

A Study on the Impact of Visual Communication Online on Brand Marketing: Taking Prada as an Example

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Abstract: With the popularization of e-commerce platforms and the development of craftsmanship technology, an increasing number of fashion brands have emerged. However, running a fashion brand is not easy, as it requires many excellent strategies to support and promote the brand's development during the management process. Capturing customer needs in a timely manner and attracting customer attention in the fiercely market has become a pursuit for most fashion brands. Based on multiple literature studies, after understanding the history of the fashion brand Prada, this article mainly studies the strategies used by Prada in its development process, and concludes the strategy of Prada to solve the current brand marketing challenges—the difficulty to let customers gain a sense of participation and experience, finding that Prada's success is inseparable from its strategies and its sense of social responsibility. Prada's strategies mainly include positioning of women's brands, the control of the scope and quality of the supply and distribution network, location strategy and wise sponsorship strategy, digital marketing strategy, mediterranean marketing strategy and visual communication, and visual communication is crucial for a brand's marketing. Because in today's society, most online products are conveyed through images or text, which makes it difficult to trigger the emotions of the buyers, so at this time, visual communication becomes particularly important.

1 INTRODUCTION

An increasing number of brands are utilizing the Internet to sell their products, as electronic commerce becomes increasingly prevalent. This paper admits that it is a great way to let people know about their goods, but that does not mean the brands must be successful if they just only take use of the Internet. There are many points that affect the brand's marketing, one key of them is the texture. This paper finds that the product picture or the words of introduction on the Internet could not let customers feel their special texture and actual experience, hence people may not judge whether the goods are the same as the picture or not. To address this issue, Prada has implemented effective strategies. Prada make their product's quality appeared in front of customers through film, video and other forms, so the customer can have a deeper impression of the product. Prada has a huge sales promotion due to its unique strategies. This article will analyse the Prada's main excellent strategies and benefit generated, then provides summary and relevant suggestions to make a Brand's marketing better.

2 PRADA'S DEVELOPMENT

2.1 History

Prada's original name is Fratri Prada, it had occupied a high-end market position in the Italian parts market since it was founded in 1931. Then it opened its first boutique store to enter the high-end retail, to meet the lifestyle needs of elite consumers by produce ornament. At that time, Prada was offered to the royal family as an official supplier, so Prada had trademark logo of the family. But Prada's product range is difficult to distinguish, people couldn't identify its unique brand logo, so Prada has four stages of change after the founder's granddaughter Micia took over the company (Moore and Doyle, 2010).

In the first stage, a stage of recognizing differences. Micia, the granddaughter of Prada's founder, she recognized the need to shed radical and different claims in the luxury sector, so she studied a practical luggage collection with black triangle logo, it seemed low-key but differed from other luxury brands (Moore and Doyle, 2010). This is the Prada's philosophical tone, because of Micia Prada's maturity and pursuit of perfection and unique ideas, she has a

significant advantage in helping the brand to rise to the forefront of the luxury industry.

Reached the second stage, Prada began to build its own platform. Micia collaborated with her husband to try to obtain elements that provide criticism, which also helped to build interest and awareness for the Prada brand at the lowest cost and risk. Because Prada's previous retail network had established significant customer demand, it subsequently launched a women's collection and expanded into shoes, men's wear (Moore and Doyle, 2010). With the help of a third-party supplier network, Prada transformed from a marginal small business Italian company into a multi-segment national enterprise, which gave the brand greater confidence to become a global luxury group.

In the third stage, Prada begins to bravely explore. Prada has delved deeper into exploration, engaging in a brand alliance collaboration with LVMH and purchasing shares in other brands, and partially sell them off later (Moore and Doyle, 2010). Although Prada's approach to fashion design brands may not seem ideal, fortunately, its acquisitions in renowned shoe brands have been quite successful, such as the acquisition of the Italian prestigious shoe brand and the shoe brand Church which was purchased in 1999 (Moore and Doyle, 2010).

Moving on to the fourth stage, in the face of market challenges, Prada chose to consolidate itself. Prada reaped substantial profits and much-needed revenue by leveraging the potential of strategic brands with LVMH. Prada attempted to establish itself as a luxury brand, but it needed to devise better strategies to address and alleviate the company's debt. In many ways, Prada should also embrace the basic elements of a 'mainstream' luxury brand and undertake more mainstream luxury marketing activities to retreat from contraction and consolidate development (Moore and Doyle, 2010).

2.2 Marketing Features and Strategies

If a brand wants to have long-term development, it must have corresponding appropriate brand strategies. Certainly, the main reason why Prada has grown from a small business into a global brand is it has adopted a series of outstanding strategies, such as positioning of women's brands, the control of the scope and quality of the supply and distribution network, location strategy and wise sponsorship strategy, digital marketing strategy, mediterranean marketing strategy and visual communication strategy.

2.2.1 Positioning of Women's Brands

Prada's brand positioning is as a luxury fashion brand for women, its clothing design style and elements give women a strong artistic character. It unifies different fabric materials and natural colors, achieving a common enhancement of functionality and aesthetics. At the same time, Prada collaborates with cartoonists, incorporating comic elements into its clothing and pattern designs for women's accessories, it attracts the attention of many women and also showcases Prada's unique style charm undoubtedly. At the 2008 Beijing fashion show, Prada further demonstrated its clothing allure by incorporating various traditional cultural elements into women's clothing, bags, and other product, meeting the unique demands of Chinese women for luxury goods. Studies have shown that in the female market, women who consume luxury goods are considered more attractive, sexier, and have a higher, more positive status compared to those who consume non-luxury items (Hudders et al., 2014).

2.2.2 The Control of the Scope and Quality of the Supply and Distribution Network

Prada operates around 600 stores directly, and it has a presence in about 70 countries. Approximately 86% of Prada's new stores are directly operated, followed by joint ventures, etc. Each store's location is carefully selected, for example, the Prada 2024 autumn-winter show was held at a venue full of industrial atmosphere. Under the natural landscape, people can feel as if they are in the midst of a forest. Over the past few years, the number of directly operated stores has doubled, prompting Prada to consider expanding its reach. Not just this, when producing products, Prada typically uses the most unique Prada manufacturing materials, and it also incorporates some advanced innovative technologies and traditional craftsmanship. To reduce costs, Prada's quality is no longer only associated with Italian brands but with the quality of the place of brands origin. Consequently, in 2014, Prada's sales increased significantly, with 85% coming from directly controlled sales channels, reaching a revenue of \$3.551 billion (Masè and Silchenko, 2017).

2.2.3 Location Strategy and Wise Sponsorship Strategy

When a brand is combined with art, its image is also endowed with greater value and significance.

Nowadays, more and more well-known brands are increasingly integrating with artistic creativity. In 2005, Prada adopted a unique approach to its store locations by situating them in the West Texas desert. While most people might consider this a nearly uninhabited place, but Prada saw the artistic value in it, because it greatly helped to establish Prada's minimalist image and also showcased the unique charm of 'Prada in the desert' in terms of land art, highlighting the different stylistic features that emerge from the combination of Prada with various regions. Furthermore, Prada invests in artists, and artists also need patrons undoubtedly. One of the notable artists associated with Prada is the artist Sax. In the 2002 exhibition at the Jewish Museum in New York, Sax's artworks were licensed for Prada to display. People were shocked by the concentration camp models made with Prada boxes, which brought Prada a great deal of widespread attention and increased its brand recognition (Ryan, 2007). Therefore, Prada's sponsorship of art is undoubtedly also a sponsorship of itself.

2.2.4 Digital Marketing Strategy

In order to attract more customers and develop omnichannel services, Prada has chosen a digital marketing strategy. Through precising advertising placement strategies, Prada has more brand visibility. At the same time, Prada combine online and offline methods to boost sales numbers. In terms of social platforms, Prada utilizes various social media platforms to release product promotions and to tell brand stories that resonate with customers emotionally, for example, Prada is very active on Instagram, where they have previously live-streamed the process of creating artworks with artists, showcasing the combination of the brand with contemporary art. If customers like the product, they can choose to purchase directly from the Internet page, as Prada offers online shopping services not only on their official website but also on major social platforms. Prada has invested heavily in developing partnerships and new retail channels, and in 2016, its retail strategy gradually shifted from geographical expansion to network rationalization and digital integration. This marks an important phase for Prada, and with the help of this long-term growth strategy, by 2018, Prada Group's revenue saw a significant increase, growing by one-third of the sales in 2016 (Simo, 2020). Therefore, this strategy has brought Prada tremendous benefits, and it has also enabled Prada to form more new partnerships while developing in the digital world.

2.2.5 Mediterranean Marketing Strategy

While pursuing the maximization of profits, Prada also places great emphasis on environmental protection, advocating for green, eco-friendly, and sustainable development. This behavior reflects the brand's commitment and responsibility towards social responsibility. Prada has planted Posidonia seagrass in some areas of the Mediterranean to provide a more comfortable environment for marine life, so it has also made significant contributions to solving global climate change. At the same time, Prada has released a series of short films about ocean conservation to raise public awareness and responsibility for protecting the oceans. For example, Prada collaborated with National Geographic to release three creative short films, each showcasing the conditions of the Indian Ocean-Pacific region, the Arctic area, and the Mediterranean marine ecosystems, with the aim of raising public awareness about global ocean conservation issues. In the Mediterranean region, Prada hosts many brand events, combining its exhibitions with local culture and enhancing the brand's stylistic diversity and influence. However, Mediterranean marketing is also a form of ideological marketing, positioning around the Mediterranean basin (Visconti and Giuli, 2014). This marketing approach has a connectivity that builds connections between different cultural fields or ethnic groups, thus strengthening the ties between Prada and the Mediterranean region.

3 VISUAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGY-BASED ON THE ANALYSIS OF THE APA MODEL

3.1 The Comparison Between Video and Words

On most platforms today, consumers typically see product images and text descriptions when purchasing goods. However, they often find a significant difference between the buyer's and seller's presentations. Cold text always makes it difficult for people to feel the real texture of the product, which leads to hesitation about whether to buy it and this also have a huge impact on brand sales. However, brands that have promotional videos and advertisements tend to make good progress in sales. Studies have shown that video is more effective at moving and attracting people than text, and it also

evokes more emotional responses. Therefore, video is a powerful tool that allows individuals to engage with content, making it more interesting (Yadav et al., 2011). Promotional videos are also a form of visual communication that can establish deeper connections with people. In this regard, Prada has made outstanding efforts, it enhances customer experience by releasing some movies or blockbuster advertisements.

3.2 Prada's Strategy in Visual Communication

At the beginning of 2024, in response to the demands of the Chinese market, Prada specially launched a Spring Festival blockbuster. This behavior was well-received by most Chinese people, as they could see cultural elements of their country presented through video, and it evoked a deeper emotional resonance. Moreover, the present study finds that in the nine months up to September 30, 2024, Prada Group's retail net sales increased by 18.3% compared to 2023. In terms of regional performance, the Asia-Pacific region's contribution was largest, followed by Europe and the Americas, this indicates that people in the Asia-Pacific region had a particular fondness for Prada in 2024.

Fashion films serve as a modern alternative to retail experiences in shaping brands. Once brands discover the advantages of fashion films and advertisements, they focus more on brand promotion because fashion films can foster universal values and emotional communication by expressing the realm of human emotions. In June 2006, Prada premiered the fashion film "The Devil Wears Prada", which was a contemporary fashion film, it mainly tells the story of a girl's transformation from a "Cinderella" into a fashion icon. After this film came out, Prada's search volume surged significantly, also enhancing the brand's image. The film's compelling plot made it easy for audiences to immerse themselves in the story. Data shows that in June 2006, Google searches for Prada reached a peak, demonstrating the tangible impact of fashion films on brand marketing (Jing, 2022). Of course, Prada's success also benefits from its brand status and recognition, which also has played a significant role in the promotion of the movie (Lu et al., 2022). Prada has also released many other films, including one titled "Mission: Impossible 4". Based on the character's name in that film, Prada launched its famous "Murder Bag", a uniquely designed bag that embodies the strong character of women, this also makes a brilliant contribution to Prada's brand design. A similar film is "The A

Therapy", which is a movie collaborated with Polanski. The theme of this film also perfectly expresses the power of women and criticism of the bourgeoisie, making people deeply moved [(Soloaga and Guerrero, 2016).

4 CONCLUSION

Through the analysis of Prada's business strategy, it can be found that Prada has a very good management policy. Whether in sales or social responsibility, Prada can show a positive attitude to respond. For today's online sales methods, most retailers choose cold text descriptions and images, but Prada has paid attention to people's emotional experience, and then launched a series of movies and promotional videos to fully present the charm of their brand's products to consumers, while also promoting the cultural characteristics of different regions, so it shows Prada's humanization and personalization, these measures also increase the sales of the product as well as brand awareness. However, in future development, Prada should work harder to understand market development and competition, not only limited to the current marketing strategy, Prada shold do more things to understand customers' needs, so it can also be combined with more regional cultures and then presented through promotional videos, establishing a more favourable brand image.

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