

# Research on Marketing Strategy Based on Consumer Behavior—Taking S Company as an Example

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**Abstract:** The snack food industry has developed rapidly in China in recent years. As the market's demand for snack food is increasing, the output has also increased rapidly. However, the snack food industry started late in China, the production capacity and production level of snack food enterprises need to be improved, and there is a certain homogenization of snack food. Faced the snack food market that compete intensively, it is necessary for snack food companies to arm themselves with marketing theories to formulate marketing strategies, and improve their market competitiveness. In paper, company S is taken as the research object, combining the marketing environment and the company's sales status, Consumer Behavior Theory and marketing theory are adopted, empirical analysis and statistics on the obtained relevant data were carried out, and safeguard measures suitable for company S's marketing strategy from the perspective of 4C marketing theory was proposed, including strategies to meet consumer needs, to reduce consumer costs, to provide shopping convenience, and to improve effective communication with consumers. In this way, the company S can obtain a longer-term development in the fierce market competition, and at the same time, it can guide the enterprises similar to the company S to formulate effective marketing activities in line with their own development.

**Keywords:** Snack Food, Consumer Behavior, Marketing Theory

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## 1. Introduction

Snack food is the food that people enjoy in their leisure time. The snack foods on the market are roughly classified into the following categories, namely, roasted nuts, puffed foods, jelly, preserved fruits, confectionery, meat, dried fruits and vegetables, etc. This paper mainly studies the snack foods of roasted nuts and seeds. Marketing strategies has played an important role in the field of snack food industry, and marketing channels have also ushered in new opportunities, for example, the government continues to increase its support for the development of snack food. However, the marketing of snack food, as an emerging product, faces both opportunities and challenges. This requires enterprises to continuously strive to improve consumers' awareness of snack foods, but also to improve their products, deepen marketing channels,

make brands bigger and stronger, and focus on product research and development, so as to provide customers with better customer experience. Only through these can we continuously promote the sustainable and healthy development of Chinese snack food industry. At present, although China has carried out research on the field of marketing, it is still in the initial stage, and most of them focus on the research of marketing theory. Meanwhile, the application of marketing theory is relatively less and a complete marketing system has not been formed. Especially from the perspective of consumers, there are few research results on marketing that study the influencing factors of snack food purchasing behavior. Most marketing research in China has focused on upgrading industrial equipment, enhancing production technology, improving product supply chain and corporate market layout. The power that truly determines the development of the snack food industry lies in

the hands of consumers. Aiming at the current situation of company S's marketing, with the help of modern marketing theory, through the research of consumer behavior theory, this paper conducts research on the influencing factors of consumer purchasing behavior of snack food, aiming to make a thorough analysis of the influencing factors of consumers' purchase behavior, and through in-depth empirical analysis, new research results of Chinese consumer behavior theory are obtained.

Regarding the research on marketing, Professor Philip Kotler, the master of marketing who is known as the "father of modern marketing", made an incisive summary in *"Marketing Management"* that marketing is not just the work of a certain department, but a management process that needs to cooperate with multiple departments [1]. In the early 1960s, Jerome McCarthy, a well-known American marketing expert, classified and summarized the various factors affecting marketing in his book *"Basic Marketing"* and summarized them into four elements: Product, Price, Place and Promotion, which is the famous 4P marketing theory [2]. In the early 1990s, American scholar Robert Lauterborn put forward the 4C marketing theory under the evolution and development of the 4P marketing theory, mainly as follows: Production evolved into Consumer, Price evolved into Cost, Place evolved into Convenience, Promotion evolved into Communication. Zhao Shihong believes that it is difficult for small and medium-sized enterprises to suit the developing economic environment if they always imitate marketing strategies, and enterprises should carry out effective marketing innovations. Effective marketing innovation includes not only the innovation of marketing ideas, but also the innovation of marketing talents [7]. Li Lin made a functional analysis of marketing and emphasized four aspects: market research, production and supply relationship, commodity sales channel process, and public relations [10]. Yu Qiu pointed out that when SMEs intend to formulate their marketing strategies, they should cooperate with large enterprises and get help from the technologies and brands of large enterprises to achieve economic expansion of SMEs [11].

Regarding the research on consumer behavior, David Loudon proposed that many aspects of consumers can have an impact on the research and analysis of consumers' purchasing behavior, these aspects include consumers' cognitive situation, consumers' learning ability, consumers' Attitude status and consumer decision-making and feedback [3]. Vohs & Faber research proposed that the external environment stimulates and affects consumers' shopping desire, spending and purchasing decision to a relatively important degree [4]. Western economics masters Pindyck and Rubinfeld (RS Spindyck, DL Rubinfeld) put forward in the book *"Microeconomics"* that the maximization of consumers' own consumption needs, preferences and their own economic ability levels can influence consumers to choose the most suitable purchasing behavior for them [5]. Tang Xiaojing and Wang Dan conducted related research on consumer behavior from three aspects, including: consumption behavior and its influencing factors, precautionary savings, and the development trend of rural residents' consumption behavior

[8]. Wang Wei believes that in real life, factors such as income, geography, society, and family all affect consumers' purchasing behavior [9]. Wang Lijun proposed that enterprises can improve their credibility in various ways to win the favor of consumers [12]. Li Hui believes that enterprises must innovate and build their own characteristic brands, only in this way can they remain invincible in market competition [6].

## 2. Problems and Analysis

Company S is a private company limited by shares mainly engaged in the production, processing and sales of roasted seeds and nuts and other nuts and seeds. A series of branded roasted seeds and nuts processed by this company, including black melon seeds, pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds and peanuts, are favored by consumers. The main marketing model adopted by company S is the traditional model of regional agents. The main job of marketing is to recruit regional agents, who will develop dealers, distributors and retail teams. So that sales branches have been set up in many places, and there are more than 60 dealers and agents nationwide. Company S mainly has the following problems:

First, in the aspect of consumer strategy, the position of customer needs is not accurate. Since the snack food industry has developed rapidly in China in recent years, marketing has become more and more important for company S. As a key food company in the local city, company S must closely focus on consumers when formulating corresponding product marketing strategies. Company S should think about problems from the perspective of consumers, take consumers as the problem orientation, abandon the previous status quo dominated by their own enterprises, change ideas in a timely manner, excavate consumer needs, and focus on meeting the needs and desires of consumers and so on. Only when the company truly understands above measures can it achieve final success. Company S directly supplies the food produced by the company to the market for sales but without in-depth understanding of consumers' cognition of the company's products, without in-depth understanding of consumers' needs, and without excavating and responding to consumers' potential needs. At present, companies generally rely on traditional marketing experience to conduct product marketing management, and determine the company's products based on the products of other companies with similar products in the same industry. However, this often leads to a result of inaccurate product positioning, and it is difficult to find a marketable product. This is because there is a deviation between the products produced by the enterprise and the real needs of consumers, resulting in the product not being recognized by the consumer market, and stress occurs in product sales. For example, there are different troubles such as the product types are not enough, the product packaging is not exquisite, the product brand is not vivid, the product has a single taste, the product price is slightly higher, the product promotion activities are few, and the product packaging specifications are unreasonable. In recent years, with the continuous changes in consumer taste needs, more and more

people are not limited to the two traditionally common snack foods, melon seeds and peanuts, but they prefer novel snack food which is tasted fresher, more flavorful, and more delicious. Company S only produces melon seeds and peanuts, obviously, the product types are too simple, and the choice on taste is too limited, only with original and sweet flavors. Moreover, the outer packing of company S's snack food is too simple, and the translucent bag design reduces consumers' purchasing desire, it is far from enough to use only Chinese characters to display the company's brand image. There are not many promotion activities for snack food of company S, whose price is not low compared to big brands such as Qia Qia and Three Squirrels, and company S's product packaging specifications are relatively small, which cannot meet the different needs of different customers.

Second, in the aspect of cost strategy, the cost that consumers are willing to pay is not well understood. Traditional snack food companies generally set prices with reference to the products of companies in the same industry or based on the relationship between supply and demand. This traditional pricing method is based on the theory of market supply and demand, and the price of commodities will fluctuate around the value. From the perspective of the 4C theory, this product pricing strategy violates the market-oriented principle. Company S adopted market pricing behavior without conducting in-depth research to understand the actual cost of products that consumers are willing to pay, or making an accurate positioning of the value scale of the company's products in the minds of consumers. The positioning of the price should be consistent with the positioning of the product. The pricing of the product in Company S does not consider the factors that affect the pricing, which include the quality of the product, the strength of promotion, the middlemen and market competition. Company S should finally set the sales price of snack food by analyzing a variety of pricing factors, deeply understand consumers' price expectations for snack food, consider multiple factors, and then determine an appropriate pricing method.

Third, there is the problem with the convenience strategy - there are few convenient ways to buy the product. In the traditional sales of products, company S mainly adopts the supply mode of supplying products to shopping malls, supermarkets and wholesale markets, which do not cover the entire urban area, resulting in it is not particularly convenient for consumers to purchase. Company S should provide consumers with more purchasing way, focus on supporting the development of e-commerce platforms, and try to cover all areas as much as possible. Since there are still relatively few channels for purchasing products, the purchasing channels of consumers are limited. And due to the singularity of packaging specifications, it limits consumers' demand for products of various specifications. Therefore, company S should add a variety of different product specifications to improve the convenience of consumers to purchase products and enhance consumers' product experience.

Fourth, in the aspect of communication strategy, it is inconvenient for customers to buy products of company S.

The communication link plays a crucial role in the product marketing process of company S. Communication is not only a language but also an art. It is related to the final step of whether the product is sold or not. Therefore, if in the process of communication, marketing personnel cannot communicate effectively with consumers, it will directly lead to the failure of the transaction, thereby affecting the sales of the products. Company S mainly adopts a very traditional marketing method that is directly supplying the products to the dealers, and then selling goods in supermarkets or wholesale markets to let customers choose and buy freely. In this process, there is no salesperson, and there is a lack of active communication with customers. In this case, customers may not be able to further understand the efficacy of snack foods. Promotions are in dire need of change. Taking the work of promotion activities as an example, the current promotion strategy adopted by company S is to combine the differences of sales regions, and consider the actual situation of its own products to carry out corresponding promotion activities as well as localized promotion. Since these promotion links and nodes are not concentrated enough, in terms of the integration situation in this regard, company S is not doing very well. In addition, it has not been able to combine the current social hotspots in time for promotion; on the other hand, in the holiday promotion activities period, company S did not have its own unique promotion method, but just like most brands following the trend without personality, and did not integrate its own brand culture into promotional activities. Thus advertising needs to be strengthened. From the perspective of advertising, the main measures taken by company S are relatively general: they do not take different advertising work according to different regions, and the measures taken for regions with relatively high brand recognition and relatively low brand recognition are the same, which causes the problems of no focusing of the advertising work. Company S has certain limitations in brand positioning and advertising work, it has not adjusted its advertising according to different regions and different media. Moreover, company S lacks a clear strategy and does not make full use of relevant means to maximize brand and cultural publicity.

To sum up, in the marketing work of company S, it should take the corporate strategy as the direction, position the brand of its own enterprise, and carry out the integration of the brand marketing strategy according to the market demand and combining the actual situation of its own enterprise. Company S will solve all the existing problems so as to maximize the utilization of resources, enhance the brand's popularity and loyalty, gain the favor of more consumers, occupy more market shares, and promote the sustainable development of the enterprise.

### 3. Suggestion

By using the PEST analysis model and Porter's five forces model to analyze the marketing environment, status quo and the main problems of company S, the main factors affecting consumers' purchase of leisure food are investigated and

analyzed in the form of questionnaires, and finally the empirical analysis is used to process and analyze the obtained data, and draw empirical conclusions. According to the results of statistical analysis, I think that company S should consider multiple aspects when formulating product marketing strategies, in order to meet the different consumption needs of consumer groups. From the perspective of 4C marketing theory, this paper puts forward the marketing strategies and suggestions of snack food enterprises from the following perspectives.

First, the strategy to meet consumer demand. (1) Strictly control the quality of products. Product quality is the lifeline of an enterprise. Once the products produced by the enterprise have quality problems, it will lead to immeasurable consequences. Based on this situation, enterprises should put the quality of products in a key position, and invest more financial, human and material resources in product quality assurance, implement comprehensive monitoring of product quality, increase consumer trust. It can help dispel the worries of the consumers if enterprises can do what we suggest above. If possible, try to strictly control the quality of raw materials from the starting source of the product. (2) To enrich the types of products and meet the needs of different consumers. For example, pistachios, walnuts, almonds, macadamia nuts and pecans, which are preferred by consumers, can be introduced or developed to meet the needs of different consumers. (3) The combination of innovative products. Based on the research and analysis of the consumer market, it can timely and effectively grasp the demand changes of consumer groups, and provide product combinations according to the different needs of consumers. Company S should innovate the combination of products according to the needs of consumers, such as producing nut sprees with different nut types and Daily Nut Packages with mixed nut types, etc., in order to meet the different needs of consumers, maximize benefits, expand market share, and win consumers. (4) Improve product packaging. Through market research and analysis, it is known that consumers are more inclined to buy bagged snack foods, which are safer and more hygienic, and secondly, consumers have a high degree of recognition of boxed snack foods with elegant packaging, which can be given as gifts to relatives and friends during the holidays. While bulk and canned are generally popular with consumers. The main reason may be that consumers have doubts about the safety of bulk packaging. The canned food is inconvenient to open and cannot be kept fresh for a relatively long time. Therefore, company S should consider more consumers' preferences and carry out differentiated product packaging, which should be mainly based on bag packaging, supplemented by box packaging, and less supplemented by bulk and canned packaging. In the process of packaging, it is necessary to carry out a unique design of the shape packaging to make the product look more high-grade, enhance the image of the product, and attract consumers to buy. (5) Build the brand image of the product. Company S should learn like the Three Squirrels brand. Relevant studies have shown that the target consumer groups of the Three Squirrels are concentrated in the consumers under

35 years old. The company uses the three cartoon squirrels as the brand image spokesperson, which are lively and lovely in shape and bright in color. The company anthropomorphized and personalized the three cartoon squirrels, making them distinctive and representative, attracting the attention of consumers, and expanding their brand influence. Company S can also refer to the communication methods of the Three Squirrels brand, strive to create a healthy and full corporate brand image, attract more personalized consumers, and meet consumers' longing needs for a better life, thereby further enhance product market competition.

Second, the strategy to reduce consumer cost. (1) Adjust product pricing. In response to consumer feedback, company S can set differentiated price strategies for products. Set up products with multiple packages and different price for consumers to choose, so that consumers at different levels have multiple choices to buy the products they need. Set the price of the product according to the purchase cost that different consumers are willing to pay, and then adopt differentiated pricing strategies. The price can be set according to the quality, packaging, and product specifications of different snack foods. For example, some products with lower quality, general packaging, and smaller specifications can be sold at a discount price or at low prices in the store. For products with better quality, generous packaging and slightly larger product specifications, the corresponding higher price can be set up, and some special counters can be set up to meet the needs of different consumers. At the same time, enterprises should also adopt differentiated pricing for the supply of convenience stores, open-air vendors and supermarkets, taking into account not only the needs of consumers in the low-end market, but also the needs of the general public. (2) Set up a product promotion mechanism. Snack food companies must focus on the needs of female consumers in order to increase product sales. According to research, female consumers are more likely to like discounts and "gifts" regardless of their financial strength. For the low-end series of products, the bundled gifts are mainly practical, with high quality, the splendid but useless ones should be abandoned. For mid-to-high-end products, the choice of gifts must be refined and in line with the taste of high-end consumers. In terms of discounts and promotions, corresponding discount prices can be formulated according to the amount of purchases by consumers.

Third, the strategy to provide shopping convenience. (1) The convenience for consumers to obtain information. Before consumers buy snack foods, they usually learn about snack foods through various channels, including books and magazines, online publicity, TV media, recommendations from relatives and friends, and introductions from salespeople, etc. According to the analysis and survey, consumers who obtain information through online publicity channels have the highest frequency of buying snack foods, which is in line with the nature of today's Internet Age, and it is more convenient for consumers to obtain information from online channels; followed by media publicity, mainly TV, Radio advertising is still an important means of communication today; then, it is the recommendation of relatives and friends, consumers trust

relatives and friends more, and the information obtained from them is more convincing. When company S spreads its snack food information, it can first use online publicity or media advertising to promote the conversion of consumers' purchasing behavior. (2) Improve offline sales channels. At present, the places where consumers buy snack food offline are mainly supermarkets and convenience stores. Most of the large supermarkets occupy a good geographical location and have many sales staff with high professional level, which makes it easier to gain the trust of consumers. In addition, product taste has a significant impact on consumers' behavior of purchasing snack foods, indicating that consumers are more concerned about the freshness of snack foods. Large supermarkets have better storage conditions, making it easier to maintain the taste of snack foods. Therefore, when company S expands its offline sales channels, it needs to enter more large supermarkets and convenience stores. In addition, company S can consider establishing a brand store, which can mainly reduce the cost of marketing. Also, it can improve the grade of products, enhance the purchasing experience of consumers, lift the brand awareness, and conduct invisible publicity for the brand through the display of the brand store windows. Besides supermarkets and convenience stores, it can also try to expand its sales channels in more different venues such as KTVs and bars. (3) Strengthen the online sales network. Enterprises should improve the function and experience of the official website, beautify the website design, and better show the product image to consumers. Secondly, strengthen the investment in the operation of Taobao Enterprise Store, Tmall Flagship Store and Jingdong Flagship Store. It is necessary to expand the e-commerce operation team, recruit more operation talents, and optimize the products on the e-commerce platform, including keyword optimization, page beautification, no negative reviews, and after-sales guarantees. In addition, some paid promotions such as Taobao Express, Taobao Spreader and other similar ones can be adopted to increase the display of products and attract more consumers. Besides, pay attention to social media marketing. Nowadays, with the rapid development of the Internet, platforms emerge one after another. Weibo, WeChat, blogs, communities, Douyin, and live stream have all become new battlefields for companies to promote products. Therefore, enterprises should pay attention to the operation of these social media platforms and strive to obtain the greatest victory in new media marketing methods. (4) The reasonable product packaging specifications. The packaging of the product is also an important factor affecting the consumer experience. Company S can pack according to the needs of consumers, neither inconvenient to take because of large quantities, nor frequent shopping because of small quantities, so as to facilitate consumers' purchases.

Fourth, the strategy to improve effective communication with consumers. (1) Set up brand and product video promotion points. Consumers mainly buy snack foods through supermarkets and convenience stores, so TV spots can be set up in these locations to broadcast information about the development of corporate brands, the processing links of

snack food production, and leisure food. It can not only expand the brand awareness of the product, but also allow consumers to feel the safety and hygiene of snack food processing links. By allowing consumers to see the production process of products more intuitively, reach certain communication with consumers, in order to attract more people, and then influence consumers' purchasing decisions. And through the video playback of snack food related information, consumers can more intuitively and comprehensively understand the nutrition and efficacy of snack food. (2) Improve the professional level of sales staff. Enterprises should cultivate a professional promotion team and hire people with sales experience and high quality to serve as full-time salesmen. They can wear clothing with a brand image during communication work, which not only allows consumers to obtain professional information interpretation auditory, but also obtain more potential information visually. These promoters need to undergo systematic training, not only to master the efficacy of the product, but also to understand the basic functions of the product. Through the professional image of these sales staff, the company can gain more trust and favor from consumers, thereby increasing their recognition of the brand. In addition, when selling on an online e-commerce platform, the service attitude of customer service staff should also be paid attention to, they must provide good service not only before the sale, but also after the sale, answering consumers' questions in a timely manner and taking the initiative to help consumers dispel their doubts. So as to enhance consumers' purchasing motivation, and firmly grasp every customer through good service attitude and professional skills. (3) Strengthen communication with channel distributors. In the marketing process of snack food companies, distributors occupy an important position, for they directly connect with the sales platform and are closest to consumers. Once the snack food company cannot supervise and manage distributors in time, it may affect the sales of the company's products. For example, if the product is not placed well, it may cause consumers to choose other products when buying snack food; and it may also cause product price increases in some areas because of lack of communication and coordination with distributors, which will further lead to a crisis of consumer confidence in the company as well as its products. In a short, communication and coordination with dealers should be placed in an important position, and marketing personnel should fully understand the latest marketing activities of products in a timely manner, adjust the company's promotional strategies timely, in order to increase product sales.

#### 4. Conclusion

The competition between snack food enterprises is increasingly intense and snack food market develops rapidly in recent years. In future, if enterprises want to always reach their sales target and achieve a steady increase in sales and profits, they must formulate marketing strategies and make the adjustment promptly according to the practical condition.

The key for enterprises to win the market is to formulate effective marketing strategies, and the spending behavior of consumers affects the effective marketing strategies formulated by enterprises. Therefore, the research on marketing strategies based on spending behavior has a certain theoretical and practical value. From the perspective of consumers, this paper analyzes the influencing factors of consumer behavior, investigates and analyzes the main influencing factors of consumers' purchase of snack food in the form of questionnaire survey, analyzes the data by empirical analysis, and puts forward corresponding marketing strategy suggestions combined with 4C marketing theory. If snack food enterprises can do what we suggest above, we think they can obtain more long-term development in the fierce market competition.

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