in depth how the Jellycat brand establishes an emotional connection with consumers through its marketing strategy and maintains this connection in the long run. It reveals that emotional marketing plays a core role in Jellycat's brand management. The findings highlight the long-term effects of emotional marketing, pointing out that brands need to focus not only on short-term market responses, but also on building long-term emotional bonds with consumers.

Brands can further strengthen emotional connections through interactive design and consumer co-creation of content, forming a virtuous cycle of consumption, so as to win the market. The brand should also assume social responsibility, enhance the brand image through sustainable development and win the trust of consumers.

However, this study also has certain objective limitations. Although the case of Jellycat has been analyzed in depth, the scope of the study is limited to specific brands and specific markets, which may not fully reflect the universal laws and effects of emotional marketing in all industries and markets. In addition, this study focuses more on the positive impact of emotional marketing, and does not delve into potential risks and challenges, such as brand aging or consumer aesthetic fatigue that may result from an over-reliance on emotional marketing.

Future research can further broaden the scope of research and explore the applicability and differences of emotional marketing in different industries, cultural backgrounds, and consumer groups. At the same time, researchers can also conduct in-depth research on the long-term effects of emotional marketing, including its long-term impact on brand loyalty, market share, and brand value. In addition, the risk management and strategy adjustment of emotional marketing also need to be further explored and improved in future research.

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