Research on the Changes and Model Innovation of Marketing under the Network Economy

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Abstract: The network economy has profoundly reshaped the marketing environment. Consumer behavior has shifted from passive acceptance to active participation, and technological development has driven the iteration of marketing methods. Traditional marketing models, due to inefficient channels and weak user connections, struggle to adapt, while innovative models featuring precision, socialization, and content-driven approaches leverage data, social interaction, and valuable content to address pain points. Innovation faces challenges such as data privacy compliance and organizational adaptation pressure, which can be effectively tackled by establishing data security systems and promoting digital transformation. The essence of marketing under the network economy is the reconstruction of a "user-centered" approach. Enterprises need to actively innovate and balance technology and trust to achieve sustainable development.

1. Introduction

1.1. Research Background

With the rapid development of Internet technology, the network economy has become an important form of current economic development [1]. From the widespread use of smartphones to the expansion of e-commerce platforms, from the rise of social media to the popularity of live streaming and short videos, the Internet has gradually penetrated all aspects of people's lives, changing traditional transaction methods and consumption habits. Today, consumers are no longer limited to shopping in offline physical stores but instead browse products, compare prices, and place orders anytime and anywhere via their mobile phones. Channels for obtaining information have also shifted from newspapers and television to online platforms such as social media and short videos, and consumption decisions increasingly rely on online reviews and social recommendations.

This change has brought a fundamental impact on marketing. In traditional marketing, wide-net advertising placement and sales models that rely on offline channels are increasingly unable to meet the needs of the network era. Enterprises have found that previously effective marketing methods are becoming ineffective: offline store traffic is decreasing, attention to traditional advertisements is declining, and consumers are increasingly resistant to homogeneous marketing content. Meanwhile, network technology allows enterprises to reach consumers more directly and collect data, but how to use these advantages for marketing has become a challenge for many enterprises. Therefore, an in-depth analysis of the specific changes in marketing under the network economy and the exploration of marketing models suitable for the new era have become an urgent need for the survival and development of enterprises.

1.2. Research Purpose

This research aims to clearly sort out the core changes that the network economy has brought to marketing and, on this basis, explore practical paths for marketing model innovation. Specifically, the study will focus on three aspects: first, to analyze how the network economy changes consumer behavior habits, such as what changes have occurred in the ways consumers obtain information and make purchasing decisions; second, to discuss the impact of network technologies (such as big data and social media) on marketing channels and communication methods, and to clarify the

inadaptability of traditional marketing models; third, to extract innovative marketing models suitable for the network economy environment in light of these changes, such as how to use data to achieve precision marketing and how to use social platforms to get closer to consumers.

Through the above research, it is expected to provide enterprises with a clear direction: to help them understand the essential changes in marketing under the network economy, break through the limitations of traditional models, guide them to use marketing methods that are more in line with the times, and improve marketing efficiency and effectiveness; ultimately, to help enterprises better connect with consumers, occupy the market, and achieve sustainable development in the network economy environment. At the same time, it also provides a basic reference for understanding the development patterns of marketing in the digital era.

2. Changes in the Marketing Environment under the Network Economy

2.1. Transformation of Consumer Behavior

The network economy has significantly changed consumers' behavior patterns. In the past, consumers mainly obtained product information through advertisements and sales staff introductions, and their decisions were often constrained by offline scenarios. Now, people are more accustomed to actively searching online for reviews and evaluations, obtaining authentic experiences from social media and short video platforms, and may even place orders after interacting with streamers during live broadcasts. Purchase decisions are no longer passive acceptance but rather active screening of similar products; consumers may compare prices, logistics, and after-sales service across multiple platforms and make choices based on friends' recommendations.

Consumption scenarios have also become more flexible. In the past, shopping required visiting physical stores, but now methods such as mobile ordering, community group buying, and flash sales during live streams have become popular, enabling purchases to be completed during fragmented time periods [2]. For example, placing an order instantly when discovering a desired product while commuting. Moreover, consumers are no longer only concerned with purchasing but also value participation, such as giving suggestions in brand communities, sharing purchase experiences, or even voting on product design and these interactions have become part of the consumption process.

2.2. Technology-Driven Marketing Transformation

The development of network technology has directly driven changes in marketing methods. Big data technology enables enterprises to easily collect users' browsing history, purchase preferences, and even time spent on pages, allowing them to profile users [3]. For example, knowing who prefers cost-effective products and who cares more about brands makes it possible to deliver suitable content accurately, avoiding the blind wide-net marketing of the past.

Social media and live streaming technologies have reconstructed communication paths. In the past, enterprises relied on TV commercials and leaflets to spread information; now, through platforms like WeChat and Douyin, a short video or a live stream can quickly disseminate information, and user reposts and shares can bring in new customers. In addition, technologies such as mobile payments and intelligent logistics have made the marketing, purchasing, and after-sales processes smoother: after seeing an advertisement, consumers can click a link to pay and receive the product the next day [4]. The whole process is more efficient and convenient than traditional marketing, greatly lowering the threshold from seeing to buying.

3. Limitations of Traditional Marketing Models

3.1. Problems of Channels and Efficiency

Traditional marketing channel models have obvious shortcomings. Offline channels rely on physical stores, with rental and labor costs rising year by year, while customer traffic is continuously diverted by online shopping, leaving many stores trapped in the dilemma of high costs and low sales. Even when expanding online channels, many enterprises simply move offline products online without

integrating online and offline inventory and membership systems. For example, a product favored by a customer offline may show as out of stock online; a membership card obtained offline cannot be used online, resulting in fragmented channels operating independently with low efficiency.

Traditional channels have multiple intermediaries. From the manufacturer to the consumer, goods must pass through dealers, wholesalers, and other middle layers, which not only push up prices but also cause delays in information transmission. Manufacturers find it difficult to know consumers' feedback in time, and inventory backlogs or stockouts often occur, falling far behind the fast response efficiency of direct manufacturer-to-consumer connections under the network economy.

3.2. Insufficient User Connection

The connection between traditional marketing models and users is very weak. In the past, enterprises mainly reached users through advertisements and promotional activities, which were mostly one-way communication: enterprises said something and users listened, with little interaction [5]. For example, a TV advertisement ends when it is broadcast, and once leaflets are handed out, enterprises do not know whether users read them or not, making it difficult to understand what users really like or dislike.

This weak connection makes it difficult for enterprises to build long-term user relationships. After purchasing a product, unless there is a problem, consumers rarely contact the enterprise again, making it hard for brands to cultivate user loyalty. Under the network economy, however, users want to feel valued. For example, by receiving personalized greetings or participating in brand activities but traditional marketing lacks such interactive mechanisms. As a result, it cannot retain old users or attract new ones, and gradually fails to keep up with the changing needs of users.

4. Marketing Model Innovation under the Network Economy

4.1. Precision Marketing

Precision marketing is an important innovation under the network economy, with its core being to find the right audience and deliver the right message through data. By analyzing users' browsing histories, purchase records, search keywords, and other data, enterprises can clearly understand users' preferences. For example, someone who frequently buys maternal and infant products is likely a new mother; someone who often looks at outdoor gear is probably an outdoor enthusiast. Based on these profiles, enterprises can push targeted information: diaper discounts for new mothers, new sports shoe launches for outdoor enthusiasts, thus avoiding the waste of sending the same ads to everyone as in the past.

In this model, marketing is no longer about casting a wide net but about precise reach. For example, if a user searches for an oven on a shopping platform, they will later see recommendations for oven recipes, related kitchenware, or even receive relevant coupons when they open the app again, greatly increasing the possibility of clicks and purchases. Precision marketing makes enterprises' investments more effective and spares users from irrelevant information, achieving efficiency for both sides.

4.2. Social Marketing

Social marketing uses the connectivity of social platforms to turn marketing into person-to-person interaction. Enterprises no longer rely solely on one-way advertising but establish long-term connections with users through community groups on platforms like WeChat or Douyin fan groups. For example, a brand may create a group for loyal customers to share daily product usage tips, where users can ask questions anytime and participate in lotteries, group buying, and other activities, gradually fostering a sense of belonging [6].

Social marketing excels at user-to-user referral. For instance, a user can share a purchase in their friend circle and get a red envelope by sending a screenshot to customer service, or invite friends to join a group and both receive discounts. This viral approach is more credible than traditional advertising; consumers are more willing to trust friends' recommendations than the brand's own claims. Through social interaction, marketing shifts from "brand speaking" to "users speaking," with

higher communication efficiency and better customer retention.

4.3. Content Marketing

Content marketing replaces hard advertising with valuable content that users are willing to watch and remember. Enterprises no longer directly promote products but instead create content that users need [7]: for example, a skincare brand might produce short videos on seasonal skincare tips; a home appliance seller might livestream tutorials on cleaning washing machines; a bookseller might post articles about efficient reading methods. Such content is natural and useful, encouraging users to follow the brand.

The key to content marketing is that content itself is marketing. While consuming the content, users unconsciously remember the brand and may even build trust that leads to purchases. For instance, mothers who watch a baby food tutorial by a certain brand and find it professional may decide to buy that brand's baby food tools. Moreover, good content gets shared: a practical life hack video, for example, will be forwarded by users to their friends, spreading the brand invisibly and often more effectively than paid advertising.

5. Challenges and Countermeasures of Innovation

5.1. Main Challenges

5.1.1. Data Privacy Protection and Compliance Risks

Marketing innovation under the network economy relies heavily on user data, but the boundaries of data collection and use have become increasingly prominent, posing considerable challenges for enterprises [8]. On one hand, users are becoming more sensitive about privacy, they dislike apps asking for unnecessary permissions (such as contacts and location) and worry about their browsing history and consumption habits being overused. Once data misuse is discovered, users may quickly become resistant and even stop using the brand's products.

On the other hand, data protection regulations worldwide are becoming increasingly strict, requiring enterprises to clearly inform users about "what data is collected and for what purpose," and to obtain explicit consent. Data must not be shared with third parties without permission, and violations may result in hefty fines. This puts enterprises in a dilemma: if they do not collect enough data, precision marketing loses its basis; if they collect too much or the process is non-compliant, they may cross legal lines.

For small and medium-sized enterprises, this pressure is even greater. They often lack professional teams to judge compliance boundaries and are reluctant to invest in privacy protection systems, this finally constrains data-driven marketing innovation, either discouraging bold use of data or causing unintentional violations, and even undermines brand credibility.

5.1.2. Technology Iteration and Organizational Adaptation Pressure

The speed at which network technologies evolve far exceeds the pace at which enterprises can adapt, creating significant pressure on marketing innovation [9]. Today's mainstream practices such as livestream selling or short video marketing may soon be replaced by new technologies like AI-generated content or virtual influencers. A data analysis tool used last month may become obsolete this month due to an algorithm upgrade. If enterprises cannot keep up, for example, if they do not know how to use intelligent tools for user profiling or do not understand private domain traffic management systems — they may easily fall behind competitors and miss new marketing opportunities.

More pressing is the difficulty of internal adaptation. Longtime employees accustomed to handing out flyers or managing physical stores often instinctively resist new methods like data analysis or community operation, feeling that "it's too complicated to learn" or "the old way is more convenient." There are also frequent coordination problems between departments, for example, the marketing department may want to test a new marketing tool, but the technical department, short on manpower, cannot develop the interface quickly, resulting in implementation obstacles. This contradiction

between "fast external technology" and "slow internal organization" leaves many enterprises stuck in a "want to do but can't" state, forced to stick with inefficient old models and gradually losing competitiveness.

5.2. Countermeasures

5.2.1. Establish a Data Security Management System

To address data privacy risks, enterprises need to build a clear data security framework that protects user privacy without hindering marketing innovation. First, adhere to "collect only what is necessary," limiting data collection to marketing-related information such as purchase records and browsing preferences, while avoiding unrelated information (such as irrelevant social activities) to reduce user aversion. Second, ensure users give "informed consent" by explaining in simple, clear language during registration "what data is collected and what it is used for," allowing users to choose whether to authorize and even withdraw consent at any time [10].

Technical measures should also be used to protect data security, such as encrypting user data to prevent hacking and setting up dedicated teams to review data usage processes to ensure compliance. For example, a certain brand added a "data permission switch" in its app, allowing users to turn off "personalized recommendations" at any time — this not only complies with regulations but also makes users feel respected, enhancing trust instead. Small and medium-sized enterprises can use third-party compliance tools to reduce the cost of building in-house systems and use data securely under safe conditions.

5.2.2. Promote Organizational Digital Transformation

To cope with technological iteration, enterprises must break internal "inadaptability" barriers. On one hand, strengthen employee capacity building by designing simple, practical training for different positions. For example, train marketing staff to use basic data analysis templates and customer service staff to use community management tools. There is no need to "learn everything," but employees should "master the core functions." Methods such as "mentorship programs" and "online courses plus practical exercises" can be used, letting employees learn by doing, for example, encouraging the sales team to try hosting a small livestream to gradually become familiar with new formats.

On the other hand, simplify internal processes and reduce coordination obstacles between departments. For example, create "cross-department marketing teams" where marketing, technical, and customer service staff work together in one place so new ideas can be discussed quickly without layer-by-layer approval. Break complex marketing workflows into "small steps," such as "creating user profiles" or "sending community notifications," making each stage clear and manageable. One company, for instance, introduced a "weekly tech sharing session" so employees could learn about new tools while eliminating the "three-department signature" approval process, doubling the speed of marketing innovation implementation. This "small-step, fast-run" transformation can make organizations more agile in keeping pace with technological changes, allowing marketing innovation to be truly realized.

6. Conclusion

The development of the network economy has fundamentally changed the underlying logic of marketing. From consumer behavior to technology application, from channel models to user connection, all aspects now show characteristics that are completely different from the traditional era. This research finds that consumers have transformed from "passive receivers" to "active participants," with decision-making paths more reliant on online information, social interaction, and personalized experiences; meanwhile, technologies such as big data and social media have broken the time and space constraints of traditional marketing, making precise reach and efficient communication possible.

At the same time, the limitations of traditional marketing models have become increasingly obvious: offline channels are costly and inefficient, online and offline are fragmented, and the connection with users is weak — making them unable to meet the demands of the network era.

Innovative models such as precision marketing, social marketing, and content marketing have emerged in response, using data insights, social interaction, and valuable content to effectively address the pain points of traditional models, achieving improvements in both marketing efficiency and user experience.

Of course, the risks of data privacy and the pressure of organizational adaptation during innovation should not be ignored. By establishing data security systems and promoting organizational digital transformation, enterprises can make full use of new technologies in compliance with regulations, bringing marketing innovation to fruition.

In general, marketing under the network economy is essentially a "user-centered" reconstruction — no longer a one-way output from the enterprise, but a process of co-creating value with users. In the future, only by keeping pace with environmental changes, proactively embracing innovation, and balancing technology application with user trust can enterprises remain dynamic in fierce market competition and achieve sustainable development.

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