



Social Media Marketing Strategies of Coachella: A Case Study of Building a Global Iconic Music Festival through Digital Engagement

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Abstract. In recent years, music festivals have become not only a symbol of unique cultural experiences but also powerful branding platforms. This study examines how the Coachella Valley Music and Art Festival (hereafter mentioned as “the festival” or “the Coachella music festival”) has used social media marketing, specifically platform-based content and influencer engagement, to establish a recognizable brand and propel subsequent financial success. Basing on secondary data from academic literature, festival reports and social media content, the study adopts a case study to analyze the festival’s strategies. The finding suggests that the festival’s social media strategy have significantly improve audience engagement and ticket sales. However, the analysis also points out several limitations of the current strategy the festival implemented, including the limited resource of social media management and decreasing credibility of influencer. The paper concludes by offering practical suggestion such as adopting artificial intelligence content detecting tool to improve the maintainability of the festival’s brand construction.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing; Influencer Strategy; Music Festival Branding; Coachella Case Study

1 Introduction

In recent years, music festivals have evolved from purely musical gatherings into multifaceted experiences that reflect and satisfy young generations social need [1]. The event is among the world's most important music festivals. The festival's singer lineup alone cannot be held solely responsible for its accomplishments. Rather, it relies on the festival’s ability to construct a brand identity that expresses values like individualism, experiential culture, and community belonging. This identity is made by its social media marketing strategy, which has shifted the festival from a simple music festival to a worldwide cultural sensation. Social media has become essential for brand to boost the relationship by engaging with their followers. Brands can establish their own image with their audience by using Instagram, Twitter or YouTube these social media, just like what the festival had done, and thus benefitting from increased attractiveness and popularity[2].Gaining understanding of how the festival's usage of social media

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marketing impacts its financial outcomes is the objective of this study. In particular, a complex examination of both the positive and negative aspects of the festival's influencer marketing and social networking content strategies was carried out, along with the financial success they generated.

2 Review of the Literature

2.1 Theoretical Foundations of Social Networking Cites Marketing

Social networking sites now serve as a pivotal resource for brands to interact with audiences and promote products or services. Influencer marketing, content created by users (UGC), and immersive brand experiences are important tactics [3]. User-Generated Content (UGC) encompasses all forms of media produced and distributed by end-users rather than the originating organization. According to research, a significant amount of UGC through multiple platforms is associated with brand and can affect how customers view a brand through peer-to-peer interaction [4]. Furthermore, influencer marketing has emerged as a successful tactic whereby social media stars promote goods to their fan base. This approach takes the advantage of influencer's authentic and credible image [5]. Another essential concept is the creation of immersive experiences, which allows users to participate in brand activities online, fostering emotional connections and long-term loyalty [3].

2.2 Music Festivals and Brand Building

Music festivals are increasingly viewed not only as a place for enjoying music but also as a lively social gathering space for people to socialize. Moreover, music festivals offer multisensory experiences through music, visuals and social interaction, emphasizing on creating memorable, immersive experiences that go beyond the simple consumption of products or services [1].

2.3 Case Study Methodology in Festival Marketing Research

The reason why case study research is used in there is due to its ability to provide deep insights into specific phenomena. As Heale and Twycross note, case studies are usually used to explore complex issues in real-life settings [6]. In the marketing of music festival, case studies allow researchers to understand interactions between marketing strategies, consumer behavior, and social settings. However, scholars also point out that case studies have some certain limitations. The result of case studies often has limited generalizability as they focus on particular cases. Additionally, the interpretation on the collected data is easily be influenced by the researcher's own bias. Despite these flaws, case studies provide a valuable method for exploring real world business practice in music festival marketing.

3 Methodology

3.1 Data Sources

This research relies primarily on secondary data, collected from three ways, academic literature about social media marketing strategy and experience economy, official reports about the festival's social media performance and business activities and social media-content from platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, YouTube and Twitter, including posts, influencer content and hashtags. These data provides a broad view of the festival's social media marketing strategy, which is also appropriate for a single case study.

3.2 Analytical Framework

This section mainly analyzes from three levels how the festival built its brand through social media and achieved commercial success. The first part analyzes the content operation mode of the platform to identify the way that the brands establishes contact with users through social media. The second part discusses the role of influencers in communication and explore how influencer expand the brand influence through utilizing its credibility among audiences' mind. The third part analyzes how these strategies mentioned before transformed into actual gains.

4 Analysis on the Problems

4.1 Analytical Framework

This paper adopts a three part analyzes from three levels to examine how the festival construct brand value and drive commercial success through social media marketing. The framework focuses on the interaction between content design, influencer strategy, and brand outcomes, highlighting both the effectiveness and limitations of each layer.

4.2 Social Media Content

Multiple platforms, such as YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, the music festival's own website and app has been utilized by the festival. The festival focus its communication with target audiences primarily on Twitter and Instagram. Twitter and Instagram are both the most influential social media [7]. Before the event, The festival utilizes Instagram to share event details, lineup announcements, and essential information, helping attendees prepare for the experience. In the months and weeks before the festival dates, these posts help guests stay informed about the latest developments. Throughout the festival, its social media account provides daily highlights, capturing each day's exciting performances and moments to remind both attendees and virtual audience. This action both interests people who attending and encourage them attend in the next day and discovers people who is their potential audiences that will come to the music festival in the next year. On Twitter, the festival posts live streams every day of the event, providing live links and review from the previous day for audiences to enjoy from home. Video and live-streaming are very effective ways to reach a larger

audience. In 2024, more than 239 million related post was posted by the number of people [8]. 43,000,000 engagements, 14,300,300 on average, 78,100 unique content 38,400 comments, and 614,300 favorites are all received by the Coachella music event. Posting related on posts not only allows audiences to better understand the event, but also gives organization an opportunity to improve its popularity. Social media can be utilized to "observe" customers, establish connections with them, and build personal and business brands, according to research. It seems like these media's worth to entrepreneurs is going to grow as their functionality improves. Moreover, impacts of posts on social media would not be limited to increases in marketing alone. As organization or entrepreneurs can interact with a great range of people, they may find some potential avenue of seeing or making opportunities for someone new [9].

However, this strategy still has some limitations. A considerable commitment of time is required for social media marketing. It must be someone's responsibility to keep a watch on all the networks, reply questions, post comments, and give information about products that customers find helpful. A substantial time commitment is necessary for social media marketing [10]. In the festival's case, the high demand for continuous engagement during the event requires enough human resources. The need for sufficient personnel means that either the efficiency of the company's review will decrease or the cost will increase due to the need to hire more people. Furthermore, overreliance on curated and highly aestheticized narratives can misrepresent the diversity of real festival experiences.

As the influence of social media continues increase, organizers must consider how to make a balance between its authenticity and maintaining brand image, ensuring that the digital content is attracting and useful for audiences.

4.3 Influencer Marketing

Influencer marketing's potency is always considered as an effective branding strategy. Audiences always take Instagram celebrity's posts as a trustworthy information [11]. the festival obviously takes the advantage of influencer's credibility to advertise themselves. The Coachella music festival makes use of its platforms to educate and engage visitors. For example, Amazon and celebrity influencer Vanessa Hudgens worked together to popularize the festival's locker service, which enables guests to easily achieve essentials straight to the event. Her yearly the festival content and sizable Instagram following drive a lot of audience interaction. Not only Vanessa Hudgens, Jared Leto, and Hailey Bieber all help the organization to improve its popularity through posting photo of themselves attending the festival [8]. Many fans who attend the festival may not primarily drawn by the music or specific musician, but by the perceived social experience and influence of others. Furthermore, the atmosphere itself plays a major role--a fund and festive atmosphere, which is also what the festival hope influencer will convey to audiences [1]. Those audiences are highly possible to put blind trust in the context posted by those influencers. Thus, audiences are not just recipients of those influencer's post. Rather, social media enables viewers to serve as both consumers and brand ambassadors, as more fans of influencers will become aware of Coachella and eventually purchase from the festival [12].

Nevertheless, influencer marketing has posed risks. The perception of quality created by an influencer may not align with the actual experience of the event. If an influencer's image becomes controversial, or if their followers feel misled by exaggerated posts of the event, the negative comment can easily spread rapidly to the Coachella music festival. Moreover, many influencers lack expertise and may misrepresented products, especially when commercial interests outweigh authenticity. Moreover, there is a growing concerns about fake followers or skills, which threaten the credibility of influencer's post.

4.4 Outcomes of Social Networking Sites Marketing Strategy

The festival's involvement on social media is directly responsible for its financial success. In 2012, the festival generated \$47.3 million as revenue and 158,000 tickets sale, making it the highest grossing festival that year. The festival and other music festivals' longevity and profitability demonstrates customers would like to pay hundreds even thousands of dollars to participate in this event, having access to unique experiences, and pay a large amount of expenses. This financial achievement reflects its effective marketing strategy and the power of a brand that attendees are willing to spend hundreds or even thousands of dollars to obtain the exclusive experiences and ticket packages. Such success is anchored in the festival's brand construction on social media. The strong brand image-- appreciating individualism, experiential culture and community belongings--fosters emotional connection and trust with consumers.

5 Discussion

While the festival's social media and influencer strategies have driven impressive engagement and brand recognition, which indirectly increase the festival's revenue, they also present challenges that require future improvement. Firstly, maintaining a constant online monitor across multiple platforms requires substantial human resources, especially during the event period. More importantly, the unpredictability of public opinion on social media creates reputational risks--negative comments, viral misinformation, or backlash from controversial topics can escalate rapidly and are often beyond the organizer's control. To mitigate this, the festival could implement artificial intelligence tool to detect public opinion. It can also establish automated responses to make some simple interaction with audience, while sensitive issues are escalated to real people. Secondly, the use of celebrity influencers creates reputational risks due to the halo effect—audience may connect the brand with the influencer's behavior, both positive and negative. The festival should consider working with more experienced influencer and review cooperative influencer's post before they submit to avoid misrepresentation.

6 Conclusion

This research uses a method known as case studies to look at how the festival utilizes social media marketing--platform content strategies and influencer marketing--to shape

its brand identity and achieve commercial success. Through analyzing secondary data from academic literature, official reports, and social media content, the research identifies that both the platform content strategies and influencer marketing have significantly improve the festival's audience engagement, brand popularity and ticket sales. The study also discovers some limitations of current strategies, including the limited human resource on monitoring social media and the reputational risks associated with influencer credibility. To address these limitations, this paper proposes several recommendations, such as implementing artificial intelligent content monitor and examining influencer's quality. However, due to its reliance on secondary data, this study may have ignored other influence factor such as internal decisions or complicated market environment. Moreover, the case study design limits the generalizability of the finding result. Future research should incorporating primary data such as interviews or surveys under multi-festival, which may maximize research result's generalizability.

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