

# Analysis of Brand Crossover Marketing Strategy Taking M • A • C and Honor of Kings as an Example

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## ABSTRACT

Crossover marketing is a cutting-edge marketing method. In the new era of increasingly fierce market competition, inter-industry penetration and integration make crossover marketing become an important means of brand development. This paper conducts a case study of crossover marketing between M•A•C and Honor of Kings, and studies how crossover marketing can inject new vitality into traditional brands based on the 5C model [1]. It can be concluded that according to the commonality and connection between different products and different preferences of consumers, some irrelevant elements are integrated and penetrated into each other, thus highlighting a new attitude towards life and aesthetic approach, and win the verse of the target consumer, so that crossover brands can be maximized marketing.

**Keywords:** Crossover marketing strategy, M • A • C, Honor of Kings, 5C, Consumer demand.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Crossover marketing includes two levels. One is the crossover, which means crossing industry boundaries; Second, integration, which implies cooperation with other brands to generate new value and consumption experience for fixed consumers or potential consumers. Crossover marketing means that when a brand or product is difficult to meet the closed-loop needs of customers, it needs to introduce a crossover partner to improve the user experience. The originally irrelevant elements can penetrate and merge, and breaking the traditional marketing model. Utilizing resource matching and complementary brands, the brand effect can be superimposed, so that users can generate more powerful brand association, acquire more valuable users, and finally inject new vitality into the brand. This paper concentrates on the brand crossover marketing strategy.

## 2. PROBLEMS FACED BY M • A • C UNDER THE NEW TREND OF DOMESTIC BEAUTY INDUSTRY

China has become the world's second-largest beauty market, with the industry's growth rate ranking first in the world, and competition among domestic color cosmetics brands is fierce. At the

same time, the homogeneity of lipstick products is serious, and user loyalty is extremely low. The rise of domestic cosmetics has won with a cost-effective advantage. Starting from online, consumers' acceptance of domestic products has continued to increase, and domestic brands have a better understanding of the preferences of domestic consumers, and low-end international beauty brands have been constantly replaced [2]. The consumption habits of Chinese beauty consumers have changed, and social media evaluation has become an important factor influencing purchase behavior. Therefore, the sales of traditional skincare products and cosmetics also pay more attention to the development of e-commerce channels, and people are increasingly inclined to online shopping. The proportion of online channels has increased year by year, and advertisers have accelerated the digital transformation of brand marketing. The post-90s and 95s generation of users has become the mainstream of the entire online shopping and retail, both in terms of the number of people and consumption amount [3]. The price is no longer the only driving factor for purchasing behavior. There are more and more innovative consumers. Beauty and skincare consumers have a strong taste and adventurous spirit. They like to experience new products and add new elements to their lives. At the same time, they promote their

personal taste through consumption. Besides, they have a wide range of interests and hobbies that they will pay attention to news and current affairs, and be willing to express your own opinions. They are attitude consumers, and be passionate about life.

As an international mid-end cosmetics brand, M • A • C is at a high risk of being replaced. In terms of price, it is 2-3 times higher than domestic products. It cannot reach the level of high-end cosmetics in terms of quality. Its selling point the variety of color numbers of its products (regardless of lipstick or foundation), so it has a certain international market, especially in multi-ethnic countries, but in the Asian market, almost all consumer groups are yellow people, so the diversity of color numbers cannot be its selling point. How to attract young consumers and inject new vitality into the brand has become a top priority.

### **3. CROSSOVER MARKETING OF M • A • C AND HONOR OF KINGS**

In 2019, the well-known beauty brand M • A • C and China's popular mobile game "Honor of Kings" jointly launched a series of customized lipsticks. The cooperation adopts the method of "product integration" to launch limited co-branded lipsticks. The reason for choosing to launch this type of product is that the category is more easily accepted by the public in the Chinese local market, and the lipstick is more compatible with the personality and characteristics of the female characters in the "Honor of Kings" game, which is convenient for realizing the beauty brand tone and mobile game. The true restoration of the essence of design. First, the brand launched the "Keep kissing, we can win" campaign online. "Honor of Kings" selected five popular heroines in the game, representing women with different personality traits, and launched lipsticks that fit their image. Propose differentiation concepts for various objects. In order to ensure the attention, the cooperation specially selected five members of the popular girl group "Rocket Girls 101" as spokespersons, and launched related activities and advertisements online, leading to a consumer boom.

#### **3.1 Crossover Marketing Strategy Analysis**

The essence of crossover marketing is to complete the transformation from the traditional 4Ps (product, price, place, promotion) to the 5Cs. The 5Cs are consumer-oriented strategies that focus on the deeper potential needs of consumers, including

Community, Consumer, Content, Collaboration, and Conversion.

#### **3.2 Community: Breaking Through the Community and Finding New Marketing Opportunities**

The purpose of crossover marketing is to break through consumers' original cognition of brands and attract more consumers. It is very restricted for beauty brands to compete in the beauty circle. The effect of improving product quality or lowering prices is limited. It is better to try to jump to the video game circle to avoid competition and find potential consumers.

Video games are referred to as the "ninth art" of the technological age, juxtaposed with art forms such as painting, sculpture, architecture, music, literature, dance, drama, and film. Highly extensible artistry is the foundation of video games.

According to the 2018 Honor of Kings Season Watch Report, the male to female ratio of the audience is about 3.7:6.4, and females are almost twice that of males, and the proportion of college students and young people is very high. In addition, according to 2017 data, the number of female players of Honor of Kings has reached 108 million, accounting for 54.1% of the total number of users, which is higher than the number of male users. It is the first MOBA mobile game in Chinese game history with female players exceeding 100 million. And M • A • C also faces young users aged 18 to 24, especially women. According to the "2018 Beauty Consumption Development Trend Report" released by CBN Data in July last year, lipstick is the largest category of online makeup consumption in 2018, and the post-90s are the most willing to pay for lipsticks. The combination of M • A • C and the Honor of Kings will not only attract the attention of a large number of young players from the Honor of Kings, but also lay the foundation for the subsequent expansion of the young market. Through the original interactive design, it has successfully activated the connection between the young group and the brand, and finally opened up new markets.

#### **3.3 Consumer: Focusing on Consumer Demand**

Consumer demand is no longer a single material need, but a fusion type, hoping to achieve "1+1>2" "material + spiritual experience" consumption. They are more and more actively binding themselves to the market, and are more concerned about products that

match their status, interests, and hobbies. Combining Maslow's hierarchy of needs and consumer psychology analysis, if a simple lipstick can only meet consumers' social and esteem needs, crossover marketing can satisfy consumers' self-actualization needs. Incorporating game elements into the lipstick gives the lipstick a deeper meaning. The personalized lipstick meets the deeper psychological needs of consumers. This is an effect that cannot be achieved unilaterally through lipstick or games. In the wave of the new era, young consumers are not only spending money to buy commodities, but also an expression of their personal lifestyle, which is to show their aesthetics and taste through consumption. Crossover sales are not only commodities, but the values and lifestyles conveyed by the merchants. It is necessary to use a warm consumption experience to approach the interests of consumers, so that consumers can produce the so-called peak experience in the process of self-realization.

M • A • C. should always pay attention to consumer trends, to understand what consumers are interested in recently, all crossover marketing will not be groundless. Weng Yanling, the marketing director of M • A • C China, said that the brand first observed that some netizens spontaneously matched the characters in "Honor of Kings" with suitable lip colors on the Internet, and at the same time kept mentioning the M • A • C. M • A • C observed this opportunity. The lip color of the Honor of Kings' heroes and M • A • C lipstick can be linked, and the color code of lipstick can also match the personality and characteristics of game characters of different styles.

### **3.4 Content: Outputting Depth Content**

Crossover marketing is not uncommon anymore, however, mutual labelling is meaningless and will only make consumers feel disappointed. Crossover marketing can not only stay on the surface, further more, marketers should focus on in-depth cooperation to output effective content. Effective content can bring surprise content to the user, and can better trigger the user's spontaneous dissemination of content.

#### **3.4.1 Creating Effective Content**

In the current situation where crossover becomes more and more common, the depth and mode of cooperation have an increasing impact on the effect of cooperation. It is worth noting that this crossover cooperation not only relies on the appeal of the two brands themselves but also uses Honor of Kings for in-depth content output. In terms of products, M • A • C takes the images of five heroines, such as Hua Mulan, Gongsun Li, Diao Chan, Da Qiao, and Luna as the theme, and jointly launched five lipsticks with the theme customization from color selection to outer packaging design, which is deeply related to the Honor of Kings product itself. Besides, in the communication slogan, M • A • C combines elements of gaming social culture to create a slogan of "Keep kissing, we can win". In the communication activities, M • A • C also uses Cosplay, VR game interaction, and other means. The two crossovers, truly achieved the depth of content output, rather than the superficial borrowing of brand reputation.

#### **3.4.2 Providing Creative Space for User Generated Content**

The company should continue to create content or topics that can be disseminated for users. In the form of social media, valuable content becomes the core of marketing. When content marketing strategies and social media plans are added to public relations, content is the cornerstone which will enable more people to participate in the topic and thus enhance brand reputation in the content. The video game has a strong social nature, through the game to generate emotional resonance with young users and become the user's social media, more active communication and diffusion effects can be obtained. Mobile game enthusiasts spontaneously produced content during the game and created a set of male character posters. The lip color corresponds to the color number of the female hero. Through re-creation and quadratic element, IP marketing is further promoted, and expanded into topical hot events. Once the tipping point of the fit is found, the enthusiasm of social media users and consumers will be ignited and transformed into consumption power. "Figure 1" presents the poster of two companies' cross-border marketing.



Figure 1 User generated content.

### 3.5 Collaboration: Choosing the Right Partner

#### 3.5.1 Complementary

The complementarity of "non-functional" and successful crossover marketing requires the product to remain independent in terms of attributes, that is, the product can exist independently without the other party and give users the right to choose freely. The crossover marketing between M • A • C and Honor of Kings is a marketing based on complementary user experience, and cooperation between beauty makeup and video games, entity and virtual. The collaboration is user-experience-centered and focuses on connecting with the audience. It can increase the attention and discussion of the audience, which is conducive to breaking the virtual barrier and making more concrete contact with the audience. It can also transform the fans of Honor of Kings into the loyal consumers of M • A • C and increase the traffic of the brand.

#### 3.5.2 Compatible Product Concepts

The Honor of Kings is Tencent game developed and operated of a popular 5 v 5 team fair competitive game, the classic game of competition like play with innovation mode on a global scale by different ages and from all walks of life of both men and women. M • A • C, which was founded in 1984, has always won the favor of global consumers with its bold and innovative colors and subversive style. It always pursues the fusion of fashion trends and life dreams and respects the rights and freedom of people of different races, genders, and ages to pursue their

dreams and beauty. Both of them have the same pursuit of philosophy.

#### 3.5.3 Suitable User Groups

From the perspective of the age distribution of the audience, the consumer group of M • A • C is concentrated in the female crowd of 18 to 24 years old, which to some extent fits well with the Rocket Girl 101's fans. As one of the Top mobile games where male and female players are evenly distributed, the age of the players is roughly the same as M • A • C.

### 3.6 Conversion: Integrating Channels of Both Parties, Linking Online and Offline Resources

M • A • C integrated the marketing resources of Tencent's entire platform. With the help of Tencent's two IPs: "Honor of Kings" and "Rocket Girl 101", M • A • C can reach beauty enthusiasts, gamers, quadratic element crowds, and idol fans, to achieve the effect of three layers of traffic superposition.

Online: First of all, it is through online "drainage". M • A • C did not choose the online official flagship store and Tmall flagship store, but built a WeChat mini program pop-up store, which introduced 30 times more than the daily site traffic. "Rocket girls 101" cosplay the five heroes in Honor of Kings, which has played to spread the value of opinion leaders. Through the "game" plus "star" hot spots, and with the aid of game IP derivative, an involvement of makeup enthusiasts, game players, quadratic element crowds and idols fans which can

maximize the promotion of brand awareness and improve brand reputation.

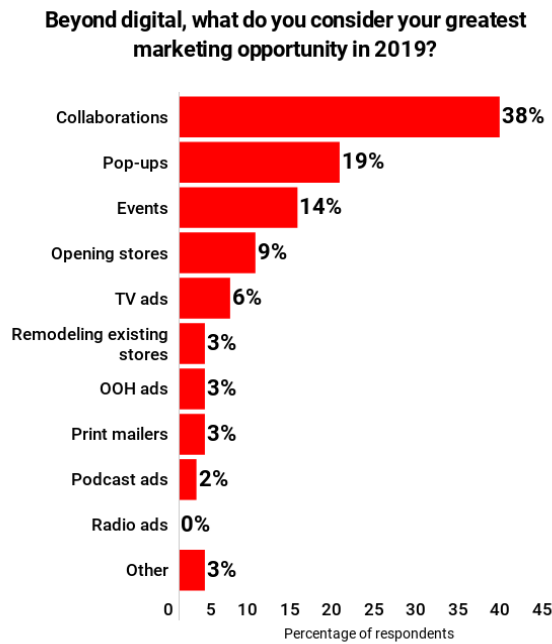
Offline: M • A • C has launched immersive experience projects to attract consumers who are outside the communities. In offline stores, consumers could have an "immersive" experience on-site with the theme of "lip color competition", M • A • C created cosplay special show and E-sports special show of "M • A • C × Honor of Kings" which has invited KOLs of cosplay and E-sports to "gang up", and took photos with fans and interacted with VR games.

Online and offline linkages increased consumers' involvement, enhanced the fun and interactivity of activities. Then finally it can achieve sales conversion in small program pop-up stores and offline smart retail stores. The company can use hunger marketing

to arouse consumers' desire to buy, but the purpose of this cooperation is not to simply increase sales but to strengthen M • A • C's younger brand image and inject fresh blood into the brand.

#### 4. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BRANDS TO CHOOSE CROSSOVER MARKETING STRATEGY

Luxury fashion brands are increasingly relying on crossover cooperation, according to a new Glossy report [4]. "Figure 2" shows the result of a survey focusing on the willingness to choose marketing methods. In this survey of 149 fashion and beauty executives, Glossy's professional research team found that 38% of their brands still see collaborations as their biggest marketing opportunity this year, 19% chose pop-up stores, and 14% chose co-events.



Source: 117 brand executives surveyed through the Glossy+ Research Panel, December 2018

GLOSSY

Figure 2 Survey on the willingness to choose marketing methods.

Crossover marketing is indeed a good way to inject new vitality into the brand, but now it is not uncommon to find crossover marketing. How to break out the tight circle in the numerous dazzling crossover, has become a top priority for brands.

The company should keeping an eye on the trends of consumers to know what they are interested in

recently, and what kind of cooperation do they want to see. The characteristic of consumers is that they like the new and dislike the old, and they need "Wow Moment". "Surprise" can increase consumer loyalty and turn consumers into loyal customers on the basis of satisfaction.

To find the right partner, clarify the purpose of brand marketing and identify the elements of crossover brand cooperation, brands should not blindly follow the trend. They must clarify the role of crossover marketing in corporate profitability, and then, based on the respective demands of different brands, seek out common points of mutual interest and form mutually reinforcing effects.

If they integrate the marketing channels of both parties, pay attention to public relations management, and combine online and offline channels, they can realize their ideas.

At present, the most crossover marketing of brands is beauty, and there is too little crossover for the male market. However, the consumption of male groups is more direct and faster, but they lack the scenarios and needs for them to consume. This is also the direction that brands can explore in the future.

Novelty crossover marketing can only bring a momentary sensory impact to users. The longer the duration, the novel marketing among different brands emerges endlessly, and users are likely to develop immunity. In the future, technology will continue to change, and consumer groups will also continue to change. Brands should plan for the long term and continue to explore future marketing paths.

## 5. CONCLUSION

For brands such as M • A • C with declining performance and weak consumption, crossover marketing of video games can be an opportunity to interact with young people and increase brand stickiness, ultimately achieving a win-win situation. This paper takes M • A • C and Honor of Kings as examples to explore the brand crossover marketing strategy. It can be concluded that for brands, on the one hand, crossover marketing integrates some originally irrelevant elements to arouse curiosity and stimulate consumers' sensory experience through brands with huge category contrasts. On the other hand, due to different channels, each brand can cover different groups. Crossover marketing allows brands to borrow channel resources from both parties to reach more target groups. For consumers, with the advent of consumption upgrades, people are paying more attention to the quality and diversification of life. Brands hope to create a fresher consumer experience to meet consumer needs. It also offers some suggestions for brands: Every step of the crossover and integration is crucial, crossover marketing requires in-depth exploration of consumer needs and finding suitable partners to update and

optimize the brand's solidified image to attract more consumers and open up new markets.

## AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

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