

## Gender marketing strategies for Women's Day on social media in China

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International Women's Day originated from a series of feminist movements in the 20th century, aiming to commemorate the achievements and contributions of women in various fields[3]. Nowadays, with the prevalence of consumerism, Women's Day in China has been wrapped in the shell of "Goddess Day" and "Queen's Day" by commercial capital to induce consumption, and the cultural value and connotation of the festival itself is increasingly eliminated[5].

In addition, brands have long been keen to use "fearmonger" to create marketing gimmicks, such as "*Women should stay in the kitchen*" and "*Women who can't use perfume have no future*", in an attempt to exploit the anxiety generated by the normative constraints of traditional femininity on women to promote consumption[1]. Along with the increase of female consumers' voice and the awakening of their independence, female consumers no longer agree with the discourse of being labelled to induce consumption, but start to use their power to choose brands that are aligned with their values[4]. Therefore, there is an urgent need for brands to shift from gender differentiated marketing to focus on the values of the marketing content.

This trend has led to the emergence of many Chinese brands that are committed to breaking the traditional gender marketing model, such as the #Itsgendernotborder# Women Empowerment campaign launched by PROYA on Weibo. While telling the story of the female lion dancers with a short public service video and calling for breaking gender bias, they also invited cultural institutions, media workers and other PUGC to participate in the hashtag discussion, leading over hundreds of millions of UGC users to share their stories and thoughts under the hashtag, and eventually this campaign ranked second in the KLA index among all Weibo hashtag placements in 2021[8].

So, how should brands make social media gender marketing strategies to build emotional communication with consumers and thus increase brand loyalty? The following suggestions will be offered.

At the level of content production, the inclusiveness, depth and breadth of content should be enhanced. Undoubtedly, companies' advertising and marketing strategies should be based on gender equality and respect of the social rights of all individuals[6]. At the same time, this can also lead men to think about breaking through their own gender identity, and men may also be the target consumers of female-oriented products. Secondly, the current gender marketing content is mostly about paying tribute to or protecting women[2], but the regional problems faced by Chinese women, such as "son preference" and the culture of bad wedding practices in rural areas, also deserve attention. In addition, in terms of population coverage, brands should not only focus on urban women, but also on people from all walks of life, such as rural women and girls who are left behind and other marginalized groups, to empower women from a practical level.

At the level of content distribution, in social media marketing, attention should be paid to the power of matrix communication to increase the contact points between brands and consumers and to make environmental pavement for the detonation of topics, while public welfare organizations and official media channels can also be used to add authority to the communication of gender issues. In addition, it is also necessary to use the power of key opinion leaders in marketing, so that opinion leaders can participate in the extension of the channel, thus driving UGC production and realizing multi-ring self-propagation of content.

At the level of content consumption experience, the needs and consumption concepts of women in the new era have become the key factor for women to dominate the consumer industry, and the core of She-economy should be the deep excavation and respect for women's needs, and actively establish two-way emotional communication with consumers. Brands can use digital tools to more comprehensively and accurately monitor the consumer behaviour characteristics and preferences of target consumers, and create marketing strategies that match their specific demands and resonate with their values, which will bring brand stickiness with its differentiation advantages.

In general, as the perceptions of female consumers change in She-economy, brands should also adapt their gender marketing strategies to leave behind the traditional perspective of male gaze and objectification of women, and actively engage in a dialogue with women on an equal footing to create empathy and recognition. At the same time, as gender marketing is a part of social culture, brands should actively help female consumers to challenge the dominant social order and exert their own agency[7], give full play to their active social role in the protection and development of women's rights issues, and promote the return of the true value core of International Women's Day as soon as possible.

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