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Evaluating the Effectiveness of Want Want Group's Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) Campaign during Chinese New Year 2022

Yuan Xuan Xin^{1,*}

¹ Department of Collingwood Durham University, Durham, United Kingdom

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ABSTRACT

It is vital for businesses to run Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) campaigns in order to communicate with their target audience in an efficient manner. During the course of this research, a critical evaluation of the IMC campaign that Wants Want Group developed in conjunction with the 2022 Chinese New Year event will take place. The decision analytics of this research is to assess the goals and effectiveness of the campaign, as well as to provide an explanation of the consumer demographics that are being targeted by the campaign, therefore demonstrating understanding of the strategies used to segment markets. In addition, our research will make use of relevant theories to assist our analysis and will conduct an analysis of the benefits and drawbacks of the media channels used by the Want Want Group. The results show Want Want's IMC campaign for the 2022 Chinese New Year was effective in establishing an emotional connection with its audience and in increasing holiday sales. The campaign was successful in accomplishing its objectives of increasing brand recognition, customer loyalty, and customer base by using a range of promotional strategies.

1. Introduction

It is vital for businesses to run Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) campaigns in order to communicate with their target audience in an efficient manner [1-3]. IMC campaigns combine a number of different promotional strategies, such as advertising, public relations, promotion, and direct marketing, in order to provide a coherent message to the target demographic [4]. These strategies all work together to achieve this goal. In addition, businesses are able to reach a broader audience when they use a variety of media platforms, such as television, social media, print media, posters, and events [5]. During the course of this research, a critical evaluation of the IMC campaign that Wants Want Group developed in conjunction with the 2022 Chinese New Year event will take place. The purpose of this research is to assess the goals and effectiveness of the campaign, as well as to provide an explanation of the consumer demographics that are being targeted by the campaign,

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: yuxuan.xin@durham.ac.uk

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therefore demonstrating understanding of the strategies used to segment markets. In addition, our research will make use of relevant theories to assist our analysis and will conduct an analysis of the benefits and drawbacks of the media channels used by the Want Want Group.

According to Lin *et al.*, [6] the executive vice president of the public relations company Rogers & Cowan, contends that marketing and social media are so linked that public relations cannot operate independently. Zaas makes this assertion in response to the question of whether or not public relations can function independently. In addition, academic research reveals that celebrity endorsement is the most effective marketing communication approach for creating favourable brand attitudes [7-9]. This is according to studies published in Chan *et al.*, [7] Pradhan *et al.*, [8] and Martínez-López *et al.*, [9] Want Want Group's Chinese New Year campaign included a Public Relations (PR) component, the focus of which was on using social media in order to develop a connection between the firm and its audience that was mutually advantageous to both parties. On social media, a significant amount of effort was put into promoting a limited gift box that was co-branded with Jackson Wang as an influencer for the Year of the Tiger. Jackson Wang's aesthetic was more suited for contemporary fashion than it was for the traditional snack manufacturer Wants Want Group. As a result of the mismatch between the brand and the influencer, as well as the expensive packaging and the tiny number of snacks that were included in the gift box, many customers gave a negative reaction.

Although the PR campaign was successful in generating more awareness and views on social media, it was not successful in generating good impressions of the business. This highlights the importance of picking the right influencer for a business as well as making sure that the marketing is acceptable for the product and the image of the brand. Elders or youngster stars who have performed classic works, in conjunction with low-priced and inexpensive gift packages, would have been better candidates for the Want Want Group's influencers. Therefore, public relations campaigns have the potential to play a big part in the development of brand awareness as well as reputation; nevertheless, it is essential to ensure that the campaign is congruent with the image of the company and is appealing to the target audience.

During its Chinese New Year campaign, the Want Want Group used several sales promotion strategies, such as in-store promotions at a number of different supermarkets [2,3]. In order to bring in new customers, the firm used a variety of marketing tactics, such as enormous posters, in-depth product displays, gift packages for the Chinese New Year, and product samples aimed specifically at children. Additionally, Want Want offered entertaining promotions, such as inexpensive prize packs that were combined with food, raffles, and a customer loyalty programme that rewarded repeat purchases [10].

Over the course of the last few years, there has been a substantial development in both the understanding and attitudes of consumers about environmentally friendly or "green" goods [11]. According to Liu *et al.*, [12] even though customers typically have favourable views towards green consumption and environmental concerns, it may be difficult to put these concepts into practise. This is despite the fact that consumers generally have positive attitudes regarding green consumption and environmental concerns. In spite of its success, the sales promotion campaign for Want Want resulted in a chaotic scene due to the abundance of flyers on the floor of the grocery store and in the trash, which had a negative impact on the reputation of the brand. The issue of consumer knowledge and attitudes towards sustainable products is relevant to the flaws in Want Want's sales promotion campaign. In view of altering client trends and attitudes towards sustainably sourced and environmentally friendly products, Want Want has to adjust its business practises to prevent harming the image of its brand. An example of an eco-friendly advertising technique that minimises waste and indicates an attention to protecting the environment is Mengniu's use of projectors to display adverts

on white walls. Want Want should investigate the possibility of combining environmentally friendly goods and business practises into its marketing campaigns in order to boost customer pride in the brand and commitment to the preservation of the natural environment.

Consequently, during the campaign for the Chinese New Year in 2022, the sales promotion strategy used by the Want Want Group successfully drew customers who were looking for value. However, in order to maintain a positive brand image and adapt to changing customer trends, Want Want has to seriously consider incorporating environmentally friendly and sustainable sales practises into its operations.

2. Methodology

2.1 Case Study

The Want Want Group is a multinational food company that focuses on the manufacturing of a variety of snack foods, drinks, and ready-to-eat meals. Since its inception in 1962, the company has extended its scope of activities to include the countries of China, Japan, and Malaysia [13]. Throughout the whole of the Chinese New Year in 2022, Want Want Group ran promotions for its many goods by using a variety of Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) strategies. They developed an engaging marketing campaign by capitalising on the customary Chinese New Year ritual, in which consumers purchase New Year's items and give presents to one another, as well as the growing trend of family get-togethers. This resulted in the creation of a captivating marketing campaign. The firm advertised its products through social media, which is a method that is both efficient and relatively affordable and can be used to communicate with a large number of people. In addition to this, they made use of public relations promotional strategies such as press releases, event sponsorships, and influencer marketing in order to pique consumers' interests in their items and encourage conversation about those products. In addition, Want Want Group participated in offline sales promotion activities, such as discounts and giveaways, in order to persuade customers to make purchases of their goods. The company wanted to reach a wider audience and reaffirm the message it was trying to convey, so it distributed a series of advertisements across several digital channels, including television and social media accounts.

The marketing communications mix refers to the assortment of communication channels and methods that a company use in order to promote its goods or services to certain demographics of consumers. According to Rowley [14], the combination often includes elements such as advertising, sales promotion, public relations, personal selling, and direct marketing. In the following parts, an analysis of the development of Want Want Group's 2022 Chinese New Year campaign will be presented, focusing on the various target audiences and distribution channels.

Campaigns for the 2022 Chinese New Year that were run by Want Want Group targeted a range of populations. The target demographics were families with children of all ages, teens, young adults, and senior citizens. The majority of the company's offers are low-priced snacks that are consumed on a daily basis. These snacks are targeted mostly towards customers with lower incomes. The company used market segmentation tactics in order to personalise its communications and media platforms for individuals of varying ages. For example, the business advertised snack packets in a festive New Year's Chinoiserie-wrapped design in an effort to persuade younger consumers to buy presents for their families. Because teenagers are often the ones responsible for buying food for their families, this strategy is a good one to use. In addition, the company disseminated brochures containing traditional New Year's words, which were targeted at the senior population. By focusing on reaching such a vast audience, Want Want Group was able to capitalise not just on the time-

honored custom of giving gifts during Chinese New Year but also on the current trend of holding family get-togethers.

3. Results

Want Want Group is a corporation that places a significant emphasis on advertising and commits a significant portion of its resources to this endeavour [15]. The company has, over the course of many years, developed an extremely successful advertising campaign that has helped to firmly establish its brand image in the minds of its clientele. The majority of Want Want's advertisements involve parents or other adults acting as role models by buying items for their children, exhibiting moral principles, or expressing care for their well-being. These advertisements use terms that rhyme and are catchy in order to emphasise good fortune and communicate aspirations for financial success. The marketing video for the company's New Year's greetings, for example, features a conversation between a grandpa and his grandson. During the conversation, the grandson expresses his expectations for good fortune in the new year by using the Mandarin term "wang," which literally translates to "good fortune."

Commercials for Want Want are often shown during programmes that are appropriate for children and families, such as after the daily weather report, which is a time of day when families usually gather together to watch television. Want Want's advertising technique subtly persuades customers that sharing Want Want products with family members not only improves family bonds and cohesiveness but also meets their need for financial security for their families. However, the company must remain current with the latest trends and attract a younger audience by adopting creative concepts. For example, the company's social media advertising efforts should include the use of animation and strategies that include brainwashing.

In order to obtain the most possible awareness across all of their initiatives, Want Want keeps their social media accounts very active and updates them often. According to Stafford and Stafford [16], the company encourages individuals to think more deeply about its goods and form more favourable views towards them by using advertising content that is unique and creative. For instance, the company's advertising campaign on social media uses tiger cubs and terms that suggest brainwashing in order to appeal to a younger demographic of consumers. However, in order to avoid losing the favour of younger customers, the firm has to keep its relevance and brand image in good shape [17].

On the other hand, Want Want's constant and well-known advertising technique has been shown to be successful, and its earlier advertisements are still warmly recalled by young Chinese people today. A new series of columns will be introduced as part of Want Want's new marketing campaign for the New Year. These columns will concentrate on the use of Want Want products to make traditional decorations. Want Want milk candies, for instance, may be repurposed into hair cards; Want Want red envelopes, on the other hand, can be turned into lanterns; and Want Want milk can be turned into firecrackers. Research reveals that consumers are hesitant to share their location and privacy [6], which may make it impossible for the firm to need players to identify their area and particular traditions in order to participate in the lottery [18]. Nonetheless, the company requires that players do so. To encourage more customers to take part in Want Want's activities, the company may use an anonymity scheme or make it voluntary for participants to reveal their location and any unique traditions they observe [19]. In addition, the business needs to resolve a recent issue in which it was found guilty of false advertising and fined 15,300 RMB. According to China News Network, 2022, the company was found to have falsely advertised the high calcium and high-quality protein content of Want Want milk, despite the fact that the NRV of protein was determined to be lower

than the Chinese standard of 10% protein per 100mL. The public relations team has to respond quickly and use crisis management strategies in order to win back the confidence of consumers.

In February of 2022, the Want Want Group launched an integrated marketing campaign with the intention of incorporating its two brands into the "family reunion" concept that was associated with the Chinese New Year. The campaign's primary focus was on conveying the brand ideas of "Love & Sweet" and "Family & Happiness" via the integration of time-honored culture with cutting-edge technology. The campaign was very well received, and it helped drive sales to all-time highs throughout the Christmas season. The target demographic for this campaign was made up of young people of all ages. Want Want's media channels used a number of different promotional methods in order to appeal to clients of a wide range of ages across a variety of media platforms. These strategies included TV ads, social media, in-store promotions, and others [20].

The AIDA model, the Cultural Exchange Theory model, and the SWOT model were used in the analysis of the success of the campaign. According to Hassan *et al.*, [2] the AIDA model is a technique that is often used in the marketing industry. The AIDA model indicated that Want Want's media channels captured the attention of customers, stimulated the consumers' interest, and simplified the consumers' ability to make purchase choices. In addition, the Want Want Group utilises the Cultural Exchange Theory by marketing its products and services via the utilisation of cultural events and symbols. In this advertising campaign, the company is making use of the traditional Chinese zodiac as a cultural emblem in order to promote a variety of its goods. Want Want Group made use of the fact that each year of the Chinese zodiac corresponds to a certain animal in order to create one-of-a-kind designs for the packaging of its Rice Crackers and Chewy Candy products. The campaign's objective is to convey to the general public the brand ideas of "Love & Sweet" and "Family & Happiness" via the medium of the notion of a "family reunion," which will be based on actual events. The tiger is a symbol of joy and pleasure in ancient Chinese culture. It also denotes power, courage, and wisdom. Because of this, the Want Want Group employed a tiger, which is a symbol of happiness, in its IMC campaign in order to attract the attention of the audience and explain the core idea behind the brand. The Want Want Group's objective was that by forging a link between its wares and traditional Chinese culture, they would be able to increase their sales among Chinese customers who value their cultural heritage and sense of heritage. In addition, the SWOT analysis revealed Want Want's strengths, such as a large audience and a variety of media platforms. It also revealed Want Want's weaknesses, such as intense competition and shifting audience needs, as well as its prospects, such as the growth of emerging markets and digital transformation. Want Want still has to increase the efficacy of its operations and preserve its position by adding more interactive components and engaging the audience more. Despite the fact that the campaign was unique and connected with the public, Want Want still needs to enhance its effectiveness.

The integration of the Want Want Group's two brands into the events surrounding the Chinese New Year is the primary goal of the IMC campaign being run by the Want Want Group. The brand ideas of "Love & Sweet" and "Family & Happiness" have been successfully communicated to the larger audience via the successful merging of traditional cultural components and contemporary technology. This has been made possible through the aforementioned process. Significantly, Want Want's results report revealed that the company's total revenues dropped by 4.8% in 2022 compared to the previous year's numbers. Despite this, sales reached their highest point over the Christmas season, which is evidence that the campaign was successful. Despite having a number of severe problems, a few of the offline and online events were original and struck a chord with the audience's sincere feelings about the New Year's holiday. This demonstrates Want Want's ability to keep up with modern trends and maintain a connection with its audience. However, there is room for improvement in the effectiveness of Want Want's efforts, and in order for the organisation to

maintain its position, it must include a greater number of interactive components in order to keep its audience engaged.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, Want Want's IMC campaign for the 2022 Chinese New Year was effective in establishing an emotional connection with its audience and in increasing holiday sales. The campaign was successful in accomplishing its objectives of increasing brand recognition, customer loyalty, and customer base by using a range of promotional strategies. These techniques included public relations, in-store promotions, social media, television ads, and print media outlets. Weibo, WeChat, and Bilibili were some of the modern media platforms that were used by the IMC campaign in order to reach a broader and younger audience, which was the campaign's primary demographic target. It was decided not to use conventional media channels because of their inability to engage with a younger demographic of audience members. Despite this, there were several limitations that may be addressed in future campaigns. Weibo and WeChat were able to reach a wider audience than the main website of the Want Want Group; nevertheless, they were unable to give a full perspective of the campaign. The main website of the Want Want Group did not allow younger users access. On the other side, Bilibili was effective in reaching a younger audience, in stimulating conversations regarding the Want Want Group and its IMC campaign, and in offering a comprehensive perspective of the campaign. Want Want should find a solution to these limitations in future campaigns by using media channels that are able to reach an audience that is both wide and youthful while also providing a comprehensive perspective of the campaign. Want Want should investigate the possibility of integrating interactive elements into its marketing efforts in order to better engage the company's target audience and boost the effectiveness of the campaigns.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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