

Content Promotion and Community Experience: Marketing Mechanisms and Paths for Outdoor Sports Products

--The Case of Arc'teryx

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Abstract: In the post epidemic period, outdoor sports have become a new trend in sports, and the demand for outdoor sports products has also increased. Among the many outdoor sports brands, Arc'teryx stands out and becomes the new favourite of people who love outdoor sports. So how did Arc'teryx become a big hit in the highly competitive outdoor sports market, with sales rising year after year? Currently, there are few detailed analyses of the brand's marketing mechanism and path. Therefore, the theme of this paper is the marketing mechanism and path of outdoor sports products--Taking Arc'teryx as an example. The research method is mainly case study method, mainly focusing on content marketing, analysing how the brand attracts audiences and builds communities through content marketing. The study found that Arc'teryx content marketing helped its own positioning and accurately attracted target customers, and the community experience also strengthened the brand's connection with customers. However, there are also shortcomings: the brand has fewer offline shops nationwide than other outdoor brands, and not all of them have a unique environment like the first shop in Shanghai to attract customers to buy. Arc'teryx still needs to revise its marketing strategy when the outdoor trend goes out of fashion to ensure that sales continue to grow, attract more people to participate in outdoor activities, and also maintain the vitality of the community and its appeal to the outside world. However, there's no denying that other outdoor sports brands can learn from Arc'teryx's marketing.

Keywords: Marketing mechanism, marketing path, content marketing, Arc'teryx

1. Introduction

With the development of the economy and changes in consumer attitudes, people are paying more and more attention to physical exercise, and in recent years, more and more people are involved in outdoor sports, outdoor sports have gradually become a new wave of sports. 2014 May the State Council issued the 'on accelerating the development of the sports industry to promote sports consumption of a number of opinions,' put forward 'to 2025 the total scale of China's sports industry exceeds 5 trillion yuan'. With the support of the policy, and the prevalence of 'outdoor wind' in recent years, the size of China's outdoor market has been rising year by year, and is expected to continue to

maintain a high growth trend in the future. At the same time, consumer demand for outdoor sports brands has become diversified, personalised and specialised. In particular, the younger generation of consumers are more in pursuit of product uniqueness and experience, which makes brands face more challenges when developing and promoting their products. With many outdoor brands around the world, it can be imagined that outdoor sports products are facing fierce competition. Against this background, Arc'teryx has been growing in popularity and sales in recent years, and the future is also a positive trend, which undoubtedly reflects that the brand's marketing approach has its own unique characteristics. This investigation takes Arc'teryx as a case study, aiming to analyse the two key elements of outdoor sports product marketing-content promotion and community experience - and explore the interaction between them and their impact on marketing effectiveness. Through in-depth analyses, more targeted marketing strategies can be provided for outdoor sports brands, thus increasing market share and promoting brand value. In addition, this study can provide new perspectives and ideas for the field of advertising and marketing, and promote the innovative development of theory and practice.

2. Literature Review

In the era of digital marketing, content promotion and community experience have become an important bridge of communication between brands and consumers. Especially in the field of outdoor sports products, how to enhance brand influence through effective content strategy and community building has become a hot issue in marketing strategy.

Existing literature on content promotion mainly focuses on three aspects: content creativity, distribution channels and audience interaction. Previous studies have suggested that the combination of storytelling, emotional connection and practical value in content creativity was the key to enhancing the attractiveness of the content. For example, Coca-Cola Beverage Company has used Coke bottles to create stories and high-quality content that are relevant to the users, thus becoming a connoisseur of content marketing [1]. In terms of communication channels, diversified channels such as social media, short video platforms and outdoor forums are widely used for brand promotion, for example, Disney company opened official accounts in major mainstream media around the world, attracting fans through its own content, unique IP culture and maintaining close contact, according to the relevant statistics on Disney's official website, Disney has more than 300 official social media around the world and has more than 1 billion followers [2]. Audience interaction focuses on user-generated content (UGC) and word-of-mouth communication to enhance the cohesion of the brand community [3]. Some researchers also believe that content marketing is the process of communicating the uniqueness of one's product to consumers through their preferred promotional methods, thus making them like the product and attracting potential consumers to buy the product [4].

Research on community experience focuses on community identity, engagement, and co-creation value. Community identity comes from the common interests and values among members, and is the core element to maintain the stability of the community [5]. Participation in the marketing process reflects the degree of activity and commitment of members to community activities. Brands can only achieve their marketing goals by capturing the core needs and purchase motives of customers, providing users with different experiences, and providing a platform for users to express themselves and stimulate their enthusiasm to the greatest extent possible [6]. Co-creation of value, on the other hand, emphasises the process of co-creating value between the brand and the consumer, and the value-added of the brand is achieved through interaction and cooperation within the community [1-3]. Other scholars have deduced, based on the learning transfer theory, that for the emotions and attitudes generated by consumers towards online brand communities to be successfully transferred to brands, they need to be based on a key premise: consumers must achieve consistency, similarity, or fit in their

perceptions of the brand communities and the brands they represent. This high level of fit will greatly increase the likelihood of emotions and attitudes being migrated to the brand [7].

Current research has made some progress at both the theoretical and practical levels, but there are some shortcomings. In terms of content promotion, although the application of diversified communication channels has enhanced brand visibility, it remains a challenge to ensure consistency of content and unity of brand image. Meanwhile, the depth and breadth of audience interaction needs to be further expanded to achieve more effective brand communication effects.

In terms of community experience, existing research has placed too much emphasis on the interaction and identity within the community and not enough attention has been paid to the interaction between the community and the external environment. In addition, the long-term operation and sustainable development of the community is also an issue that needs to be addressed. Especially in the field of outdoor sports products, how to maintain the vitality and attractiveness of the community has become an important issue for brands with the changing needs of consumers and intensifying competition in the market.

In summary, there is little existing literature on outdoor brand and product marketing. However, outdoor sports have been on the rise in recent years, both domestically and abroad, the government is constantly advocating a healthy and green life, and more people are responding to the call for the pursuit of nature and the pursuit of the outdoors. And ordinary sports brands have been unable to support the needs of outdoor enthusiasts or professionals, the professionalism of outdoor brands has also come to the fore, so this study will take the professional outdoor brand Arc'teryx as an example to explore how the outdoor brand markets itself, how to create a user community experience, and to shape its own brand culture and image.

3. Case Description

Outdoor sports products are one of the commodities that consumers use more frequently. Under the marketing mode of content promotion and community experience, the consumption process and behaviour of outdoor sports products will be activated and tracked. In this paper, researchers analyse the marketing mechanism and path of content promotion and community experience of outdoor sports products by taking Arc'teryx as an example. The content promotion mode includes brand story, outdoor knowledge, and community activities; and the community experience mode includes the construction of brand community, virtual community and offline community.

The Arc'teryx is a Canadian outdoor apparel brand (Arc'teryx). Founded in 1989 in Vancouver, Canada, the brand's predecessor was David Lane's Rock Solid brand, at the same time, the brand founders found that traditional outdoor brands for alpine climbing and other extreme sports functional coverage of the existence of certain vacancies, the market share is extremely low. This is how the brand was founded, its goal is to develop high-end quality professional outdoor equipment, unprecedented, unused design concepts, with professional high-quality clothing raw materials, in the direction of the construction of professional top outdoor brands to achieve a gradual accumulation of breakthroughs. However, Arc'teryx has had a bumpy road, experiencing three changes of ownership. The first time, Arc'teryx was acquired by Adidas in 2001, and was included in the Freeride athletes segment. The acquisition was aimed at increasing Adidas' presence in the outdoor sector. The second time, it was acquired by Amer Sports, a Finnish sporting goods group, back in 2005, requiring Arc'teryx to focus on developing apparel products. The third change of ownership was in 2019 when it was acquired by the Anta Group, which continues to this day. And it was because of this third change of ownership that Arc'teryx really opened up the Chinese market, allowing more people to learn about the brand and broaden its popularity. It is also because of this change of ownership, the Chinese outdoor brand also has a high-end professional outdoor brand, upgraded to a certain level.

In recent years, the heat of Arc'teryx brand has been rising, which is also attributed to the brand's marketing strategy. This paper will focus on content marketing and community building to analyse the brand's marketing approach and explore how the brand has stood out in the highly competitive outdoor sports products field through its own marketing methods in recent years.

3.1. Content Marketing Aspects

The Arc'teryx had no major marketing initiatives for years until 2020, when the brand signed its first global spokesperson, supermodel Liu Wen. It is understood that Liu Wen has a certain influence in the Chinese modelling industry, and has a certain degree of concern in the youth collective, because of her love of nature, often released outdoor sports photos, so this image is also deeply rooted in people's hearts, in line with the brand characteristics of the Arc'teryx, and shaping the sense of seniority of the clothing. This sense of high class is in line with the brand positioning of Arc'teryx, which puts forward the concept of 'sports luxury' at the beginning, wanting to create the 'Hermes' in the sportswear industry. So the price of the product compared to other brands of outdoor products is more expensive, an entry-level assault jacket to about 4,000 yuan, and the brand does not discount all year round, do not participate in the activities, merchandise sales rely entirely on the consumer's personal purchasing power. In order to conform to the brand's tone, after Arc'teryx was taken over by Anta, it formulated a location strategy, 'Better (better image), Bigger (larger area), Lower (lower floor)', so Arc'teryx completed its first flagship shop, the world's largest, in Shanghai's Huaihai Road, which is home to many luxury goods. The Arc'teryx Alpha Centre, next to the Hermes, has completely penetrated the concept of 'transporting luxury' into people's hearts.

The Arc'teryx is also a 'permanent guest' in major shows and films and TV dramas. The most influential show was the closing ceremony of LV Autumn/Winter 2020 Men's Fashion, where the late Artistic Director of Men's Fashion Virgil wore blue Arc'teryx ALPHA SV; and the Autumn/Winter 2020 Women's Fashion of OFF WHITE, where Beginner's and OFF WHITE's patchwork gowns attracted a lot of attention from the trend setters; and in film and television, it has made several appearances in films such as Venom, Spy Kids 4 and Vertical Limit, using softcopy to get people to actively learn about the brand.

In order to rejuvenate and trendise the brand and broaden the consumer base, Arc'teryx has co-branded with British street fashion brand PALACE, Japanese trend brand BEAMS, clothing brand JIL SANDER and GREAT GOODS to create a series of special limited products, which has created a wave in the trend circle, combining functionality with fashion and greatly enhancing the brand, product exposure. And a series of limited products in the circle of the price is also rising, in 2024 Arc'teryx launched the 'Year of the Dragon limited' punching jacket, priced at 8200 yuan. In the second-hand platform, the model has been fired to 12,000 yuan high price. The high price is also hard to find, and this marketing method opens the door to the trend market. The high price, leading technology and limited edition products have successfully made Arc'teryx the outdoor brand of choice for trend-setters. The co-branding with Songtsam Group in 2023 and the signing of a five-year project cooperation plan connects the unique outdoor aesthetics with the local culture of ethnic minorities, colliding with different sparks, making Arc'teryx more than a simple outdoor gear apparel, but also a fashionable and trendy cultural item. In the cooperation programme, the clothing such as punching jackets in the co-branded collection themed on the local Meili Snow Mountain range, headed by the Kawagabo, has received a wide range of consumer appeal.

The real popularity of the Arc'teryx originated in May 2021, Tiktok user Jcallred posted a video wearing the Arc'teryx Bathing Suit ALPHA AR under the shower nozzle, which fully demonstrated the professional waterproof performance of the Arc'teryx Suit, and near the end of the video, Jcallred jumped into a swimming pool while wearing the Bathing Suit. It was these two nonsensical scenes that made Arc'teryx a hit. The video generated a lot of attention in the aftermath and was copied by

users in Tiktok, becoming a popular trend for making videos. Although there is no link underneath these videos to the official Arc'teryx's shop, the viral spread of these videos has undoubtedly set fire to Arc'teryx. The company quickly adjusted its marketing strategy in response to this situation. The company quickly adjusted its marketing strategy in response to this situation. With the support of huge traffic, the Arc'teryx used its existing official accounts on major social media platforms to release a large number of short videos to attract people's attention, and organised a number of online activities to encourage outdoor enthusiasts to wear Beginner Bird's products and release short videos, photos, etc, to expand the influence of its own brand. In 2022, the number of notes posted about Arc'teryx on Little Red Book increased by 1,247 per cent year-on-year, and the number of searches increased by 742 per cent year-on-year. When the functionality of a product is visualised and concretised in the form of a filmed video, the product becomes more influential and more and more people will learn about the brand because of the gimmick. The fact that Arc'teryx has burst onto the scene in such a way is undoubtedly due to the brand's own excellent quality and its outstanding performance. The Arc'teryx in the research and development of fabrics up and down a lot of effort, the design team spends a lot of time thinking about the process and materials, the use of GORE-TEX patented fabrics, has a strong warmth and waterproof, windproof performance, the use of professional 'science and technology' thermobonding press glue on the punching bag, this special process makes the Beginner bird punching bag on the jacket does not have a place is sewn with a needle and thread, unlike the traditional punching bag. This special process makes no place is sewn with needle and thread, different from the traditional punching jacket. Under the support of the special process, the life of Arc'teryx punching jacket can be up to five years, even in the process of wearing violent experiments, or in the extreme cold weather wear, the jacket can have a strong guarantee. Each piece of the jacket requires a tedious process, and need to have a specific machine and extremely skilled staff, in the tedious work method a jacket needs to go through more than 190 times of manual process processing, spend a lot of time production. And before the product is released to the market, it needs professional athletes go to the mountains for a lot of practice, to feel whether the product is suitable for outdoor sports, and then make targeted adjustments. It is precisely because Arc'teryx clothing system is so professional that professional outdoor sports enthusiasts have a strong recognition of the brand, and the products of the brand can cope with changing and extreme natural environments. Both outdoor enthusiasts and professional athletes need professional sports equipment when doing outdoor sports such as ice climbing, rock climbing and snow climbing, etc. Arc'teryx has also made proper use of this point and formulated the product strategy in the 4P theory system to publicise the professionalism of its own brand of outdoor apparel.

Along with its strong fabrics and technology, Arc'teryx pursues a brand philosophy that other outdoor brands should learn from and explore. The origin of the logo is the discovery of the fossil Archaeopteryx by palaeontologists, which is the earliest known bird-like creature, and is based on the most complete fossilised specimen of the Archaeopteryx, the 'HMN specimen', which was found in Berlin around 1880. The creature between the reptile and bird animals, through continuous evolution to become bird animals, to fly freely in the air, the story of the brand is so, and this is the original intention of the brand of the first Zuzhu bird, outdoor sports products continue to upgrade and transform, injected into the evolution of the genes, and now grows into the world's leading outdoor sports brand, is still upgrading and development.

Arc'teryx's product line is rich and diversified, with products ranging from T-shirts, jerseys, polo/shirts, cotton jackets, down jackets, ski jackets, trouser suits, all kinds of outdoor/casual footwear, outdoor accessories and so on. All the products can be classified according to the usage scenarios: mountaineering/climbing, hiking/traversing, field running, snowboarding, urban leisure, and business. In different scenarios, there is a matching punching jacket or jacket, which is suitable for all kinds of scenarios in life, not only limited to purely outdoor. In recent years, the Chinese

‘outdoor wind’ prevalent, outdoor sports participants in the growth year by year, more and more people wearing punching jackets in the outdoors to take pictures, whether it is camping or climbing, in the major social platforms this style of dress is more sought after, and in the many brands, wearing Arc'teryx will become more recognisable because of its brand value positioning and its extremely high quality. The brand's value proposition and its high level of exposure, as well as its special styles, tailoring styles and highly specialised fabrics, make Beginner Bird distinctive, and also make themselves distinctive.

3.2. The Community Experience Aspect

While shaping its own brand image, Arc'teryx not only focuses on the dissemination of its own content but also cares about the experience of consumers. Outdoor sports are highly specialised sports and it is not easy to get started, requiring a certain basic knowledge of outdoor sports. In order to give consumers a perfect outdoor experience, the brand chose to set up complex outdoor scenes such as rainy, mountainous and snowy environments, as well as art installations such as mountain ranges and quarries in its shops in top business districts, to create an outdoor shopping experience and to attract more people to come to visit its shops. The Alpha Centre in Shanghai, as the global flagship shop, covers an area of 763 square metres. In order to better convey the product concept, the brand has spared no effort in setting up 50% of the space as a dedicated outdoor experience area, interactive area and display area, and regularly holds member activities, inviting outdoor sports professionals to tell their own stories and pass on their outdoor experience to create a ‘spiritual home’ for Arc'teryx’s loyal customers and potential consumers who love outdoor sports. A ‘spiritual home’ for loyal customers and potential consumers who love outdoor sports. The relevant initiatives can build bridges of communication, shape brand identity, increase the exchange between customers and brand puts, and shape common values.

In 2022, Arc'teryx opened its first ‘destination shop’ in Songtsam Shangri-La Rinca, bringing its offline shop to a high mountain at an altitude of 3,280 metres, and organising the ‘Up to Beauty’ brand campaign. With the concept of excellence, Arc'teryx has always been closely linked with outdoor sports, interpreting the value of its brand in the mountains, and demonstrating the brand's strong professionalism and functionality through the interaction of outdoor equipment and props. The activity demonstrated the brand's own strong brand connotation and attracted countless consumers, bringing them closer to each other. For consumers who have already purchased, participating in the event and experiencing a more interesting outdoor trip also strengthens the level of activity in the community, making the connection between the brand and the consumers even closer.

Arc'teryx's professionalism in the outdoors and its care for consumers are not only reflected in the setting up of the event scene, but also in other brand culture activities. As a leading brand in the outdoor mountaineering industry, Arc'teryx chooses the right time of the year to organise a series of activities for the Academy. For example, in the ‘Mountain Classroom’ activity, Arc'teryx continues the core concept of sharing outdoor professional knowledge, skills and experience, with outdoor professionals in China teaching members more professional outdoor knowledge and hands-on practice, helping them to know the mountains, experience the mountains, and walk safely and effectively towards the mountains. Various scenarios of mountain classrooms have so far exceeded one hundred offline activities and more than 90 online live broadcasts, attracting more than 2,200 members to personally participate in the actual classroom. Many like-minded outdoor hobbyists and outdoor players know each other because of Arc'teryx , learning climbing techniques and sharing practical experience together. Many participants also changed from bystanders to practitioners and started exploring the outdoors.

4. Case Studies

The core value of the Arc'teryx's brand lies in its extreme pursuit of product quality and in-depth understanding of outdoor sports. The brand has always insisted on positioning itself as professional, high-end and innovative, and is committed to providing outdoor sports enthusiasts with the highest quality products and services. This positioning has made Arc'teryx highly recognisable in the market, and has become synonymous with 'professional outdoor sports equipment' in the minds of consumers.

4.1. Pinpointing the Target Audience

Arc'teryx's content marketing strategy is always centred on its target audience-professional outdoor sports enthusiasts. Through in-depth research on the needs, interests and behaviours of this group, Arc'teryx is able to accurately deliver content that meets their needs, thus effectively attracting and retaining the target audience.

4.2. Create High-quality Content

In terms of content production, Arc'teryx always insists on the principle of high quality and value. Whether it is product introduction, usage tutorials or outdoor sports knowledge sharing, Arc'teryx always strives to do its best and provide users with the most valuable information. This high-quality content not only enhances the brand's image, but also strengthens users' trust in the brand. As the customer's recognition of the brand increases, the brand will also be affirmed, and then users will actively promote the brand's products as well as long-term purchase, which in turn increases the loyalty to the brand [8].

4.3. Rational Use of Brand Quality UGC

In order to expand the brand's own influence, Arc'teryx cherishes the idea of encouraging users to post quality content on social media as part of its content marketing in today's digital age. For brands, it is not only the content they create that has marketing value, but also the content created by consumers, which provides brands with a different creative space [1-6]. The mass creation of consumer groups not only meets the demand for personalisation, so that people can choose the same style and refer to the size based on the similarity of their bodies, but also meets the diversified demand for different outdoor scenarios and different experiences of wearing different products, which helps brands to promote themselves from another angle. It can also meet the diversified needs of different outdoor scenarios and the different experience of wearing different products, which can help the brand to do publicity from another angle. From the consumer's point of view, consumers not only satisfy their own desire to share through UGC, but also satisfy their own needs such as self-expression, social interaction, and emotions, so it can be said that both parties are satisfied with the situation [9].

4.4. Diversified Forms of Content

In order to better attract and satisfy the target audience, Arc'teryx has made diversified attempts in the form of content. In addition to traditional text and pictures, multimedia forms such as video and live broadcasting have been added, making the content more vivid and interesting. In addition, Arc'teryx has also made frequent appearances in major outdoor films with a high risk factor, not only achieving higher visibility among users, but also emphasising the brand's outdoor functionality and practicality. And it actively cooperates with various outdoor sportsmen around the world, inviting them to share their sports experience and stories, thus bringing the brand closer to consumers.

4.5. Social Media Marketing

In terms of social media, Arc'teryx has also done quite well. Through social platforms such as Weibo, WeChat, Tiktok and Xiaohongshu, Arc'teryx not only released a lot of valuable content, but also actively interacted with netizens, answering their questions and solving their doubts. This interactive approach to content marketing not only enhances user engagement, but also increases brand awareness and influence.

5. Conclusion

These previous examples show that content marketing can be effective in increasing consumer brand identity and loyalty, whether through providing valuable information or entertainment content, or through social media marketing and storytelling, soft copy, etc. The key to marketing success lies in understanding the needs and preferences of the target consumers and designing and implementing a targeted content marketing strategy accordingly.

The content marketing case of Arc'teryx demonstrates its unique brand positioning, core values and content marketing strategy. By pinpointing the target audience, creating high-quality content, diversifying content formats and social media marketing, Arc'teryx has successfully attracted the attention and support of a large number of professional outdoor sports enthusiasts. At the same time, these strategies have effectively enhanced the image and awareness of the brand, gaining an advantageous position for Arc'teryx in the highly competitive market. The creation of the community also makes consumers more interactive and sticky with the brand, which is conducive to the brand's subsequent development and the construction of a large fan base, thus expanding its influence. Some related studies have shown that the brand side can satisfy some of the customer's needs for it through the community, such as: brand autonomy, brand social relevance, to further cultivate the customer's emotional dependence on the brand and enhance the customer's loyalty [10]. For other brands, the successful experience of Beginner's Bird is worth learning and learning from.

While Arc'teryx has done an impeccable job in content marketing and community experience in the highly competitive outdoor market, Arc'teryx also faces a huge risk that its products will drive consumers to have a strong psychological gap if they are not in line with the content they are marketing. It is therefore important to improve the stability of the product. And in the outdoor activities organised by the brand, how to maintain the perfection of each activity is also a very difficult problem, to ensure a good experience for each user in the activities, to protect the safety of each user, but at the same time not to lose the sportiness and adventure of outdoor activities is a great challenge. This paper summarises that in its marketing, Arc'teryx has made full use of its own brand advantages and professional fabric resources, promoted its unique brand culture, brand clothing, brand spirit and brand positioning through content marketing-based marketing, and used the short video platform to successfully build momentum, attracting large-scale attention and attracting a large number of customers. Arc'teryx also used content marketing to promote the brand's community building, which is very worthwhile for other outdoor brands to learn from. This not only strengthens the link between the brand and the customer, but also favours the customer for the brand loyalty enhancement, strengthen the stickiness between each other, on their own brand publicity is also a great help. All in all, Arc'teryx has made good use of content marketing as a marketing tool to attract large-scale customer groups, and used outdoor sports as a group sport to build a bridge of contact, building a large number of small-scale communities to help the brand go farther and farther.

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