

# How to Use Social Media to Achieve User-centered Product Marketing?

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## ABSTRACT

This paper is based on the authors' insights into the current consumer marketplace, where marketing strategies have shifted from company-driven to consumer-driven and marketing decisions have shifted from empirical to data-based. This article uses the case of "How Popeyes Promoted Fried Chicken Sandwiches" to demonstrate that well-designed products and effective marketing strategies often lead consumers in specific directions. Marketing professionals can use data to understand consumer habits and quickly capture changing trends. This leads to the conclusion that in the e-commerce environment, leveraging data and adopting an "approachable" marketing strategy can be very effective.

**Keywords:** *Chick-Fil-A fallout on Sunday, Low-cost campaign, Word of mouth, social media, the audacity to campaign BYOB, An "approachable" marketing strategy*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Marketing is a very important part of business operations. Because when a company plans to offer a good or service to consumers, it requires the marketing department to plan and execute the pricing and promotion of the product. How the good or service is priced, who is targeted, when it is promoted, and the channels and methods of promotion are all dependent on the work of the marketing staff. In the e-commerce environment, consumers have a variety of channels to obtain information. In 2018, WeChat opened the function of placing WeChat applets in the circle of friends, which allows you to place advertisements about WeChat applets in the circle of friends. This combination of the circle of friends and the form of advertising is undoubtedly an additional way of publicity and promotion for WeChat applets. This form is a good opportunity for offline businesses. Precise advertising in the circle of friends can bring online user traffic to offline and play a role in promoting the exposure of the brand.

This makes it even more important to use social media to achieve user-centric product marketing and thus maintain lasting relationships with consumers.

Henry Ford's favorite thing to say about marketing is that "They can have any color they want—as long as it's black." Marketing has indeed come a long way. From the

seller's marketplace in the 18th to 19th century to fragmented new-age marketing in the 21st century to the innovative internet-enabled business models in recent years. For example, Bezos often places an empty chair at the company's most important meetings, with the goal of reminding the management attending the meeting that the consumer, as the most important person, is also attending the meeting. Marketing strategies have transitioned from company-driven to consumer-driven and marketing decisions have transformed from experience-based to data-based.

Marketing is no longer a one-way street, and corporations need to carefully delve into the reasons why consumers may be attracted to the products or services being brought to the market. With the prevalence and influence of social media in modern society, the reputation of a certain product or company can be quickly built up or, just as quickly, torn down. Japan's Isuzu Motors used the "He's lying" incident to ignite users' curiosity, and Zhang Ruimin, the founder of Haier Refrigerator, used the "smashed refrigerator" incident to convey his strict quality concept to users. The success of these cases is to make use of the curiosity of events to attract countless people's attention. [1] True, well-designed products and effective marketing tactics often guide consumers towards certain directions. However, the general awareness of the "marketing effects" and the variety of alternative options empower consumers and often put them into the driver's seat.

## **2.THE IMPORTANCE OF CONSUMER CENTRICITY**

Consumer-centric marketing is no longer just a slogan. Online shoppers are tired and unwilling to pay extra for shipping? Here comes Amazon's two-day free shipping. A big population of people in India is vegetarian? Here come KFC vegetarian burgers. Millennials are reaching the legal driving age and are more environmentally aware? Here comes Harley Davidson's first electric motorcycle. Present-day consumers are trendsetters, and they have the power to pick and choose. Any sudden event will attract people's attention. This unexpected event is what marketers need to shape, so when planning marketing activities, marketers should pay close attention to which process in the event can make the event suddenly fire up to attract more people's attention. With globalization and the circulation of similar products on the market, it has become extremely important for companies to understand how their consumers of different backgrounds receive and process information, interact with and influence their social circles, and hope to be serviced on a more personal level. These all present an increasing number of challenges to marketing moving into the future. Many companies have tried various promotions to attract users' attention, but the results are not satisfactory because of the lack of users' participation. In these promotional activities, users only passively accept the invitation of the business activities, rather than actively participate in the activities, the results are naturally less than ideal. Therefore, when looking for the trigger of marketing events, companies must focus on whether users can participate in them. Consumers are now the centerpiece on the table.

As the turnover rate of trend is only getting higher as technologies advance, what appeals to customers one day may not work the next. In the next 5-10 years, marketing needs to involve in a direction where it can leverage data to learn consumer habits and to quickly capture the ever-changing trend. These data-driven marketing decisions not only keep the company afloat in the market, but it also gives insights on how to reverse engineer and to improve the products to better cater to the appetite of potential customers, to increase loyalty and retain existing consumers, and to be among the most competitive among other companies.

## **3.HOW POPEYES PROMOTED FRIED CHICKEN SANDWICHES**

Many young people have always found themselves gravitating towards having a piece of crispy and juicy fried chicken, and Popeyes has always been their go-to choose when it comes to fulfilling that little yet strong desire. Of course, when Popeyes launched its fried chicken sandwich with the chicken sandwich war that

was pursued, it immediately caught the attention of consumers.

The campaign itself seemed simple and straightforward – ever since Restaurant Brands International acquired Popeyes, it has been on a mission to expand the brand worldwide. [2] After two years of researching and testing, Popeyes came out with its own fried chicken sandwich to compete with other fast-food chains such as Chick-Fil-A and KFC. After initially introducing the fried chicken sandwich on Aug. 12, Popeyes quickly announced the sell-out of its latest product on Aug. 27. [3] In response to its product's scarcity and while trying to fix its supply chain, Popeyes had the audacity to come out with its follow-up campaign to encourage its consumers to "BYOB" (bring your own bun) and purchase the three-piece tender box to assemble the fried chicken sandwich. [3] The eye-catching sandwich was so popular that this campaign in effect humorously diverted the crushing customer demand in its chicken sandwich to a comparable DIY product. While you cannot scroll through your Twitter or Facebook feed without spotting mentions of Popeyes chicken sandwich, Chick-Fil-A took a stance and reminded its followers on Twitter that it is the "inventor" of chicken sandwich. This marks the beginning of a marketing war and a Twitter feud between Popeyes and Chick-Fil-A that eventually generated the former roughly \$65 million in earned media value. [1,2]

Soon after that, Popeyes seized the perfect opportunity to relaunch its chicken sandwich. When its main competitor in the chicken sandwich business, Chick-Fil-A, mistakenly marketed for its annual National Sandwich Day, which so happened to fall on a Sunday when Chick-Fil-A is closed, Popeyes took it to Twitter and retweeted Chick-Fil-A's apology letter with the comment "seriously...y'all good?" and announced that its previously out-of-supply chicken sandwich is finally coming back on the same Sunday as a permanent item on the menu, as shown in Figure 1. [4] Not only did Popeyes leverage the discontent from Chick-Fil-A's customers over the marketing overlook, but it also used this opportunity to target one of its biggest competitors in Chick-Fil-A and dinged Chick-Fil-A's reputation and accountability. One stone, two birds. Once the Pandora's box has been opened, what ensues is an organic and consumer-oriented burst of popularity on the comparison of the chicken sandwich from both brands. With a subjectively better flavored and objectively bigger and cheaper sandwich from Popeyes, feedback poured in one-sided across social media platforms. Influencers of different generations, people of different backgrounds and social-economic classes, and both old and new consumers blew up the news feed with their comparisons and reviews. With its initial online marketing efforts and the afterward word of mouth marketing from its consumers, Popeyes took off with its newly built brand credibility as well as its user stickiness. Chick-Fil-A has

yet to find an effective rebuttal.



Figure 1 “I’m back.”

Obviously, Popeye’s initial marketing on its chicken sandwich did not target any specific competitor. However, as the situation evolved and as an opportunity presented itself, Popeyes ran away with it by targeting the giant in the industry, Chick-Fil-A. The low-cost marketing strategy of Popeyes was smartly carried out in a way that it simply pointed out a mistake made by its competitor on Twitter, and its audience did the rest. The targeting was neither relentless nor malicious. [4]

If an event is to form a torrent of public opinion, it must mobilize various emotions such as public excitement, sympathy, anger, or sadness, all of which will increase the intensity of public opinion. This is like a butterfly flapping its wings to trigger a storm of public opinion, which tends to erupt fully within a short period

of time, and it has become difficult to clearly separate the development of public opinion from the period of eruption.

It's no coincidence that Burger King has also made clever use of social media for marketing purposes. On the night of the Floyd Mayweather vs. Manny Pacquiao "Fight of the Century" in Las Vegas, photos of Burger King and Justin Bieber appearing together behind Mayweather as shown in Figure 2 took over Twitter and Facebook. The restaurant chain was the talk of the town. "We worked hard to create opportunities for Burger King to enter into organic discussions about current trending topics," said Axel Schwan, global chief marketing officer for Burger King, "Our goal was to weave our brand into the fabric of pop culture. " [5]



Figure 2 Burger King and Justin Bieber appearing together behind Mayweather

The relationship drive forms the basis of the social effect and the basis of user conversion and influencing decisions that ferment into big events. Just like the most neglected star fire, it began to contribute to a new prairie momentum on social networks, stimulating the huge momentum of social circles.

Everyone can use the power of media communication, but it doesn't mean that by the media blowing up, you'll be instantly successful. For example, there is a female makeup artist who made a video teaching people how to make up as Lady Gaga, which immediately became popular on video websites, and as a result, she now not only has 5 million hardcore fans, but is also the official video makeup artist of Lancôme. This female makeup artist has real talent. Before uploading the video of makeup as Lady Gala, she had already uploaded many videos, and they were all good, but they were just not noticed. So when the opportunity came, the real talent of the female makeup artist worked and was able to continue to go viral, while the geeks in California who happened to shoot the rainbow couldn't. The modern world is still reasonable after all, and you have to have real skills if you want to accelerate your success. [6]

#### 4.CONCLUSION

Before the rise of social media, many people thought that advertising was just an outward push, but social media is pulling users toward the brand side. As a result, the act of brand promotion and advertising will gradually be replaced by social media marketing. Social media marketing will effectively enhance the brand image. In his book "The Small Group Effect: The Hidden Power Sweeping the Masses of Users", Xu Zhibin, vice president of Weiboyi, analyzed e-commerce data and found that the natural recommendations and shares of only 200,000 users brought at least 100 million yuan in sales, and these people were called shopping experts, and each share could bring a conversion volume of 200 to 2,000 orders. [7]

To conclude, what proved to be the most intriguing about this campaign was how effortless it seemed and how social media was leveraged in this modern society. First off, it seemed effortless in a way that it only took Popeyes a few tweets to trigger the collateral effect of what followed. Compared to the defensive stance of Chick-Fil-A when it tried to remind everyone who originated chicken sandwich, Popeyes went on offense, caught Chick-Fil-A's mistake, and magnified it. As we say in sports – offense is the best defense. Second, Popeyes effectively took its campaign online with its "approachable" marketing strategy and utilized the greatest way to propagate anything in the 21st century in social media. Again, user-centric marketing is no longer a buzzword. Popeyes succeeded significantly in its grassroots campaign by effectively connecting with its audience on an emotional and sensible level.

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