Digital Marketing Strategies for Traditional Buyi Ethnic Clothing Enterprises in Guizhou

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Abstract: With the advent of the digital age, traditional clothing enterprises are facing a transformation in their marketing strategies. As an important carrier of ethnic cultural heritage, the implementation of digital marketing strategies for traditional Buyi ethnic clothing enterprises in Guizhou is particularly crucial. This paper aims to explore the application of digital marketing strategies in Buyi ethnic clothing enterprises, to assist these enterprises in better utilizing digital marketing tools, enhancing brand awareness, and improving market competitiveness.

Keywords: Buyi Ethnic Group; Digital Marketing; Marketing Strategy

1. Introduction

With the advent of the digital age, profound changes have occurred in the field of marketing. Digital marketing, as an innovative marketing method, has become an important way for enterprises to enhance competitiveness and expand their market reach. The Buyi, a minority ethnic group in China, possess a unique and rich traditional clothing culture (Meng et al., 2018). According to the 'Research Report on the Development Status of Internet Networking in China', by June 2023, the number of Internet users in China has exceeded 1.067 billion, and the Internet usage rate has risen to 75.6% (Zhang et al., 2023). Moreover, with the rapid development of e-commerce, online shopping has become one of the main shopping methods for consumers. In this context, digital marketing for traditional Buyi ethnic clothing enterprises has broad market space and potential (Liu et al., 2021). However, relevant enterprises still face many challenges in the practice of digital marketing. This study aims to delve into how traditional Buyi ethnic clothing enterprises can utilize digital marketing strategies to increase market share. Starting from the current situation, the study analyzes existing challenges and proposes effective improvement measures. Through research on these enterprises, we hope to provide valuable references and guidance for them, helping them to better seize market opportunities, enhance brand visibility, and market competitiveness. Simultaneously, this study also enriches the theoretical knowledge in the field of digital marketing and provides a reference for the digital transformation of other traditional industries.

2. Overview of Traditional Buyi Ethnic Clothing in Guizhou

The Buyi ethnic group has a long history and has been living in the southwestern region of China from ancient times to the present day (Zhang, 2023). Their homeland spans across the two Miao autonomous prefectures of Qiannan and Qianxinan, the cities of Anshun, Guiyang, Liupanshui, among other places, and includes many scattered families. These families have maintained the tradition of the "rice civilization," which has continued from ancient times to the present day (Luo, 2018). Guizhou Province is a key residence for the Buyi ethnicity, housing 97% of the population, with Yunnan and Sichuan provinces also being significant parts of this ethnic group (Fan & Huo, 2020).

2.1 Characteristics of Traditional Buyi Ethnic Clothing

2.1.1 Color

Traditional Buyi ethnic clothing predominantly features blue and green colors, reflecting their reverence for nature (Shih, 2007). The color of women's traditional clothing is more vibrant with intricate patterns, focusing on decoration and aesthetics. Men's traditional clothing is more plain, emphasizing practicality and comfort.
2.1.2 Patterns

The patterns on traditional Buyi clothing often derive from natural elements, ethnic legends, or historical stories, rich in ethnic characteristics (Meng et al., 2018).

The ‘Lanni’ pattern on Buyi clothing carries rich symbolic meaning, where ‘Lanni’ implies ‘Dragon's son’. This pattern originated from the Buyi people's various methods to ward off dragon attacks, one of which was depicting them as totems. The Buyi people used to print the ‘Lanni’ script on clothes using wax dyeing to express their connection with the dragons (Ye, 2022). However, over time, people realized that there are no deities in the world, so they no longer feared dragons but revered them instead. According to 'King An and King Zu,' the origin of the Buyi can be traced back to a mystical era, where the ancestor Panguo and a woman who transformed from a fish married and had a son named King An. This legend not only indicates a long history between the Buyi and fish but also highlights the significance of fish in Buyi culture, leading to the Buyi's reverence for fish (Luo, 2022).

2.1.3 Material

Traditional Buyi ethnic clothing is made predominantly from natural fibers like cotton, linen, and silk, focusing on comfort and environmental friendliness (Liu et al., 2021). Men's traditional clothing mainly uses cotton and linen, while women's traditional clothing is primarily made of silk and cotton. The materials for traditional Buyi clothing are mostly homemade and dyed cloth, along with some silk, cotton, and linen (Ye, 2022). Among them, homemade and dyed cloth is a significant feature of Buyi clothing, usually made from local cotton and hemp fibers, through processes like weaving and dyeing. Traditional Buyi clothing comprises various skills, including indigo dyeing, tie-dyeing, picking flowers, brocade weaving, and embroidery (Shih, 2007). These techniques are widely applied in fabric production. Buyi clothing from different regions may vary slightly in material and craftsmanship but all reflect the unique aesthetics and cultural characteristics of the Buyi ethnicity.

2.2 Cultural Connotations of Traditional Buyi Ethnic Clothing

2.2.1 Color

In Buyi ethnic clothing, the choice of color is very significant, with different colors representing different meanings (Luo, 2018). For example, blue symbolizes freshness and tranquility, representing the Buyi people's reverence for nature and their pursuit of freedom; white signifies purity, integrity, and nobility, reflecting the simple and kind nature of the Buyi people. Buyi clothing typically uses a mix of light and dark colors to showcase its unique cultural characteristics.

2.2.2 Fabric

The fabric of Buyi ethnic clothing is usually made from natural materials like cotton and linen, which are not only comfortable but also have a strong natural texture (Fan & Huo, 2020). The traditional fabric of Buyi clothing is primarily homemade cotton cloth, spun and woven by the people themselves. Zhenning Buyi and Miao Autonomous County in Anshun City, Guizhou, is one of the main settlements of the Buyi, where cotton planting is widespread due to the suitable soil and climate. The cotton is processed through steps like seeding, fluffing, and spinning into cotton yarn, which is the basic method of transforming cotton into thread and a preliminary preparation for weaving (Yao, 2017).

2.2.3 Style

The style of Buyi ethnic clothing is diverse, characterized by simplicity and elegance, mainly including robes, short jackets, skirts, and headscarves (Zhang, 2023). Among them, the robe is a common garment for Buyi women, usually in blue or black with colorful embroidered decorations at the collar, cuffs, and hem. The short jacket is worn by men, typically a front-opening style in blue or black with some colorful embroidery. The skirt is an important part of women's attire, usually a pleated or tube skirt, knee-length or ankle-length, primarily in blue, black, or green. The headscarf, worn by both men and women, comes in various colors and patterns, forming an essential part of Buyi ethnic clothing.

3. Current Situation and Issues of Traditional Buyi Ethnic Clothing Enterprises in Guizhou

The minority ethnic clothing industry in Guizhou Province is rapidly growing, thanks to a series of measures adopted by the province, including the promotion of cultural heritage protection and inheritance. According to recent statistics, there are now 2,100 minority ethnic clothing enterprises in
Guizhou, accounting for 22.87% of the industry in the province. Established in 2017 by Wei Guolan, Guizhou Buyi Amei Ethnic Clothing Company has gained a good reputation for its visionary designs, excellent products, and outstanding services. In 2021, it broke through the 2 million yuan mark, benefiting many children from impoverished families. Their industry has achieved brilliance in 'fingertip skills' and 'fingertip economy' (Wang, 2019), and Guizhou Buyi Amei Ethnic Clothing Company has been honored as the 'Anshun City Jinxiu Plan Demonstrative Training Base' and recognized as a 'Demonstrative Training Base for Women's Poverty Alleviation through Skilled Handwork', drawing attention.

The capacity for resource integration has been significantly enhanced. To date, Guizhou Province has successfully established 724 traditional ethnic handicraft training centers and has 162 ethnic traditional handicraft training centers. Additionally, Guizhou has utilized approaches like company + cooperative + farmer to transform these folk techniques into saleable products, thereby achieving the goal of economic benefits for different ethnic groups. In 2013, Wei Bo and Wang Weixian established a Buyi ethnic clothing manufacturer at the end of the year in the local area. Based on the raw materials of the surrounding Buyi residents, they turned these into exquisite high-end ethnic clothing and introduced them to the market. After years of effort, the scale of this manufacturer has continuously expanded, not only offering more than 10 exquisite embroidery patterns but also involving over 300 Buyi 'embroidery ladies' magazine staff, promoting the inheritance and development of Buyi's traditional culture. In recent decades, Puan County has continuously increased investments in tea, Buyi textiles, embroidery, agricultural products, catering, and homestays, with Wei Bo leading the local residents to bring more economic income to over 600 locals. Moreover, Puan County has vigorously developed various ethnic cultural resources such as 'Qian Embroidery', 'Qian Art', 'Qian Series', 'No. 292 Qian Series', and 7 series of exquisite gifts. The dissemination of the 'Qian Series' should be based on its unique history and tradition, striving to build a meaningful 'Qian Series' brand, thus promoting the development of ethnic culture.

The enterprises are small in size and weak in market competitiveness. According to statistics, over 90% of traditional Buyi ethnic clothing enterprises in Guizhou have between 10-50 employees and an annual sales volume of 1-5 million yuan. In contrast, large domestic clothing enterprises usually have thousands of employees and annual sales of hundreds of millions of yuan. This indicates that traditional Buyi ethnic clothing enterprises in Guizhou are at a disadvantage in terms of scale and market competitiveness.

The industry chain and brand value are relatively low. The production cost of traditional Buyi ethnic clothing enterprises in Guizhou generally accounts for 60%-70% of the sales volume, while the national average is 40%-50%. At the same time, the brand value index of these enterprises is 30%, which is also lower than the national average of 50%. This indicates that there is a significant gap in product innovation and brand building for Guizhou's traditional Buyi ethnic clothing enterprises. Due to the lack of a complete industry chain, these enterprises struggle to effectively connect procurement, production, and sales, affecting production efficiency and profitability.

4. Strategies for Digital Marketing of Traditional Buyi Ethnic Clothing Enterprises in Guizhou

4.1 Refining Brand Awareness, Enhancing Brand Influence

Brand is one of the core competencies of an enterprise. For traditional Buyi ethnic clothing enterprises in Guizhou, refining brand awareness is a crucial pathway to enhance brand influence. By deeply understanding the culture, history, and traditions of the Buyi ethnicity and integrating them into the brand story, a unique and consistent brand image can be established. Consumers are more likely to emotionally resonate with brands that have a story and cultural connotation, thereby enhancing their sense of identity and loyalty to the brand. At the same time, enhancing brand influence is also essential. Utilizing digital channels such as social media, blogs, and video platforms to actively interact with audiences and share the charm and stories of Buyi ethnic clothing can be effective. Collaborating with fashion bloggers and opinion leaders for product promotion and brand publicity can expand the brand's exposure and influence. Organizing online events and fashion shows to attract more attention and participation further enhances the brand's recognition and reputation.
4.2 Integrating with Ecotourism, Enhancing Overall Attractiveness

Combining with ecotourism is a unique strategy for traditional Buyi ethnic clothing enterprises in Guizhou. Both ecotourism and Buyi ethnic clothing enterprises are dedicated to the protection and inheritance of natural and cultural heritage and boast rich natural landscapes, such as the Huangguoshu Waterfall and Libo Xiaochi. This combination provides a platform for Buyi ethnic clothing enterprises to showcase their products, attracting more tourists to understand and purchase Buyi ethnic clothing. The involvement of Buyi ethnic clothing enterprises can also enrich the content of ecotourism. Buyi ethnic clothing, blended with the local natural scenery, can achieve sustainable development and create unique tourism products, bringing immense benefits to the local economy, culture, and environment. Collaborating with local ecotourism attractions and ethnic villages to offer joint tourism products; incorporating Buyi ethnic clothing cultural experiences into tourism itineraries can attract more tourists’ attention and participation. While enjoying the natural scenery, tourists can also deeply understand and experience the Buyi ethnic clothing culture, enhancing the richness and attractiveness of tourism. Additionally, integrating resources can also increase attractiveness. By collaborating with other related industries, such as handicraft production, ethnic dance performances, etc., a complementary and synergistic effect in the industry chain can be formed. This approach can offer tourists a more comprehensive and rich experience, increasing their interest and willingness to purchase Buyi ethnic clothing. Creating a rich ethnic cultural atmosphere by combining local customs and national cultures, with clothing culture as a medium, is an effective way to enhance the visibility and attractiveness of enterprises and scenic areas (Wu, 2019).

4.3 Utilizing Digital Technologies

In today's digital age, fully leveraging digital technologies is a necessary means for the development of traditional Buyi ethnic clothing enterprises in Guizhou. Digital technologies can break the barriers of time and space, allowing more people to learn about and access Buyi ethnic clothing. Through e-commerce platforms, virtual reality technology, etc., they can provide consumers with a convenient shopping experience, meeting their personalized needs. Establishing an official website offering product displays, purchases, and online consultation services is essential. Adopting advanced SEO (Search Engine Optimization) techniques can significantly enhance the enterprise's visibility and further expand its market share, laying a foundation for customer service and product development. Additionally, combining advanced data processing can continuously improve the user experience, further enhance the economic benefits of the enterprise, achieve effective inventory management, better facilitate timely fund recovery, and ultimately reduce economic risks. For example, using big data analysis and artificial intelligence technology to understand consumer needs and preferences, recommend products accurately, and provide personalized services. Simultaneously, through digitized supply chain management and production planning, they can achieve precise inventory control and enhance production efficiency, reducing operational costs and risks.

4.4 Enhancing Professionalism in Digital Marketing for Enterprises

Digital marketing holds significant importance for minority ethnic traditional clothing enterprises. It can expand the market reach, introducing minority ethnic traditional clothing to a broader audience and increasing the enterprise's visibility and sales opportunities. Digital marketing can enhance marketing efficiency; through precise targeting and personalized marketing strategies, enterprises can more accurately find their target customers, improving marketing effectiveness and return on investment (Jiang, 2023). Additionally, digital marketing can enhance customer experience by offering more interactive and participatory methods, such as virtual try-ons and online customization, thus increasing customer satisfaction.

To improve the professionalism of digital marketing activities, enterprises need to develop a digital marketing talent plan. Firstly, enterprises should clarify their digital marketing strategies and objectives and determine the positions and skill requirements of the needed talent. Secondly, they can train and improve their existing employees internally to enhance their digital marketing capabilities. At the same time, enterprises can also recruit externally, hiring talents with experience and professional skills in digital marketing to supplement their team. Concurrently, there should be an introduction and innovation in digital marketing technologies, such as artificial
intelligence and big data analysis, to enhance the precision and effectiveness of marketing. Enterprises need to strengthen cybersecurity measures to ensure the safety of customer information and transactions. In the process of digital marketing, Buyi ethnic clothing enterprises need to use a large amount of text, images, videos, etc., to showcase their influence and should enhance online security measures to prevent cyber-attacks and data breaches.

In conclusion, digital marketing brings new development opportunities to minority ethnic traditional clothing enterprises. By developing a digital marketing talent plan, strengthening cybersecurity measures, and introducing and innovating in digital marketing technologies, enterprises can enhance the professionalism of their digital marketing activities and promote sustainable development of the enterprise.

5. Conclusion

With the advent of the digital age, digital marketing has become an inevitable trend in business development. For traditional Buyi ethnic clothing enterprises, it is crucial to develop and implement effective digital marketing strategies that align with their unique characteristics and market demands. On the path of digital marketing, Buyi ethnic clothing enterprises need to continuously monitor market trends and consumer feedback, adjusting strategies promptly to adapt to the ever-changing market environment. By constantly optimizing their digital marketing strategies, Buyi ethnic clothing enterprises will be better positioned to inherit and develop ethnic culture and achieve success in the competitive market.


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