

Analysis on 5W Mode of Uniqlo Brand Communication in the Era of New Media*

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Abstract—With the rapid development of new media information, the communication methods and marketing methods of many branded clothing are also from the Internet. As a giant in the apparel industry, Uniqlo's communication concept has also changed under the influence of new media. In this paper, the 5W model is used to deeply analyze the Uniqlo brand communication. It strives to show the detailed picture of Uniqlo brand communication under the new media environment.

Keywords—new media; Uniqlo; brand communication

I. INTRODUCTION

Founded in 1963, Uniqlo is one of the well-known Fast Retailing Group of Japanese company. Uniqlo has inherited the spirit of the Fast Retailing Group and provides consumers with the most suitable clothing for consumers around the world with uniform prices and uniform services. With the advent of the new media era, Uniqlo's brand communication concept has also undergone a profound transformation. With Lasswell's famous "5W" model, namely who, what, in which channel, whom, and with what effect, the communication picture of Uniqlo brand under the new media environment can be depicted in three dimensions.

II. DISSEMINATOR (WHO)

A. Uniqlo Leader

In the process of shaping the corporate brand image, the image of the leader affects the business performance of the company. On the one hand, the leader is the representative of the whole enterprise. His image affects the consumers who buy their products and services. On the other hand, consumers will have a deep understanding of their brand through association with business leaders. As a leader, the formulation of brand communication strategies and the choice of communication routes require his behind-the-scenes participation. The founder and CEO of Uniqlo,

Tadashi Yanai's communication can be said to be best.

When Tadashi Yanai founded Uniqlo, he hoped to make it a "great warehouse where clothes can be selected at any time." When Uniqlo opened its first store, it paid attention to the brand communication. "If you want to do business in an unfamiliar area, the customer will not know or come without promoting the brand and product through the advertisement." Even if it's already well-known, Uniqlo must do it every time when opening a store. Starting from the first store of Uniqlo, Tadashi Yanai insisted on publicizing on radio and television. He believes that Uniqlo's advertisement is not a unilateral transmission of information, but allows the audience to remember the brand and the characteristics of the brand's goods after reading it.

B. Uniqlo Sales Staff

Salesmen are the first face of the company directly facing consumers, and the first impression they give consumers is very important. The spirit and image of the brand can be reflected in the sales staff.

Every sales personnel working in the Uniqlo store, regardless of the position, must undergo multi-faceted training to ensure professional work behavior. The sales staff knows the product information of Uniqlo. They are responsible for receiving customers and introducing the materials and performance of the products to customers. Sometimes they need to solve the after-sales and complaints. Every store sales personnel must be smiling and use polite expression to communicate with customers when they need help. They also carry a notebook with them, and record everything that the manager tells them or suggestions from customers. Uniqlo has a unique concept to strengthen the training of its employees. They are truly international operators who can take responsibility for running stores and businesses, not just training individuals. This is not only to ensure the quality of the service, but also to ensure the brand image of the employee's behavior.

C. Consumers

In the brand communication of Uniqlo enterprises, consumers, like leaders and employees, can spread the Uniqlo brand through relevant channels. Unlike leaders and employees, consumers not only play the role of the

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disseminator of brand information, but also act as the role of the recipient.

Uniqlo's summer UT always cooperates with various cartoon characters or famous designers to launch jointly-designed styles, such as One Piece, Sesame Street series, and classic series with Hermès designers, which are deeply loved by consumers, even stars are no exception. It is a good idea to take this opportunity to spread the brand. Taking the One Piece series of UT as the example, the passers-by photographed Liu Haoran and Xu Weizhou wearing jointly-designed UT of the One Piece at the airport. After the photos were sent to the Internet, fans rushed to the Uniqlo store to purchase the same style, resulting in a scene of "hard to finding the same style". Some consumers also like to match Uniqlo's clothing and upload it to new media apps such as Xiaohongshu and Bilibili. They share their tips with netizens to resonate with netizens, leading their purchase behavior, and ultimately achieving the effect of promoting the brand. Therefore, the author believes that it is crucial to turn consumers into communicators.

III. THE CONTENT OF THE COMMUNICATION (WHAT)

A. *Uniqlo's Brand Vision*

Brand visual identity is the most intuitive part of brand communication. It can reflect the culture and spirit of the company and brand, and is the appearance of the brand. The closest thing to consumers is brand visual design. Brand vision mainly includes brand logo, product design, store design and so on.

The Uniqlo brand logo and all its products come with the English word Uniqlo, which is displayed in red and white colors. White has a strong contrast with the red background, and the latter one has a strong visual impact. Corporate logo is the main idea passed to consumers. "Clothes are supporting roles, and the people who wear clothes are the protagonists", which makes Uniqlo's people-oriented concept emphasized. In the design of the store, the store has become an "environment that allows customers to choose freely." When the shop is renovated, the main passage in the store must be straight and spacious. The zenith should not be suspended as much as possible. The cement frame does not matter. It looks spacious and has a sense of space. The window and lighting are mainly ordinary lighting. The overall lighting is clean and bright, creating a kind of easy, open atmosphere, which is in line with popular brand characteristics.

B. *Uniqlo's Brand Concept*

The brand concept is a key part of brand communication and represents the brand's thoughts and soul. Brand values, visions, slogans, and emotional appeals all belong to the brand concepts.

Uniqlo's brand slogan is "LifeWear Applicable Life", and LifeWear refers to a new concept of clothing — high-quality fabrics, stylish and precise design aesthetics and comfortable clothing. Instead of pursuing fashion like other similar brands, Uniqlo is committed to developing innovative

functional clothing and high-quality clothing that emphasizes comfort, maximizing the comfort of wearing clothing while adding natural beauty.

C. *Uniqlo Brand Behavior*

Brand behavior is the method and means of putting the brand concept into practice. It is mainly divided into two parts: brand behavior within the company and external brand behavior. Internal brand behavior includes employee training, employee benefits, company systems, etc. External brand behavior includes employee service levels and public relations.

Taking employee training as an example, Uniqlo is one of the few companies that attach great importance to employee training, such as, smile practice, seven hospitality terms, and active delivery baskets. Uniqlo employees always treat each customer with the most polite and most intimate look. Uniqlo has a very good idea of training employees, and they require employees' smiles to be sufficiently appealing to make customers feel at home. They also asked employees to shout "Welcome" every time they meet any guest, and be polite and kind. To this end, employees have to practice by "biting chopsticks". This rigorous approach allows each Uniqlo employee's smile to penetrate the customer's heart. In addition, Uniqlo employees must master the skills of stacking clothes quickly and regularly. Uniqlo employees are very motivated to serve every consumer. If it hits the rainy weather, every consumer's packaging paper bag will be intimately put on a transparent plastic bag to prevent the clothes from getting wet. These are the brand behaviors that Uniqlo has been talked about by consumers, and consumers who have experienced these brand behaviors have become loyal consumers of Uniqlo.

IV. COMMUNICATION CHANNEL (IN WHICH CHANNEL)

A. *Uniqlo Sales Channels*

By holding promotions, it is possible to stimulate consumers to buy products. Uniqlo spends less on fashion shows, celebrity endorsements, etc., and their brand and product promotion is mainly through stores, that is, the sales strategy of "sales being advertising". In the store of Uniqlo, the costumes on the mannequin and the models on the posters have played a big role in sales promotion. The clothes on these models are made by the employees of Uniqlo, which makes the consumers have a simple and stylish feeling when entering the store. In addition, Uniqlo promotes sales by creating a sense of scarcity. In order to create this scarcity, the staff has allocated these products to different stores when new products are launched. Each store has its own special products. A marketing approach can be very attractive to consumers and promote consumer purchases. This is actually a hunger marketing strategy adopted by Uniqlo.

Uniqlo will also launch a limited-time promotion at the store, which on the one hand attracts potential customers and on the other hand reduces inventory. Overall, Uniqlo's short-

term price strategy is more likely to achieve scale benefits than a significant price cut after a season or a few months.

B. Uniqlo's Advertising Channels

Tadashi Yanai has said that publicity advertisements are love letters that companies write to customers. Uniqlo's advertising not only has the design of a professional public relations team, but also carries the mission of brand communication, with good creativity and the emotional input of the brand. In the Chinese market in 2017, Uniqlo adopted the rap form in order to attract young people, invite consumers from different places to play a dialect version of rap dubbing. This series of dialect advertisements includes dialects such as Cantonese, Shanghai dialect and Dongbei dialect, carrying on the localization advertisement marketing for the light down jacket series. At that time, it caused a lot of attention on the social network. This is the localization attempt of the Chinese team to cater to the tastes of young people based on Japanese creative materials.

The bigger breakthrough came from the latest HEATTECH series of advertisements in 2018. Uniqlo invited a group of well-known Japanese electronic singers for this series of advertisements. The singers are famous for their musical style. They used to appear in the advertisements of the Apple mobile phone series, and their arrangement guides created the music of "Eight Minutes" at the closing ceremony of the Rio Olympics. Therefore, HEATTECH series of advertisements of the Uniqlo also use this fantasy music style. In the video, the audience will see three girls who are not afraid of cold floating on the ice. These three girls use an avant-garde way to express HEATTECH technology to keep warm. Uniqlo no longer adopts the method that a model wears thermal underwear standing in print ads, which is the usual way used by Uniqlo.

In recent years, Uniqlo has increased its efforts in advertising, and it has also made great breakthroughs in its creativity. Through the individual dialect advertisements and cool advertising images, it has refreshed the image that has been conservative and unchanging in the hearts of consumers, making eyes shine.

C. Uniqlo's Public Relations Channels

The purpose of the company's public relations activities is to establish a good relationship with the society, so as to leave a good brand impression in the hearts of consumers, thereby enhancing the brand image.

Beginning in July 2017, Uniqlo launched a whole-product recycling campaign with the theme of "one piece of clothing delivering thousands of loves" in national stores, and appealed to caring people to recycle unused clothes and donate clothes to stores. In August, Uniqlo teamed up with the China Soong Ching Ling Foundation to travel to Ningxia to hand over the recycled love clothes to the local children and their families. While passing on love, they will feel the warmth from all over the society and help them grow healthily and confidently. It also allows the world to develop in a better direction. Through the love recycling activities, it

is possible to pass the love and help consumers establish a green lifestyle, so as to play the value of the clothing.

The author believes that Uniqlo's public relations activities only stay in promoting their social responsibility and product quality. However, there is a slight lack of awareness of the core value of the brand. More important for public relations activities are to use the power of new media to take advantage of this rapidly evolving information age to promote the brand value of the company. Therefore, on the basis of promoting its social responsibility and product quality, Uniqlo should focus on using new media to showcase the brand's high quality and low price, thus enhancing the brand's reputation.

D. Uniqlo's Marketing Channels

New media marketing is a marketing approach that uses new media channels as a vehicle, using modern marketing theories and the overall environment of the Internet. Brand marketing with new media channels can not only expand the brand's visibility and influence, but also close the distance with consumers.

1) *Cross-border marketing*: In terms of cross-border marketing, Uniqlo collaborated with Juvenile Weekly JUMP to launch the JUP 50th Anniversary Series UT in the summer of 2018. The 57 types of original printing UT, including 22 classic anime such as one piece, naruto and silver soul, were quickly snapped up by consumers. Uniqlo took advantage of this cross-border marketing and successfully evoked consumers' memories of the young age. Some people think that Uniqlo's cross-border marketing only borrows the JUMP 50th anniversary. It is only a kind of sentiment. This marketing method is difficult to repeat, but the author believes that Uniqlo has changed from the former bargains to the current "fashion brand". Its development and cross-border marketing are inseparable. For Uniqlo, such cross-border cooperation can not only be repeated, but also become their core competitiveness. The pattern on the UT not only shows the consumer's preference, but also conveys a feeling to the surrounding people. If the people around have the same feelings, they will also be prompted to buy the Uniqlo brand.

2) *Experience marketing*: In terms of experience marketing, Uniqlo consumers can choose to pick up the goods in the offline store after placing the order online. After picking up the goods, they can try on them immediately. If the size is not suitable, the size and color can be changed. At the same time, the store provides free modification of trouser length; and scanning code to check the inventory of relevant products and other services are provided in stores, saving unnecessary time consumption in the purchase process. Since Uniqlo's stores support picking up goods in different places, consumers can also purchase goods for family and friends who are not around. On the eve of the Spring Festival in 2019, Uniqlo also focused on promoting this experiential marketing model, aiming at

attracting more foreigners who had not been able to go home for the New Year to purchase Uniqlo products for their families.

V. AUDIENCE (WHOM)

A. *Uniqlo's Internal Audience*

For Uniqlo, the main practitioners belong to its internal audience. When Uniqlo selects employees and management, it focuses on whether employees truly understand the company and love the company. Most Uniqlo employees are loyal fans of their own brands, which enables employees to digest Uniqlo's management philosophy and corporate culture, and to better publicize and achieve corporate marketing strategies. Uniqlo believes that the audience within the company directly affects the development and image of the company. It uses the loyal employees as the driving force to establish the elite image of the industry and enables employees to work in two-way because of the development of the Uniqlo brand. In Uniqlo, not only leaders can become shareholders. As long as employees are hardworking and loyal, they can become a member of the company's shareholders. As shareholders, they are supporters of the Uniqlo brand and have inherent advantages in communication.

B. *Uniqlo's External Audience*

Consumers, the media, the government, etc. all belong to the external audience of Uniqlo. They have no direct interest relationship with the enterprise, but they play an important role in the development and marketing of the enterprise. The media is the main intermediary for the brand to carry out cultural communication and development, and can guide social public opinion and shape the brand image. The government can directly influence the development of the company and play a pivotal role in branding. As a consumer group at the core of the brand relationship, it is possible to directly communicate the image and feedback the brand. Enterprises must maintain a good and stable relationship with all major interest groups in order to successfully shape the social image of the brand. To be proud, Uniqlo is a reputable brand in the eyes of consumers, governments and the media.

VI. COMMUNICATION EFFECT (WITH WHAT EFFECT)

The effect of communication is the response caused by the information at the level of cognition, emotion, and behavior after it reaches the audience. It is an important criterion for testing the success of communication.

In terms of sales, Fast Retailing Group released the 2018 Uniqlo financial report in October 2018, and the company achieved total revenue of 2.13 trillion yuan, a year-on-year increase of 14.5%.¹ The Group's outstanding performance was mainly due to the sales performance contribution of Uniqlo in China. The financial report shows that China has become the main driving force for Uniqlo's overseas market.

¹ Quoted from 2018 Annual Report of the Fast Retailing Group. <https://www.qianzhan.com/analyst/detail/220/181015-e9c3cedb.html>

Uniqlo also highlighted the help of new media channels in its earnings to increase sales of its brands in the Chinese market. According to the financial report, Uniqlo (China) online brand information dissemination speed is very fast, and online store sales performance is even stronger.

In terms of popularity and reputation, through the 2018 Uniqlo retail market research report, consumers can see a new demand trend when shopping. More than 50% of people will refer to friends or online buyers when they shop, and new media channels will socialize. The promotion of brand awareness and reputation has become an important decision-making reference. ² Regardless of online and offline, customers want to get the latest and most comprehensive information through brand information communication. More than half of the customers will search for the latest brand and price information on the Internet before shopping, and most customers will trust and continue to buy Uniqlo products due to the improvement of its brand awareness and reputation.

In terms of consumer feedback, Uniqlo's assessment of the effectiveness of brand information dissemination mainly comes from the questionnaire survey conducted by the company. After becoming a WeChat member, Uniqlo consumers will receive a message from WeChat public account when having each consumption and fill out a questionnaire survey. Through the questionnaire survey, companies can learn more about the loyalty, trust, satisfaction, etc. of the brand, and can also learn more about the main types and reasons to purchase products through feedback information, consumers' own preferences, opinions and suggestions for the brand. Such research can better benefit the development of the brand, and the brand can also improve and innovate according to the feedback results.

Uniqlo has been adjusting the products, brand communication channels and disseminated content through data indicators and consumer feedback, so as to achieve the most appropriate communication status. From these data indicators and consumer feedback, it can also be seen that Uniqlo's brand communication has rapidly improved its popularity and reputation through new media channels, and its sales have shown a steady growth trend.

VII. CONCLUSION

According to the development trend of the Internet, adopting new media to spread its own brand is the right choice. As the development of e-commerce platforms becomes more and more mature, Uniqlo has also chosen media formats such as Weibo and WeChat that are closer to consumers. Uniqlo keeps its brand in consumers' daily life through the promotion, advertising and marketing of We-Media of various new media platforms, which brings the distance between the brand and consumers closer. Finally, it is possible to achieve the effect of expanding the brand.

² Quoted from the "new retail era, why does Uniqlo grow worldwide?" http://www.sohu.com/a/276052991_168180

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