

Analysis on the Marketing Strategy of Regional IP Brands

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Abstract: Nowadays, IP has become more and more influential in the cultural and creative industry, and the emergence of IP marketing has stimulated consumer demand for products and derivatives. Most of the IP is based on animation, novels and film and television dramas. To create a unique IP among the blooming works, it is necessary to find a new IP image in a unique way. This article will take the local characteristic IP Kumamoto Kuma as a case to analyze the process and ideas of creating local characteristic IP in Kumamoto Prefecture, and open up a new path for my country's cultural and creative brands.

Keywords: IP; Kumamoto; regional characteristics; cute culture

1. Introduction

Cute culture developed from Japanese ACG culture, is a kind of popular culture with the main characteristics of harmony, loveliness and pleasure, which is formed under the influence of Chinese mainstream culture and consumerism, and belongs to the category of popular culture.[1]

With the continuous development of new media, Cute culture has been widely spread, recognized and loved by the world. In addition to the imperceptible influence of consumerism, today's Cute culture is not limited to the daily communication, but has a strong commercial nature. The integration of Cute elements and brand promotion is in full swing, and the new economic form of cultural industry - Cute economy is constantly promoting the pace of China's cultural and creative industry.[2]

On the other hand, nowadays IP has more and more influence in the cultural and creative industries. IP (Intellectual Property) first appeared in the field of Internet, but with the application of Internet in the cultural industry, IP has been given a deeper meaning. In the cultural industry, it represents an intellectual property with its own value, cultural concept, influence and fan base.[3]

IP marketing has been introduced into China since 2,015. Up to now, it has not been eliminated in commercial competition, but has continuously created great value in the field of cultural industry. [4] In the era of growing IP resources, a strong IP with creativity can make consumers more easily identify and arouse brand association, and further promote consumer demand for its products and derivatives. With the continuous

development of Internet technology and the continuous upgrading of consumer demand, IP operation is moving from a single extensive model in the past to an integrated, autonomous and full industrial chain model.[5]

Nowadays, culture is no longer limited to meeting the needs of people's spiritual life, but more transformed into an entity that can be consumed, creating huge economic value. This is the new normal of the development of cultural industry up to now. The initial impression of Cute shape is the images of mascot and animation. However, this kind of image is no longer rare nowadays, and this way of visualizing Cute culture is everywhere. With the continuous development of Internet technology and the continuous improvement of people's requirements for cultural and creative products, how to create new value and drive the innovative development of Cute economy by using Cute culture is the most noteworthy form of integrating Meng culture into IP new cultural and creative. In this way, a cultural production mode with cute IP construction as the core will be formed, thus forming a complete brand industrial chain.[1]

As for the well-known image of Kumamon, the designer Manabu Mizuno has carefully designed the image in the initial IP design process. In addition to combining the local characteristics of Kumamoto County, he also specially added the Cute element. Since then, in order to make Kumamon different from the general IP, the operation team has used a series of event marketing to create a special character for it. This series of design and planning combines the Cute culture and IP of Kumamon and strengthens the bond among IP, products and consumers. At the same time, through online marketing, event marketing and brand marketing, the IP of Kumamon was deeply rooted in the hearts of the people, promoting the completion of the brand and the sales and promotion of cultural and creative products. This makes the IP of Kumamon play a great value.[6]

2. The Background of the Case Brand

2.1. Kumamon Image

Kumamon is a bear-shaped local mascot designed by well-known writer Kundo Koyama and famous designer Manabu Mizuno, in order to bring more sightseeing and income to Kumamoto Prefecture. In 2011, Kumamoto was awarded as the Kumamoto Prefecture Business Minister and Minister of Happiness, becoming Japan's first mascot civil servant. While revitalizing the economy of

Kumamoto Prefecture and promoting the reputation of Kumamoto Prefecture, Kumamon, relying on its cute image and unique authorized operation method, has gained an unimaginable welcome in Japan and outside the country, and has become the world's most popular mascot.

2.2. Image Design

In order to highlight the characteristics of the county, The cartoon image of Kumamoto bear's body is black, which is the main color of Kumamoto Castle, and uses blush that is often used by cute images on the cheeks. The red color contains the title of fire country in Kumamoto Prefecture. It not only represents Kumamoto Prefecture's volcanic geography, but also represents many delicious red food. Kumamon are the same size as real bears and are played by real people. Each of its classic movements are designed, such as tilting their heads and covering their mouths, raising their feet and so on. Its cute image is widely loved by the public.

2.3. Job Responsibilities

As the mascot of Kumamoto Prefecture, Kumamoto's main responsibility is to attract more tourists and increase the popularity of Kumamoto Prefecture. It is active in multiple venues, participating in office travel, business performances, tour guides and other work. In 2011, the prefectural government appointed Kumamon as a temporary civil servant. Kumamon was earliest played by the staff of the prefectural government. As Kumamoto's business increased, the official had to recruit more actors to complete these tasks in order to cope with more work. From participating in fashion shows, NHKredwhite, to perform gymnastics in front of the emperor and empress. From business trips in Japan to overseas trips. Kumamon is responsible as a civil servant. Under the propaganda from Kumamon, the popularity of Kumamoto Prefecture has also been greatly improved. People's willingness to travel to Kumamoto Prefecture has increased significantly, and the economic income industry of Kumamoto Prefecture is increasing day by day.

2.4. Derivative Culture

As the popularity of Kumamoto bears increases, it can be seen in Japan and even other corners of the world. In July 2012, the Kumamon Train was built on the Fat Sa Orange Railway, and there were many Kumamoto-bear arrangements in the car. In March 2014, Kumamoto Electric Railway built the Kumamon Tram. Big Kumamoto bears are in the front and rear of the car. In 2013, the Kumamoto prefectural government in Japan spent about 46 million yen to build Kumamon Plaza and opened. The square has an exchange area, a product information area, etc., which regularly release information about Kumamon. In 2014, Kumamon attended the NHKredwhite. On September 14, 2019, a robot in the shape of a Kumamoto Bear opened in a large business in Kumamoto City, acting as an information guide and security guard.

In Japan, Kumamon appears on signs, vending machines, cars, household items, stationery. And its

surrounding products are countless, so Kumamoto's peripheral goods are also found in many stores. With the rapid development of the Internet, Kumamoto's emoji bag is also on fire all over the Internet.

2.5. Image Promotion

The Kumamoto prefectural government organized a professional planning team and launched a series of marketing plans in order to raise the popularity. ManabuMizuno proposed to promote Kumamon without charging fees, allowing major merchants to use the image of Kumamon on their products. Since the birth of Kumamon, its cute image has gradually appeared in the products produced in Kumamoto Prefecture. As a civil servant of Kumamoto Prefecture, Kumamon was also sent to Osaka on a "business trip" to increase the popularity of Kumamoto Prefecture by distributing business cards. Subsequently, the Kumamoto Bear Disappearance Case and Blush Search Notice were launched, and promote and report them through various media. These marketing strategies have greatly increased Kumamoto's popularity and influence.

3. Marketing Strategy

3.1. Network Marketing

As Kumamon's promotion budget is limited, Kumamoto Prefecture chose the Internet as its marketing position in order to bring the bear into the eyes of the Japanese people. In September 2010, Kumamon's Twitter account was officially opened. As an information collection and release platform, this is the most direct channel for the public to know about Kumamon. The account occasionally reveals the location and clues of Kumamon's appearance, and interacts with followers. In addition to the Twitter account, Kumamoto Prefecture has also prepared an official website introduction page and its own blog, creating a comprehensive online publicity platform for Kumamon.

3.2. Event Marketing

In order to promote Kumamon, the Kumamoto Prefecture government has adopted a series of event marketing strategies. In 2011, the prefectural government hired Kumamon as a temporary civil servant and let Kumamon appear in crowded places in Osaka without prior notice, arousing interest in the adorkable bear. Then it posted a series of messages about Kumamon with the help of social networks, and then directed and starred in two famous missing cases.

3.2.1. Disappearance in Osaka

After being hired as a temporary civil servant, Kumamon went to Osaka to distribute business cards. But in the process of issuing business cards, it is attracted by the urban charm of Osaka and does not want to leave. To this end, in November 2010, the governor of Kumamoto Prefecture held an emergency press conference in YouTube to declare that Kumamon was "lost" and called on Osaka residents to find it and send it back. Soon, the disappearance of Kumamon aroused the curiosity of

Osaka people and successfully attracted people's attention. Finally, in the national search, Kumamon came back to continue to complete the task of handing out business cards.

This incident first uses the unconventional plot to arouse the topic of public opinion, and then turns the propaganda stage into the whole city, recommending its own characteristics when people are curious. This series of activities triggered a scramble for reports in the Kansai media. Kumamon's popularity has greatly increased. Over the course of a month, Kumamon's Twitter followers have grown rapidly, and tens of thousands of netizens have contributed to Kumamon's Twitter home page.

3.2.2. *Disappearance of blush*

In 2013, Kumamoto Prefecture launched the "Kumamon blush search campaign" to promote agricultural resources in Kumamoto Prefecture.

As a result of Kumamon eating too much tomatoes, horse meat, strawberries, snapper and other Kumamoto county specialty "red" food, resulting in the loss of blush on the cheeks. Kumamoto Prefecture called on everyone to help find its blush, and Kumamon himself reported the case to the Tokyo Police Department. Eventually, Kumamon's blush was found in tomato and strawberry fields in the county.

The incident successfully made people understand the importance of red to Kumamoto Prefecture, indirectly promoted Kumamoto Prefecture's specialty food: tomatoes and strawberries, and developed agricultural resources. Moreover, this incident has achieved 600 million yen in advertising marketing results.

3.3. New Copyright Model

Many characters' IP images come from content works, such as movies, comics, stories and so on. If you want to use these images commercially, you need to be licensed and pay high royalties, which is an important source of income for copyright owners.

Kumamon is different in that it does not rely on any content, its copyright party Kumamoto prefectural government's demand for royalties is not strong. As a result, they adopted a completely different copyright strategy-in Japan, any company or individual can use the Kumamon image for free to make or sell peripheral products as long as it is licensed. Since then, in the face of the vast overseas market, Kumamoto Prefecture government has extended this idea to the whole world. In January 2018, new copyright rules for Kumamon came into effect, allowing companies outside Japan to apply for its image license for the first time. After a successful application, a company can use the Kumamon image as long as it pays 5% to 7% of the royalties. After the rules were issued, they attracted more than 3600 applications in the first year. In the second year, 5400 enterprises applied for cooperation, and in the third year, there were an average of 750 applications per month, including snacks, stationery, clothing, cosmetics and personal computers. It is reported that the total revenue of

commodities related to the Kumamon license has accumulated to 7.66 billion yuan over the past two years.

With the help of a new copyright strategy, Kumamon soon became a world-famous bear.

3.4. Virtual Stars Create Regional Popularity

Before Kumamon appeared, Kumamoto Prefecture was an agricultural county that few people wanted to visit, unable to get rid of the traditional stereotyped image of farming, prairie horse grazing and rich products. But when Kumamon appeared as the minister of sales and happiness of Kumamoto Prefecture and made people know it in various ways, people's impression of Kumamoto Prefecture changed from a poor mountain area that used to rely solely on agriculture to the hometown of the cute and interesting happiness minister. As a result, Kumamoto Prefecture has attracted domestic and foreign tourists to visit Kumamoto Prefecture.

Frequent outbound visits to drive the input of tourists. As a civil servant, Kumamon is very busy, such as taking part in fashion week shows and Kabuki. Frequent overseas visits have greatly enhanced Kumamon's international popularity and has fans all over the world. In order to understand Kumamon's hometown and taste the tomatoes and strawberries of Kumamon Prefecture, many tourists travel thousands of miles to visit Kumamoto Prefecture. Kumamoto Prefecture has exported a bear to the world, and its popularity has led to Kumamoto Prefecture's tourism.

The surrounding products selling well drives the input of tourists. As a result of Kumamon's free licensing strategy, Kumamoto's peripheral products have soared from thousands to tens of thousands, and their products have also expanded from agricultural products to stationery and packaging. Free licensing strategy and peripheral sales, Kumamoto Prefecture through this cultural business card to reap long-term income, Kumamon also become Japan's "national bear." In order to attain the perimeter of Kumamon's signature, many tourists travel to Kumamon Prefecture and take photos with Kumamon.

4. Conclusion

Nowadays, IP has become more and more influential in the cultural and creative industry, and the emergence of IP marketing has stimulated consumer demand for products and derivatives. As early as 2010, the Kumamoto prefectural government used its local characteristics to create the mascot Kumamon. In order to better publicize, Kumamoto Prefecture integrated its cute image into IP cultural creation, derived a variety of IP peripheral products, and carried out a series of marketing activities. There is no doubt that the Kumamoto IP culture in Kumamoto Prefecture is a successful case. The emergence of this IP has boosted local tourism, developed the local economy, and enhanced the local reputation. Today, Kumamon is not only a resounding business card of Kumamoto Prefecture, but also a representative of local IP. How to integrate local characteristics into IP culture and give full play to its commercial value, we can learn from it.

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