

Research on Tourism Brand Mascot Promotion

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Abstract: With the development of China's tourism industry, the promotion of tourism brand mascots should be further optimized. By improving the promotion of tourism brand mascots, the connotation of tourism can be effectively expanded, so as to attract more consumers to participate in tourism activities. Promoting the mascots of tourism brands from different angles and levels will help increase the popularity of tourism brands and enhance people's understanding of the culture and connotation of tourism brands ^[1]. Therefore, this article will discuss the promotion of tourism brand mascots and put forward several strategies for reference.

Keywords: Tourism brand; Mascot promotion; Strategy

Online publication: August 19, 2022

1. Overview of tourism brand and mascot

1.1. Brand

"Brand" generally refers to a product's trademark. Its origins may be traced back to the western nomads who branded their sheep, cattle, and horses to indicate ownership. The emergence of modern branding and intense commodity rivalry enhances the recognition and competitiveness of enterprise commodities in the market through branding. It also serves as a guarantee for enterprises to their own product quality ^[2]. In 1960, the American Marketing Association defined "brand" as is a name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that allows consumers to differentiate between various products and services.

1.2. Tourism brand

"Tourism brand" refers to the tourism industry's brand, which generally includes tourism enterprises, tourism products, scenic spots, and other brands. The connotation of tourism brand is that it can fully reflect the values, characteristics, and ideological connotations of scenic spots, and it enables consumers to have a clearer understanding of tourism enterprises and scenic spots within a short period of time ^[3]. In addition, as a part of the service industry, tourism enterprises do not only sell tourism products to consumers, but also convey the ideology of the corresponding scenic spot to consumers through rich, diverse, and interesting images. The development of tourism brand may enhance consumers' satisfaction and experience as well as how they perceive the meaning of the brand, thus considerably enhancing the competitive advantage of scenic spots ^[4].

1.3. Mascot

Mascots are visual image elements designed to better publicize tourism enterprises, scenic spots, and tourism products. Designers integrate various elements, such as animals, plants, characters, and virtual objects, with the connotation and ideology of specific tourism brands, and adopt anthropomorphic,

exaggerated, or other methods to design the modeling with specific images ^[5]. A mascot can well express the business philosophy and characteristics of the tourism brand, so as to better convey its cultural concept. In this way, the brand value can be enhanced. Compared with other elements, mascots can attract the attention of consumers, strengthen the impression of consumers toward the tourism brand, effectively reduce the gap between people and the tourism brand, enhance the level of interaction between people and the brand, as well as increase the affinity of the brand image.

2. Advantages of tourism brand mascot promotion

First, the promotion of mascots can enhance the popularity of tourism brands and strengthen consumers' recognition of tourism brands. Although many photos are taken while travelling, tourists hardly ever look at these pictures again after their trips. However, mascots are different; mascots themselves are more intuitive and vivid. Some mascots are made into accessories, so that tourists can attach them to their backpacks or other belongings after traveling; in that way, they would come in contact with these accessories on a daily basis. At the same time, there are also more opportunities for these mascots to be displayed externally, which plays a significant role in improving the efficiency of promotion and increasing the popularity of tourism brands. Furthermore, the promotion of mascots can better attract the attention of consumers as some mascots have unique artistic elements in them ^[6]. In addition to expressing the connotation of tourism brands, they allow consumers to recall pleasant memories of certain scenic spots whenever they come across these mascots, thereby increasing the likelihood of them revisiting these scenic spots.

Second, since most tourism brand mascots are personified images, they can better interact with consumers, thus bridging the gap between tourism brands and consumers and enhancing their desires to learn more about the mascots. Generally speaking, most scenic spots are dominated by natural landscapes and cultural landscapes. When consumers are present at scenic spots, they rarely resonate with these natural landscapes emotionally. Brand mascots are different. They usually take the form of personification, which narrows the gap between consumers and scenic spots, thus improving the level of interaction between them. This plays an extremely important role in promoting consumers' tourism experience. In the long run, their willingness to purchase tourism products will also become stronger. In addition, consumers are more likely to have emotional resonance with mascots, especially anthropomorphic mascots that resemble the human form. This is of great value to enhance the influence of tourism mascots ^[7].

Third, the promotion of tourism brand mascots, as visual cues, enables consumers to achieve visual coherence and heightens the influence of tourism brands on consumers' perception. Generally speaking, there are strong similarities between different scenic spots. In the eyes of consumers, Mount Tai and Mount Huangshan are both, mountains despite their differences. However, with different tourism brands, it is possible to design mascots with more anthropomorphic characteristics and apply them to the promotion work in combination with the cultural connotation of the corresponding scenic spots. This would improve the promotion of tourism brand mascots.

3. Strategies for tourism brand mascot promotion

3.1. Shoot promotional videos to enhance the influence of mascots

Videos created for publicity may be used to enhance the quality that tourist brand mascots are promoted. For example, several designers collaborated with the "Tiger View" mascot and traveled to more than a dozen scenic spots in Fujian to shoot the promotional video "Tiger View! Fujian!", in order to promote the province's excellent scenic spots and strengthen their understanding of its culture. This promotional video tells of Hujian's experiences at various scenic spots. In the video, Hujian is seen playing at those scenic spots, while identifying with his grandfather's intuitive thoughts from across the strait. Through this video,

consumers can interpret the connotation of “tiger view” and understand the culture, food, scenery, and other elements of various scenic spots in Fujian. At the end of the video, a foreigner from Zhangzhou, a city in Fujian Province, appeared across the strait, allowing consumers to empathize with Hujian’s affection for his hometown. This effectively improves the cultural connotation of the promotional video. This video is regarded as Fujian’s most beautiful promotional video ^[8].

When shooting promotional videos, anthropomorphic methods can be used, which effectively enhances the propinquity between mascots and consumers. For instance, Hujian was personified as a little boy who loves his hometown. Allowing him to play about in Fujian’s scenic spots enhances the video’s appeal and highlights his personality. In one scene, a tiger is seen lying in front of a sugar painting booth, refusing to leave. This anthropomorphic image makes the tiger seem more like a child ^[9]. In addition, Hujian is seen riding a bike happily, holding red bayberries using his clothes, tasting local snacks at the snack bar, and sitting on the roadside, while waiting for the bus. Through these lenses, the image of the mascot is enhanced. In the promotional video, Hujian is played by a man in a hood, in which he shakes his head from time to time. His actions bring visual contrast and leave a deep impression on people. When watching the video, people are able to recall the image of the mascot tiger. This promotional video allows people to have a better understanding of the various scenic spots in Fujian ^[10].

3.2. Design mascot derivatives to create economic value

In the promotion of tourism brand mascots, it is possible to restore the livelihood of mascot promotion by designing derivatives. In particular, designing auspicious derivatives can create more economic value for tourism brands ^[6]. For example, the mascot “Hujian” was shown to be successful in the tourism commodity competition in 2016 and was widely praised by the public. It virtually opened the market for Fujian tourism brand mascots. Many people began to travel to Fujian after seeing the mascot; they even purchased souvenirs that are embodied with this mascot ^[11]. Over time, the design team developed many variants for this mascot. Other dolls, phone casings, postcards, and other items are coupled with its image. The design team has also successively launched new design categories, including neck pillows and mouse pads. The majority of netizens adore Hujian’s expression bag as well. From here, it can be appreciated that designing mascot derivatives would not only heighten the influence of mascots, but also create more economic value for tourism brands ^[12].

When designing mascot derivatives, in addition to thinking from the perspective of tourism brands and designing corresponding derivatives in line with their characteristics, it is also necessary to analyze and design mascot derivatives from regional and cultural levels, so as to ensure that the derivatives are fitting and the needs of local consumers are met, thus laying a solid foundation for the promotion of mascot derivatives. From here, it can be seen that the promotion of mascot derivatives is also crucial in the establishment of tourism brands, which plays an important role in creating economic value for them ^[13].

3.3. Utilize the network to enhance the promotion effect

In addition to selling mascots and their derivatives offline, the network should also be utilized to promote tourism brand mascots. At present, China’s new media technology is developing rapidly. By using the internet, the promotion effect can be enhanced ^[14]. For example, social media videos, movies, dramas, and short videos can be used to display tourism brand mascots. This would gradually form a value chain and eventually trigger the promotion effect of mascots. In addition, tourism brands can also cooperate with media companies to further improve the promotion effect by arranging promotion contents in subways, office building elevators, and other locations.

For example, in promoting the mascot “Qishi” in Xuexiang, a WeChat official account and microblogs were used. News of the mascot were updated on these sites to interact with netizens. In addition, photos

and videos of the interaction between tourists and mascots can also be uploaded onto the internet, so as to create a topic that garners public opinion. Following the heightened publicity influence of Xuexiang's mascot, an official website of "China's Snow Township" was launched. In addition to uploading videos and pictures taken in Xuexiang on the mobile application ^[15], consumers can purchase tickets, book hotels, and reserve restaurants in Xuexiang using the application. Moreover, using this application allows travelers to better plan their itinerary and reduce the probability of visiting unfamiliar places. Utilizing the network, the sale of mascots can be done via Taobao stores, thus realizing the purpose of integrated network and entity marketing ^[16].

3.4. Design tourist souvenirs to promote local culture

In fact, modern tourism is not only a simple economic activity, but also a cultural activity. Therefore, when promoting tourism brand mascots, it is not only necessary to publicize the sceneries and food offered by a specific tourism brand, but also its culture, so as to enhance the cultural confidence of the tourism brand and enable tourists to experience pleasure at the spiritual level while overlooking the beautiful scenery and enjoying delicious food ^[17]. It is possible to promote local culture by designing tourist souvenirs. In the process of designing these souvenirs, it is not only important to reflect the local cultural characteristics, but also ensure that these souvenirs are in line with the trend of the times. In addition, it is also necessary to consider the psychology and characteristics of consumers, so as to better explore the features of tourism culture ^[18].

For example, many buildings in Xuexiang are snow wooden houses, decorated with saffron cloth, red lanterns, and other accessories. Most of the souvenirs sold in the market are necklaces and handmade bags derived from these elements. In addition, most tourists visiting Xuexiang are families with their children. Therefore, when designing souvenirs, not only the traditional style should be retained, but also the addition of mascot elements to school supplies, daily necessities, and other relevant items.

3.5. Launch promotional activities to improve the quality of promotion

In promoting tourism brand mascots, displaying them in shopping malls, squares, and other places may improve the quality of promotion ^[19]. For example, when promoting Xuexiang's mascot, a model can be built reflecting the environment of Xuexiang, and then "Qishi" can be included in the model itself. This model allows people to move around freely, especially children. In addition, children are allowed to take pictures with the mascot for free, and subsequently the photos are printed for them. This plays an important role in promoting its tourism brand. In addition, it is also possible to carry out promotional activities by placing mascots in buildings. For example, a model of mascots can be set up at the central building of the square. Giant mascots may leave a deep impression in people's hearts. By carrying out promotional activities, the quality of promotion can be improved ^[20].

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, in order to improve the promotion effect of tourism brand mascots, promotional videos can be used to enhance the influence of mascots, mascot derivatives can be designed to create economic value, the network can be utilized to enhance the promotion effect, tourist souvenirs can be designed to promote local culture, and promotional activities can be held to improve the quality of promotion, thus bringing the promotion effect of tourism brand mascots to new heights ^[20].

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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