

Exploration on Creative Thinking in Marketing of Chinese Domestic Movies

Li Yipu

University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce

Abstract

This paper explores creative thinking in marketing approaches for Chinese domestic movies. The marketing situations were analyzed by considering the issues of the consumer-based approach, market-oriented concept, publicity-enhanced concept, business opportunity-based approach, and post-movie marketing approach. These ideas were applied in the analysis of the current situations in marketing of Chinese domestic movies. The findings can be used as a guide direction for increasing effectiveness of marketing for the Chinese domestic movies and lay a solid foundation for a sustainable development in the Chinese movie industry.

Keywords: Domestic Movie; Marketing Strategy; Deficiency; Development

Background

For economic thrive, it is very important to strengthen marketing innovation for the long-term development of Chinese domestic movies, in order to generate brand proliferation. With a successful application of effective marketing, Chinese domestic movies could be promoted to excel in the market. Thus, this paper places a great emphasis on the marketing innovation, maximization of value by adopting effective means and establishment of a foothold for Chinese domestic movies to thrive in the movie industry, which can be achieved through creative marketing. Hence, the main purpose of this paper is to analyze creative thinking in marketing of Chinese domestic movies, detailed as follows.

1. Current Situation of Marketing of Chinese Domestic Movies

There are many problems in marketing of Chinese domestic movies at the present stage. Some of which include could potentially involve the issues of the superficial marketing concept, a gap in attracting marketing talents, and out-of-date marketing modes.

1.1 Firstly, the superficial marketing concept involves adopting a market-oriented operation, where Chinese domestic movies can enter the market and reach target audience. Giving an example of state-owned movie studios, millions of yuan are invested in publicization. Chinese domestic movies, in contrast, would require a few years to be publicly recognized, causing an adverse effect on a possibility for a larger distribution of quality movies. A main reason for this is the lag-behind of the system in terms of the knowledge on how to manage the distribution channel. This issue is also caused by the restrictions created by the distribution agencies and the projection agencies, who act as gate keepers deciding whether the movies would potentially be favored by the audience. The decisions by these agents do not necessarily be the case that domestic movies cannot become successful. The system thus potentially deprives domestic movies from obtaining an opportunity to achieve their public popularity.

1.2 The second issue involves the issues of the deprivation in marketing talents. Industrialization must be implemented in operation, which requires excellent marketing talents to operate. As evidenced in a successful cooperation by Zhang Weiping, who made the case for *Hero* – a Chinese domestic movie. A main factor for its success is due to an innovation of marketing concepts and mature market operation mode that were introduced into the public. However, there are few marketing talents like Zhang Weiping in China. With this in mind, it would be beneficial to cultivate high-level marketing talents and build a marketing team with strong comprehensive quality. ^[1]

1.3 The third issue involves out-of-date marketing methods. The marketing of Chinese domestic movies is based on ‘screen-based marketing’ and ‘public relation’ as the methods of communication. According to Wen Shuo, the marketing modes of Chinese domestic movies are believed to require four stages in order to reach maturation. These four stages comprise (1) single box-office-centered marketing mode, (2) marketing mode based on box office marketing, (3) marketing mode focusing on both non-box office and box office, and (4) marketing mode focusing on non-box-office marketing.

In keeping with the notion of the above four stages, marketing modes for Chinese domestic movies has now developed past the first stage. Nevertheless, the marketing mode has not yet been connected with the international market. In this respect, new marketing modes (e.g. cultural marketing, brand marketing, environmentally friendly marketing, competitive-cooperative marketing and network-based marketing) could be considered as new orientations of enterprise’s marketing.

Chinese domestic movies would benefit from innovative marketing approaches. For example, new marketing concepts could consider the issues of unique characteristics and points of differentiation for creating growth of the domestic movie industry. These approaches can be carried out through content marketing, for example, rather than solely market investigations. ^[2]

2. Creative Thinking in Marketing of Chinese Domestic Movies

The marketing of Chinese domestic movies shall proceed from the following approaches: ‘consumer-based’, ‘market-oriented’, ‘enhanced promotion and publicity’, ‘provided business opportunities’ and ‘focused post-movie development’, for the purpose of promoting the Chinese domestic movies and enabling a sustainable development of the movie industry.

2.1 The first approach involves optimizing the market-oriented marketing mode. The movie is said to be simply the box office, and the box office is simply the audience. The audience judges the box office and also determines the success of movies. Thus, this system requires the movie studio and the distribution agency to be greatly satisfied by the movies, in terms of the ‘quality’ of the movies, and that they can serve the consumer’s demands.

Reviewing the marketing situation of Chinese domestic movies, the movie *Goodbye Mr. Loser* inevitably wins a good box office by taking its comic style as a selling point,

because the huge pressures suffered in life under the social background of the new era are reflected in the characters and themes in the movie, which in turn act as a reflection of the fact in the mundane life of many people.

The movie producers become successful due to the support from consumers and their satisfaction. However, the discrepancy between the box offices could be regarded as a creation of another issue - i.e. market-oriented marketing. For example, the production agency of the movie *One Step Away* released its advertising at the airport as follows: a large piece of grassland with the words “3D movie *One Step Away* 12.18 by Jiang Wen” appeared beside the toll station of T3 Terminal of Beijing Capital Airport. This released advertising campaign immediately triggered a number of admirations. For instance, the notions of ‘Jiang Wen is extremely capable’ and ‘the production agency is very rich’ are examples of the claim. In Beijing, the discounted price for a set of advertising on guideboard was about RMB 500,000, including 100 advertising spaces and a biweekly release cycle, this has laid a solid foundation for its good sales of box office. ^[3]

2.2 The second approach concerns innovative promotion means. This marketing approach focuses on creating and developing a brand. Before a movie is produced, producers would generally decide on their target market and how they would position their movie brand for its public audience. As a result, a large amount of costs could be incurred for advertising and branding activities, aiming at establishing successful brand awareness. Thus, good advertising is important in the sense that it can communicate information about the product. Once the [supposed] information is successfully communicated, the movie can achieve a good image in the mind of its audience. ^[4]

Giving an example of LongDa Peanut Oil Company, in association with Movie *Guan Yunchang*, sponsoring marketing campaigns for ‘storm’. At that time, large-scale brand marketing campaigns were launched for the ‘May 1st’ blockbuster *Guan Yunchang* in 14 cities in Shandong Province and Xi’an City in Shaanxi Province. The first prize is one ticket for the movie *Guan Yunchang* that would be released nationwide on April 28. During the campaigns, more than 10,000 movie tickets and prizes would be sent to the audience in the province by LongDa Peanut Oil Company together with New Century Cinema, etc., and 100% audience would win the prizes. Undoubtedly, media publicity and promotion had effectively improved the movie popularity and aroused the audience’s enthusiasm in watching the movie. This suggests that the success in movie is highly related to good publicity and promotion.

2.3 The third approach is related to providing many business opportunities. The investment promotion for integrated marketing for movies may improve the movie publicity level and raise the box office to a new level, because the channel may be found out in association with movie publicity and advertising. For example, the movie *Wolf Warrior* was positioned as an action movie by taking the patriotism and superstars as selling points through elaboration. The movie was made available in the market and overall investment promotion was launched by advertising agents. As a result, the movie grabbed public’s attention, evidently by a cosmetics brand immediately received the exclusive title, and put vast amount of investment on movie promotion. As a result,

this movie has a good box office. ^[5]

2.4 The fourth approach deals with the post-movie development. When a movie is successful and needs to be recreated after the previous version(s) / production(s). Movie producers could continue to reinforce the popularity, aiming at expanding the level of consumers' engagement. Reportedly, the movie expansion can generate flow of income for the economy. For example, 80% of economic benefits from the US movies, was derived from the post-movie incomes, and 100% of which derived from the movie marketing. Profits also came from the follow-up market expanded by employing the approaches of the integrated marketing.

Other useful relevant aspects of post-movie strategies involve advertising in relevant media channels and allowing distributions of CD-ROM (or other similar means). The success cases are: *The Lion King*, and books describing the shipwreck process published based on the movie *Titanic*, for example. ^[6]

Of course, not all movies are popularized because of superstars. Therefore, many directors also decide, with careful consideration, when adopting the marketing approach by using attractive young actors. A success case is the movie *Li Cha's Aunt* is very young, and its actor also contributed to the movie marketing, which could potentially be a fundamental factor that promotes the movie brand. Discussing these issues, the Chinese domestic movie industry pays more attention on the production of movie products, but, unfortunately little attention has been paid to the post-movie development. As discussed above, adopting a suitable fine-tuned marketing approach would have a positive effect on the domestic movie industry. In applying the new marketing approaches, including developing post-movie market, ultimately the Chinese domestic movie industry can potentially make improvements on its economic efficiency.

3. Conclusions

In conclusion, in order to ensure a sustainable development of the Chinese domestic movie industry, it is important to strengthen the marketing innovation, arouse the masses' interests in watching movies by applying the emerging marketing strategies. In doing so, marketing strategies can place an emphasis on the creating the innovation of marketing approaches, changing the traditional marketing concepts, and maximizing the marketing roles, which includes inviting talented people to promote the Chinese domestic movies to excel and occupy a position in the international arena.

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