Analysis on the Advantages and Disadvantages of Clothing Network Marketing

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Abstract

With the popularization of network and the development of information technology, as a new mode of marketing, network marketing has been accepted by the majority of consumers, and applied rapidly to the field of clothing marketing. This paper describes the present situation of China clothing industry network marketing at first. Then it points out the advantages and disadvantages of network marketing from the perspective of clothing enterprises. Finally, put forward that enterprises can standardize identification, manage with good faith, perfect the virtual fitting system, improve logistics system and establish brand stores online to improve the disadvantages.

Keywords: clothing; network marketing; advantages; disadvantages; suggestions

1. Introduction

Today, the human society has stepped into a digital era of information. With the popularization of network, the population of Internet user increases and the scale of network shopping market deal grows rapidly. According to the 33rd China Internet development statistics report CNNIC published in January 2014, there are 618 million Internet users in China as of December 2013, the scale of network shopping users is up to 302 million and Internet popularization rate is 45.8% [1]. Network shopping penetration increases from 26% in 2009 to 42.9% in 2012. From 2009 to 2012, the scale of China network shopping market deal increases from 250 billion RMB to 1.259 trillion RMB. For the clothing, the scale increases from 48 billion RMB to 318.88 billion RMB [2]. It means clothing network shopping has a growth trend.

Based on relevant reports, there is a trend that the structure of whole clothing network market changes from C2C market to B2C market in 2012. Tmall accounts for the largest share in B2C clothing network shopping market and the proportion reaches 66% [3]. Although women's wear is still the biggest category segment in the clothing shopping category segment, the share of men's wear rises by 2.6% in 2012, showing some space for men's wear enterprises. Faced with great business opportunities clothing network market shows, a lot of clothing enterprises and individuals open clothing stores in succession. Compared with the traditional marketing mode, clothing network marketing mode does not only have advantages during the process of rapid development. It also has some disadvantages worth being paid more attention by the clothing enterprise managers and need them to take some measures to improve and perfect them.

2. Advantages of Network Marketing

2.1 Reduce clothing enterprises' operation cost

During the process of clothing network marketing, clothing product information distribution and transmission, product display, the communication with consumers and advertisement delivery is conducted by the network. Compared to traditional marketing, its cost is lower with network [4]. At the same time, there is no need to lease or buy brick-and-mortar stores for clothing enterprises through the implementation of network marketing. Just use the web to carry on non-store sales.

It can reduce the cost of enterprises in leasing or buying stores and employee wage on the one hand. On the other hand, it reduces enterprise inventory, relieves stress from inventory and reduces enterprises' operation cost.

2.2 Own price advantage and expand clothing display scope

In the virtual network marketing, reduce channel cost because the decrease of middlemen. The decreases of channel cost and enterprises' operation cost lead to that clothing product price online is lower than that of brick-and-mortar stores, such as traditional market and brand stores [5]. The cheap price of clothing product can cause consumers to buy online easily, beneficial for clothing enterprises to reduce inventory and increase sales. In addition, there is no limitation of area in virtual stores online; enterprises can exhibit more clothing than in the brick-and-mortar stores in the condition that they have enough clothing. Clothing types, styles and color shown can be various, providing more choices for consumers and attracting consumers' attention to buy clothing online. It's beneficial to increase consumer purchasing possibility.

2.3 Expand clothing enterprises sales market

The characteristics of network, such as wide coverage, no limitations of time and area, make clothing sales break through the limitations of time and places. Clothing network marketing enlarges the scope of products' sales area and extends open time to sale clothing for clothing enterprises. It really realizes the "24 hours" business. Through network, clothing enterprises can develop new market, expand the clothing sales market from the local market to the whole country market, and even the global market [6]. It's very convenient for distant consumers to purchase clothing they need, no matter where they are or how far they are away from the clothing delivery area. According to present situation of clothing development, network marketing is beneficial to expand sales market for clothing enterprises.

2.4 Improve clothing enterprises' quick response ability

As epidemic strong product, clothing has a lot of characteristics, for example, rapid change and short popular cycle [7]. According to the market and enterprise's own conditions, clothing enterprise needs to make a quick response for consumers' increasingly personalized demands. They can get feedback information from consumers in a timely manner with using BBS message and other electronic information communication methods. Based on the acquired feedback information, the enterprises can quickly adjust the allocation of clothing products, so as to cater to the market and meet the demands of consumers in clothing network market. Thus, it can help clothing enterprises to improve quick response ability through carrying on network marketing.

2.5 Provide more promotion activities and meet consumers' personalized demands

Due to the limitations of time, space and human factors, it's almost impossible to hold on multiple promotions at the same time for one brick-and-mortar clothing store [8]. But in clothing network stores, enterprises can hold many promotions at the same time. Consumers can choose the promotional activities based on their actual demands, helping clothing enterprises attract more consumers and increase sales. In the 21st century, people pursuit individual character. People with different genders, occupations and ages have different tastes of clothing and the personalized demand for clothing has become increasingly apparent. As a kind of consumer oriented marketing mode, clothing network marketing makes customers have a great freedom in time and space. In the process of trading, the businessman communicates with consumer and knows about consumer demands directly. Then the businessman can provide some clothing recommendations to the consumer based on his or her demands. Even some enterprise operators launch network custom service according to fashion trends and consumer demands, let consumer with special body have fashion clothing by custom service. Through personalized on-demand customization, meet the individuality demand of consumers, at the same time, win the good reputation in the market, strengthen the customer loyalty and increase market share for clothing enterprises.

3．*Disadvantages of Network Marketing*

3.1 Fitting problem

In traditional clothing purchase mode, consumers always need to go through a trial wear and touch fabrics before buying clothes [9]. This way consumer can feel the clothing fabrics and look at the overall effect when they put on the clothing, so as to determine whether the clothing is suitable for their own style, temperament, color, size and other match. But network stores are virtual.

Although consumers can know about the information about the style, size, color, fabric and other aspects of the clothing by browsing clothing pictures and reading text description the businessmen show and edit, consumers can't directly contact with clothing and go through a trial wear. Even sometimes, the color, quality and other aspects of the clothing businessmen show and describe are not completely corresponding with the actual clothing. It is not suitable for the consumer actually. Due to being worried about that this situation happens, consumers will be hesitated to purchase clothing online and even resist, in turn reduces network sales and against the development of clothing network marketing.

3.2 Quality and label problems

On the one hand, consumers couldn't touch the clothing directly, for which some enterprises exaggerates clothing quality, affecting consumers' judgment on clothing quality. On the other side, online clothing price is too cheap to increase consumer worries about clothing. So online clothing quality can't get guarantee in network stores, reducing consumer confidence in online clothing enterprises, in turn affecting enterprises development. In addition, due to lack of relevant laws or regulations on online clothing label management, there is no unified label at some aspects of clothing such as size, color and fabric content. For this, consumers don't know the clothing sizes and fabrics they chosen meet their own demands or not, thus influence consumer online shopping behavior and network marketing development.

3.3 Logistics and distribution problems

Consumers purchasing clothing online are very concerned about how long they can receive the clothing, which relates to logistics and distribution problems [10]. According to the Chinese State Postal Bureau statistics, online shopping goods distribution increasing by 54.8% over the same period in 2012, reaches 5.685 billion pieces and the highest daily processing volume of goods is even more than 30 million pieces [11]. However, Chinese logistics system is relatively backward compared with that of developed countries, can't adapt to the rapid development of network marketing and differs too much from foreign automatic distribution with the usage of computer technology. Besides, some problems block the development of clothing network marketing, for example, the logistics staff bad service attitude, high clothing transport cost, backward social distribution. These problems need to be solved.

3.4 Hinder clothing brands development

Network with the characteristics that no limitation of time and space, high efficiency and fast speed, accelerates the dissemination of products' information, and makes clothing products homogenization more and more serious. Small and medium-sized clothing enterprises can compete to imitate brand clothing, sell clothing to customers through the low price strategy, seizing brand clothing sales market. Even some businessmen without authorization of the clothing brand enterprises, directly sell clothing brand products to consumers in online stores, hindering the development of the clothing brands seriously. Thus, although network marketing brings good prospects for brand clothing enterprises, the factors such as imperfect laws and regulations for network marketing to protect clothing brands hinder the healthy development of clothing brands [12].

4．Suggestions

4.1 Perfect the virtual fitting system

The purpose of virtual fitting technique is to make the dressing effect as far as possible into a visual experience with some tools and software, help consumers judge whether some characteristics of the clothing are suitable for them or not, and then select the clothing and complete their purchase activities. In the premise of using virtual fitting technology, consumers can log on to the website. After the consumer enters the sizes of their body key parts, for example, height, weight, across chest and waist size, and the physical characteristics such as skin color and face shape, the system will soon be able to generate a 3D virtual model.

Its body characteristics look like the consumer's. When the consumer browses the websites to search for the clothing, the virtual model can replace consumer to have a try on clothing online and show the whole effect after dressing on clothing to consumer, help consumers judge whether the clothing they choose are suitable for themselves better or not [11]. Virtual fitting system will enhance consumers' perceptions of online clothing, improve the efficiency of purchasing clothing online and reduce the risks of purchasing clothing not suitable for consumers.

4.2 Standardize label and manage with good faith

Related clothing Institutions can set the unified standards for online clothing identification, provide reference for clothing enterprises and make clothing label online sales more standardized. Enterprises can identify clothing according to the existing and national clothing management standards. Follow them strictly. Based on the actual situations, describe and display clothing information online without exaggeration, reduce the possibility of information distortion to guarantee the real reliability of clothing information and clothing quality. Clothing related quality inspection institutions can strengthen online clothing quality inspection and supervision.

From the source control and guarantee clothing quality. Through standardizing clothing label identifying the standardization and describing the product information truly, clothing enterprise can not only reduce the troubles caused by the label or quality problem return from consumers, but they also can increase consumers' good feelings about clothing enterprises and their products. This is conducive to the cultivation of customer loyalty.

4.3 Improve the logistics system

Network marketing of the clothing cannot develop vigorously without a sound logistics system. Nowadays, there are a lot of various logistics enterprises in the society. The enterprises can meet the requirements of different transport systems. The logistics and distribution of the clothing can be decided based on the different consumption objects of clothing and the different characteristics of clothing [13]. According to the different consumption objects, clothing logistics is mainly divided into two kinds. One is logistics and distribution to the terminal consumers. The other is logistics and distribution to distributors or dealers. The distribution of the end consumers' range is wide, the population is large and the category of the clothing they buy is little.

So clothing enterprises can carry on the distribution tasks of logistics through a professional third party logistics company. Different with the end consumers, the category of the clothing distributors or dealers generally buy is various and they have a lot of requirements about the clothing. So it is better for clothing enterprises to determine the packing transportation according to the kind of the clothing. High-grade clothing can be adopted hanging way, which will not damage the clothing or make the clothing deformed during transport. Low and medium-grade clothing can be used folded way, which has lower logistics fees.

4.4 Establish brand stores online

Generally speaking, clothing brand enterprises often can know about the fashion trends of the market of the clothing early and the fashion elements will be usually integrated into the clothing products they then produce. In order to avoid the small and medium-sized garment enterprises copying and imitating the clothing from the information online and affecting the normal development of clothing brands, clothing brand enterprises can choose to sell clothing online and offline. They can sell the latest clothing in brick-and-mortar stores, establish brand stores online to clothing a little out of date or will not be popular, and propaganda new clothing in brick-and-mortar stores. Of course, the brand clothing enterprises must guarantee the clothing quality, so as not to cause consumers' discontent with the brand because of online clothing quality. Don't decrease consumer loyalty and make clothing brand develop healthily.

5．*Conclusion*

Although there are a lot of problems of clothing network marketing in some aspects, such as the experience of fitting, logistics and distribution as well as hinder clothing brand healthy development, clothing network marketing will become more and more mature with the development of computer information technology, the improvement of the laws and regulations related to the online shopping and the gradual perfection of the services of online shopping. In addition, the popularization of the 3G and the smart mobile phones and the development of 4G, making mobile network get rapid development, have brought a lot of new opportunities for the network marketing of the clothing. Therefore, in the information age, clothing network marketing will become an important sale mode for clothing enterprises and promote the development of clothing industry.

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