



Research on Building Fashion Brand Operation Model by Content Marketing

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Abstract

As AI, big data and IoT are applied in media, enabling precise push, enable smart interaction, and facilitate efficient creation and distribution based on user data, traditional media mode and ecology change. Content marketing, integrating creation and dissemination, conveys info, shapes brand, forms key brand assets and shows unique value. By analyzing the general and typical psychology of the new generation consumers, this paper attributes the consumption hotspot, including content consumption, and then explores the innovative ideas of content marketing and the idea of creating a new fashion brand operation mode based on the clues of content creativity, operation and marketing.

Keywords: *New Generation Consumers; Content Marketing; Fashion Brand; Brand Operation Model*

Based on a comprehensive analysis of the clothing market, three significant phenomena can be identified: First, post-95 consumers account for a quarter of the e-commerce consumer base, indicating that the new generation of consumers has entered the market. Second, the rapid advancement of internet technology, along with the rise of self-media, has facilitated the widespread sharing of information, leading to the privatization of mass communication. Third, post-95 consumers actively share content while consuming, and the User Generated Content (UGC) model, such as short-video apps, has become a hotspot for user engagement. Wang, J. (2024) suggests that UGC has gradually become a mature marketing paradigm.

By connecting these three phenomena, it is foreseeable that content marketing, much like the rise of e-commerce, is triggering—and will continue to trigger—a new market revolution. According to Mahmić-Muhić and Klico (2022), “content marketing has become one of the leading marketing techniques in marketing communication.” reshaping consumers’ perspectives and modes of consumption.

From a market perspective, this ongoing transformation actually represents a return to the consumer-centric essence of business and brand philosophy. The following section provides a preliminary exploration of the essence of content marketing and its potential role in the innovation of clothing brand operation models, offering valuable insights for clothing brands seeking breakthroughs.

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1. Analysis of Consumption Characteristics of the New Generation Consumers

1.1 Enthusiasm for Experiential Consumption

The development of communication studies and marketing shares similarities. In communication studies, the educational perspective and methods focus on the study of media effects and models of response to informational stimuli. Dahlem, S. (2024) suggest that, in contrast to traditional social media interactions, which are often characterized by actions such as sharing, liking, or commenting to establish links with users, content marketing emphasizes communication with the goal of brand needs. This approach employs more advanced stimulus-response models to convey information to target audiences and users.

Thus, both marketing and communication studies aim to stimulate the target audience, aligning the information recipients with their needs and expectations for benefits. In this context, marketing theory is applicable in incorporating content into the practices of modern communication, which is why content marketing has become an essential strategy for brand marketing in the digital media era.

As of August 2024, extensive data statistics was conducted on two major national literature platforms, namely China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) and Web of Science (WOS). Through bibliometric methods such as Cite Space and LDA, as well as data and information visualization techniques for literature processing, the results indicate that Ding (2023) pointed out that the period from 2018 to 2022 was the peak stage of research related to social media content marketing. On the WOS Platform, the research trend of social media content marketing rose sharply and then reached its peak, with a significant tendency. Yang (2024) noted that since 2022, content marketing has evolved into a crucial marketing communication approach, where the in-depth research of creative content and the innovation of dissemination methods have been deeply integrated into the brand asset system.

Whether it is spending leisure time in large commercial centers with multifunctional new environments such as consumption and entertainment or engaging in frenzied shopping on China's online retail platform Taobao, both reflect the characteristics of experiential consumption among contemporary Chinese consumers: the shift of the consumption object from products to the purchasing process and even the act of purchasing itself. In other words, Yao (2011) fulfilling spiritual needs has become the primary goal of modern consumption, while products have become mere tools. The essence of this experience lies in the frequent and inexpensive purchasing behaviors, which soothe the anxiety and discomfort caused by the significant gap between one's material life and social status. As a result, the dopamine release after a purchase increasingly captivates us, making this "psychological compensation mechanism" a dominant force in everyday consumption, and transforming "experiential consumption" into a prevalent mode of daily life, which greatly stimulates the willingness and behavior of a large number of new-generation consumers.

1.2 Interpersonal Attributes of Content Consumption Groups

1.2.1 Psychological Foundations of Content Consumption Groups

Tracing back to the 1980s, Japan's "bubble economy" (Zhai, 2011), fast-paced lifestyles, the proliferation of home electronic entertainment products, the rise of the animation industry, and the emergence of individualism all contributed to the gradual formation of "otaku culture" under specific environmental and demand conditions. The global development of "otaku culture" is also linked to the rapid growth of social media, which has brought changes to the lifestyle of adolescents.

Many scholars, when conducting quantitative research, often arrive at corresponding conclusions. According to Müller and Christandl (2019, July), in their study on designing content based on brand needs, they propose that "although coming directly from a brand, content marketing seemingly is perceived in a similar way as user-generated content."

Essentially, content consumption is a form of social product consumption, which forms the foundation for the development of “otaku culture” among the new generation of consumers. The internet’s limitless space allows individuals to access a new digital ecosystem through an endless array of apps, as long as they have a device in hand. This environment has fully fostered the interest-driven, entertainment-centric life philosophy of the post-1995 generation, which has grown up alongside the internet. As shown in Figure 1, content creators and users engage in anonymous interactions through social media platforms, exchanging various types of information, including fashion-related apparel information.



Figure 1. Internal Testing of Content by Live Streaming Companies in China

Zhou (2018) According to surveys and commercial reports, social media apps are the most frequently used by the post-95 generation. They primarily acquire content of interest through social channels, and the spread and downloading of new apps are key social activities. Technology once again plays a pivotal role. Today, short videos have quickly become the dominant form of social interaction, with user numbers on platforms such as Douyin (TikTok) and Bilibili³ growing rapidly.

With the rise of psychological tests like the MBTI, which emphasize social attributes, there has been a growing admiration for introverted personalities. This has further deepened the younger generation’s identification with the “otaku culture” social model. Meanwhile, the content consumption phenomena derived from this trend reveal the common psychological traits of the new generation of consumers. Most of them are only children and have grown up accompanied by computers and the internet, instilling the “otaku culture” gene within them. As a result, loneliness is a prominent part of their emotional experiences. Tao (2023) Today, the group born in 1995 and beyond is often referred to as the “new generation,” reflecting their heavy reliance on the internet. In fact, this reflects their strong sense of loneliness coupled with a high demand for security and reassurance.

1.2.2 Interpersonal Mechanisms of Content Consumers

The rapid development of the online ecosystem has provided the new generation of consumers with a channel to alleviate loneliness, and they have quickly developed a widely accepted social mode that reduces the time cost of getting to know one another and lowers the sense of unfamiliarity. Moreover, internet-based social interactions are characterized by being intuitive, simple, instantaneous, and fragmented, emphasizing live experiences, visual imagery, and entertainment. This has profoundly changed how the general public

³Bilibili, a leading domestic subculture community in China, was founded on June 26, 2009, and is affectionately referred to as “B Station” by its users

acquires information and engages in social activities.

New generation consumers invest a significant amount of energy in online events, news, and activities that interest them. They are eager to join related fan communities and actively engage in interactions, sharing personal feelings and opinions. Due to sustained attention from fans, the related content gradually becomes richer and more refined, which drives the promotion of peripheral merchandise marketing activities. It is precisely because this process enables new generation consumers to gain a sense of involvement, recognition, and belonging, while simultaneously fulfilling their social needs and achieving psychological security, that they are able to express and release emotions with no pressure. This results in an enriching social experience. Consequently, they have become the main contributors of traffic and content consumers.

2. Content Operation

2.1 Core of Content Operation

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From an operational perspective, content operation involves the creation of content—transforming various forms of media such as text, images, audio, and video through processes of creation, collection, editing, and distribution. The fundamental attraction mechanism of content marketing strategy proposes the “A-I-D-A” operational model, which outlines the approach to be followed in content design: Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action. As illustrated in Figure 2, this model emphasizes the sequential process of capturing the audience’s attention, stimulating their interest, arousing their desire, and ultimately driving them to take action.

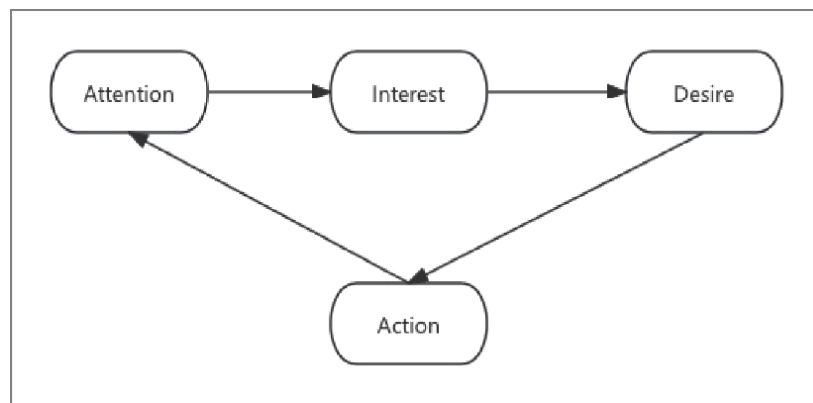


Figure 2. “A-I-D-A” operational model

These contents are presented to users via specific technical workflows, with each type of content displayed in a unique way based on particular technical specifications. When user needs are met and their interests are stimulated, it can enhance user engagement, activity, and retention. This, in turn, facilitates the accumulation of data for websites and products, providing essential support for website profitability.

2.1.2 Differentiated Characteristics of Content Generation Models

The key to content operation lies in content creation, which involves three main content generation models: UGC (User-Generated Content), PGC (Professionally-Generated Content), and OGC (Occupationally-Generated Content). UGC refers to content created by users. It has a wide range of sources, diverse content, and is dynamic and flexible, making it the most widely followed category in online social

networks. Zhou (2018) pointed out that PGC refers to content produced by experts, which can be considered an enhanced form of UGC in terms of professionalism, depth, and insight. OGC refers to content created by professionals within a specific industry, characterized by clear direction, systematization, continuity, and marketing purposes. It serves as the basis for interaction between websites and users.

For example, in 2018, Alibaba utilized PGC and UGC across platforms like Toutiao and Douyin to create interactive campaigns. Through the creation of story-driven content such as “Tmall Runaway” and “Tmall Double 11 Koi,” the public was engaged with the content while simultaneously receiving information about “Double 11.” This method stirred consumer desire in a short period, accumulating consumption demands and desires for the upcoming weeks, months, or even longer, and releasing them all at once during “Double 11.” This is a fundamental approach to attracting target audiences through content creation, which in turn triggers consumer behavior. It is precisely because of this psychological mechanism that content, along with its presentation format, can enhance user engagement and sustain continued consumption.

3. Analysis of the Relationship Between Content Marketing and Fashion Brands

3.1 Consistency Between Content Creation and Brand Communication

Content creation is not a new concept. In fact, since commercial information was integrated into the media, the media has served as a disseminator of products and brands, with the essence of its function being content dissemination. With the widespread adoption of the concept that “communication is marketing,” brands have increasingly utilized storytelling as a method for product promotion and brand marketing, which has become an irreplaceable approach. Qin (2022) pointed out that to distinguish between the two, traditional brand communication focuses on building brand image through content accumulation, whereas today’s content marketing emphasizes highlighting the content by deconstructing the brand’s essence. This shift indicates that content is no longer a mere tool but has become the objective. It is precisely because content plays such a pivotal role in branding that content creation and brand communication are inherently consistent. Correlation analysis is used to study the relationships between quantitative data, including whether there is a relationship, the degree of closeness of the relationship, and other related factors. In analyzing the purchase drivers perceived by fashion consumer groups, the correlation between daily consumption habits and the dissemination of fashion information is examined to understand the factors influencing purchase drivers when organizing information content.

3.2 Relevance of Content Creation to Products

Zhao (2022) pointed out that the prerequisites for creating content include: possessing a media platform, having attention-grabbing subjects or events, and using suitable formats for expression. From the perspective of content creation, clothing, particularly fashion, is both a fashion element and a life element. The long-standing fashion culture, especially the one focused on showcasing its form, offers inherent advantages and convenient conditions for using clothing as a content element. Under this mechanism, clothing products, with their strong visual appeal, trendiness, entertainment value, and shareability, can easily become hot topics. They can both represent lifestyle choices and demonstrate product innovation. The vivid form and rich symbolism of clothing products are highly conducive to wide dissemination. Moreover, by innovating marketing strategies and engaging in timely, appropriate interactions—or further promoting related content—brands can significantly enhance the targeting of their audience and effectively achieve marketing objectives.

Table 1. Correlation Analysis Between Fashion Consumer Purchase Channels and Trend Information

		Pearson Correlation					
		Price	Quality	Service	Trendiness	Style	Friends' Opinions
Physical stores	Correlation Coefficient	0.089	0.300**	0.154	0.066	0.258**	0.114
	p-value	0.277	0.000	0.060	0.420	0.001	0.163
e-commerce platforms	Correlation Coefficient	0.068	0.022	0.044	0.220**	0.276**	-0.189**
	p-value	0.411	0.789	0.595	0.007	0.001	0.021
social media commerce	Correlation Coefficient	0.049	0.094	0.179**	0.207**	0.197**	0.056
	p-value	0.555	0.250	0.028	0.011	0.016	0.493
brand official websites	Correlation Coefficient	-0.061	0.081	0.182**	0.217**	0.192**	0.000
	p-value	0.456	0.324	0.026	0.008	0.019	0.997
purchasing agents	Correlation Coefficient	-0.045	0.083	0.203**	0.187**	0.089	0.093
	p-value	0.586	0.313	0.013	0.022	0.280	0.259

3.3 The Correlation between Content Operations and Fashion Brand Image

The role of content in brand structure does not imply the dissolution of brand image; rather, it enriches, emotionalizes, and intuitively refines the brand image. Such transformation is highly compatible with the fragmented communication model. We are already in an era of fragmented communication, where traditional methods of building brand image based on systematic rules are no longer applicable. Only content that is fresh, lively, diverse, random, and timely can meet the increasingly varied consumption demands of target audiences.

The findings of Nusantara and Pardede (2023, November 27) indicate that marketing conducted through social media and customer presence has a positive and significant impact on purchase intention. A key mechanism of content operations lies in integrating different ways of creating content, allowing for flexible implementation based on needs, and combining content with consumer interactions. This process enables a trending piece of content to evolve into a dynamic carrier of brand meaning. Essentially, it mirrors the brand image and can rapidly generate significant “energy,” with countless viewpoints, evaluations, attitudes, and emotions emerging from this trend, creating new hotspots. As a result, communication can grow exponentially through a “viral” mode. Furthermore, brand communication driven by content operations is a “crowdsourcing mechanism” that continually produces new content. By creating content that is personalized, entertaining, interactive, and immersive, it consistently gathers attention and increases the level of engagement. This not only increases the number of followers but also embeds the brand image into the minds of more consumers.

4. Pathways to Innovating Fashion Brand Operation Models through Content Marketing

4.1 Finding Innovation Points

4.1.1 Innovative Content

Attracting followers or target audiences through content, with the goal of monetizing through marketing, is the fundamental characteristic of content marketing. Among these, content serves as the premise and foundation. In this context, the concept of content should be understood as the “target of attention”. In today’s intuitive and emotional age, simple forms often generate considerable attraction. Fundamentally, the appeal of form is driven by novelty, uniqueness, and interactivity. Following this line of thought, content innovation can be achieved through intelligent design, a method that helps create unprecedented visual experiences. For instance, by using virtual reality technology, target customers (whether real or virtual) can experience makeup, image, clothing, and color design. These designs can be provided by online designers or by actual customers and event participants, with the presentation and modification of the design handled by specialized systems. The key to this approach lies in the content creation process, which integrates technicality, aesthetics, novelty, interactivity, and experience, thereby helping the content become a highlight.

4.1.2 Innovation Mechanism

Merely following conventional procedures in brand operations clearly cannot fully leverage the advantages and characteristics of content marketing; innovation in mechanisms is essential. For instance, an online competition designed to attract the target audience could be organized around the theme of “Best Creative Image for New Fashion,” where participants can showcase their creativity by styling fashion items with accessories, or by analyzing and commenting on the style, design, and image of the clothing from a cultural perspective. Participants could also write advertising slogans and describe suitable occasions and the appropriate aura for the fashion items. The competition would involve submissions from participants, expert reviews, votes from the audience, and other interactive elements, ultimately selecting and awarding the best creative idea. This competition format not only allows for the full exploration of the value of fashion, infusing it with personalized viewpoints and emotional interpretations to create new highlights (selling points), but also stimulates the interest and enthusiasm of participants, providing them with various experiences. The novelty of this approach lies in designing content marketing as a “creative relay game,” enabling the target audience to use their imagination and allowing the brand image to take shape and spread among the wider participant group.

4.1.3 Innovation Interaction

From the perspective of the target audience, the role of interaction is mainly reflected in two aspects: on one hand, it generates attention to the content, and on the other, it creates a sense of relevance to the product. The logic of innovative interaction is as follows: strengthen the attractiveness of the content through interaction, demonstrate the connection between clothing and consumers through content, and further enhance the audience’s perception of the clothing’s details, features, creativity, and functionality through continued interaction.

For example, a fashion survey targeting a specific collection of apparel (using online interactive methods) can be designed. Participants could be recommended a fashion series, guess and comment on popular elements, rate the fashion collection’s trendiness based on their views on these elements, and then score the fit of the collection on online models or themselves. Finally, an apparel expert system (a combination of AI and human input) would reveal the fashion trendiness and fit indices for each item, as well as the accuracy of the participant ratings (with rankings). Based on this, online sales and rewards would

be organized.

The focus of this approach lies in the idea that innovative interaction can effectively deepen the target audience's perception of the product's value, thereby promoting the conversion of traffic into effect.

4.2 Formation of New Concepts

4.2.1 The Necessity of Innovation in Brand Operation Models

As previously discussed, placing content at the core of brand operation is one of the most fundamental aspects of classic brand strategies, which have historically achieved tremendous success in brand marketing. However, just as e-commerce is referred to as a product of the "post-brand era," the marketing rules of the internet age reveal that "debranding" has become an obvious trend. The reason is simple: the organizational structure of e-commerce goods is based on a platform-first system, followed by categories, and then products. The sorting of goods is determined by system algorithms, such as conversion rates, positive reviews, sales volume, popularity, promotional recommendations, and featured listings.

The research findings of Zhang, X., and Zhang, Y. (2024, March) further support this argument, demonstrating that the ultimate value creation model depends on the combined effects of UGC influence, content quality conversion rate, and price. As a result, this inevitably strengthens products while weakening the role of brands. Today, with the introduction of "new retail," and the continuous upgrading of network platform capabilities, the competition between the effects of experience and traffic remains inconclusive. Shaping brands in the context of the internet has become a key point of reflection. Based on the consumer-centered essence of business and a deep understanding of brand culture, it can be argued that utilizing the principles and ideas of content marketing to build new internet-based brands holds substantial potential from a theoretical standpoint and significant necessity in terms of development.

4.2.2 Paths to Achieving Innovation in Brand Operation Models

Zheng (2024) pointed out that industry experts have previously pointed out that all business formats are worth rethinking under the concept of "New Retail". If this is the case, the market will create enormous space for products, and brand image will become a key competitive weapon in the new model. In this context, physical brand stores will become the primary focus of reconstruction, where the consumer experience will be realized and enhanced through innovative online content and marketing.

From a theoretical standpoint, establishing the connection between content and the brand is a critical entry point. Methodologically, this requires the fundamental elements of the brand to be set, designed, and refined into key points and highlights of the content. This process not only completes the emotional design of the brand but also serves as the content marketing design. For example, content can be used as a medium to design and promote brand-based clothing customization, auctions, and self-designed models, guiding the audience through their process of self-recognition and converting them into brand consumers. Alternatively, following the "New Retail" model, content can be designed as a 3D virtual store with an online shopping guide system, stimulating consumer expectations and imaginations about the actual experience, fostering brand associations and understanding. Another approach would be to integrate category attributes, product characteristics, design creativity, daily life topics, and brand logos into a content series titled around the brand, demonstrating key marketing points and achieving interactive reinforcement.

In summary, the general principles and basic approach to innovating the clothing brand operation model based on content marketing are as follows: visualizing and making the brand concept intuitive; fragmenting and titling the brand form; and storytelling and contextualizing the brand image. At the same time, attempts are made to design virtualized products, abstract fashion concepts, and conceptualized functionality, so that the brand, product, and content marketing forms complement each other. This alignment with user habits

fosters the continuous development of brand and product concepts, creating possibilities for form-based innovation.

5. Conclusion

The consumption patterns and consumer beliefs represented by the new generation of consumers are the primary driving forces behind the rise and rapid development of content marketing. If fashion brands with innovative awareness can effectively leverage the general focus of their target audience on content and their immersion in it, they can start with strategies such as the contactization, simplification, characterization, and fragmentation of the brand image. Rather than simply pursuing traffic, these brands should prioritize conversion rates, thereby more precisely targeting their desired audience. By planning and designing the correlation between content and fashion themes, as well as the connection to modern lifestyles, brands can innovate their brand image and create clothing products and content derivatives that both align with the content and meet consumer needs. The brand should distinguish itself through unique and professional expressions in form, scene planning, situation creation, and interactive methods, while raising higher demands and standards in terms of content depth, values, aesthetic appeals, and social significance. This approach will shift the audience's focus from content to the brand image, overcoming the flaws and limitations revealed during the development of content marketing, and establishing and developing an innovative brand model based on content marketing. This will usher in a new era in brand marketing.

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