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Research on the Construction and Optimization of Haidilao's Service Marketing System Based on the 4C Marketing Strategy

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Abstract. In the context of intensified competition and consumption upgrading in China's catering industry, traditional product-centric marketing has been unable to meet the growing experiential and personalized needs of consumers at this stage. This paper takes Haidilao, a leading Chinese hot pot chain brand famous for its premium, customer-centric service, as the research object. Based on the 4C marketing theory (Customer, Cost, Convenience, Communication), using the case analysis method, this paper systematically analyzes the construction logic and practice path of its service marketing system. The results show that Haidilao has successfully achieved the integration of systematic and humanized service marketing by deeply meeting customer needs, optimizing customer comprehensive costs, improving service convenience, and building a two-way communication mechanism. In addition, this study proposes key challenges such as cost control and service quality balance faced by Haidilao in its rapid national and global expansion, and puts forward targeted optimization suggestions to support its long-term, sustainable development.

Keywords: Haidilao, 4C marketing strategy, customer value, catering management

1. Introduction

4C marketing theory was put forward by lauter Pen, an American scholar. The core of 4C marketing theory is customer-centered, which includes four dimensions: customer satisfaction and experience value creation; Cost - reduce the comprehensive consumption cost of customers; Convenience - improve the convenience of services; Communication - establish a two-way emotional connection between the enterprise and customers. This is clearly different from the traditional 4P theory oriented by enterprises. At present, the competition in China's catering industry is intensifying, and the problem of product homogeneity is prominent. Service marketing has become the core of building differentiated advantages. The existing research focuses on the innovation of a single service link, lacks systematic analysis based on the 4C framework, and the case study of local head chain brands is even less. This paper takes Haidilao as the research object, uses the case analysis method, analyzes its service marketing system from the 4C dimension, identifies the challenges in the scale expansion and puts forward the optimization path, so as to provide practical reference for catering enterprises to build differentiated service advantages.

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2. Construction of Haidilao service system based on 4C marketing strategy

2.1. Customer demand-oriented personalized service design

Haidilao has always put customer demand in the first place. The customer-centric concept runs through the whole service system of Haidilao. Through market research and service innovation, Haidilao has achieved a leap from "meeting demand" to "creating demand". At the same time, in terms of customer demand surveys. Haidilao sometimes accurately understands the differentiated needs of customers by means of secret person visits and store observation. And its service not only covers the basic catering links, but also extends to the entertainment experience during the waiting period (e.g. manicure service and hand care can be booked) and personalized care during the meal (e.g. providing hair rope, mobile phone antifouling bag, eyewear cloth, etc.), and even covers "unexpected services" such as baby watching and birthday celebration, providing special private rooms for various business occasions, and also providing the elderly with Sichuan opera face changing performance of traditional Chinese culture [1]. Let customers of all ages feel this customer-centered service design in all aspects such as dining, which deeply embodies the core idea of "customer demand orientation" in 4C theory.

2.2. Cost optimization and value promotion strategy

Haidilao has systematic cost control and service value-added, and the cost reduction of Haidilao is not simply to reduce the price of products, but to reduce the comprehensive consumption cost of customers, and also to improve the perceived value. On the one hand, Haidilao has reduced the cost of materials through large-scale procurement and its own supply chain system (e.g., Yi Hai International is mainly responsible for the bottom materials of Haidilao and Shu Hai Group is mainly responsible for the distribution of stores), making the price of Haidilao more people-friendly. At the same time, when ordering, customers can choose half portions, so that customers can taste a variety of delicious foods without wasting food and money. On the other hand, by providing free manicure and snack waiting services, customers' time and spiritual costs are reduced [2]. It reduces the anxiety of customers and improves the time utilization of both parties. In addition, Haidilao also improves customers' perceived value and reduces psychological costs through policies such as member points and student preferences [3].

2.3. The whole process coverage of convenience services

Haidilao attaches great importance to convenience in the service process, covering the whole process of booking, waiting for meals, dining and checking out. Realize the integration of online reservation, ordering and payment through digital tools such as "Haidilao app" and Wechat applet; Customers can make an appointment offline in advance according to their own time, avoiding the need for a long queue when arriving at the store. When arriving at the store, they can take a seat, place an order immediately, and improve efficiency through a scientific serving mechanism and a self-service small material table. In addition, takeout service and community distribution were also launched to meet the demand for convenient meals under the "housing economy" [4]. It further extends the space-time boundary of the service and meets the needs of modern consumers for convenient catering.

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2.4. Two-way construction of the communication mechanism

Haidilao pays attention to establishing an emotional connection and a trust relationship with customers. On the one hand, through the direct interaction between employees and customers, employees will serve customers all the time during the dining process. Each employee has their own specially responsible customers, and employees are also given full service autonomy. On the other hand, social media and customer communities (such as Wechat group) are used to carry out brand communication and feedback collection to build a multi-dimensional communication network. In the release of service stories and brand-new dishes such as Douyin and Xiaohongshu, Haidilao stores will reply at the first time, repeatedly understand the various needs of customers, and conduct efficient communication even if they reply to public comments, whether they are positive or negative. At the same time, Haidilao's employees will also take the initiative to help customers, listen to customers' suggestions and give timely feedback. This kind of zero-distance communication will also make customers feel valued [5]. In the event of a public relations crisis such as the "price rise storm", Dilao responded quickly and adjusted its strategy, reflecting its high regard for customer opinions and the flexibility of its communication mechanism [3]. This practice not only maintains the trust of the brand, but also reflects the core connotation of two-way communication in the 4C theory

3. Challenges and optimization suggestions for Haidilao's 4C marketing strategy

3.1. The balance between cost control and service quality

With the expansion of its scale, Haidilao is currently facing problems such as rising labor costs (there are too many employees in the store, and a lot of manpower is needed to maintain each link), conflict between service standardization and personalization, etc. It is suggested to plan in advance through digital tools to optimize the allocation of human resources. For example, you can choose your own way of eating before eating: some customers prefer to eat autonomously, so they can use less manpower, and some customers prefer to be served, so they can arrange equivalent human resources or use service robots, etc. At the same time, a more refined service training system should be established to maintain service consistency without losing temperature.

3.2. Lack of systematization and depth of the communication mechanism

Although Haidilao is outstanding in communication, it still lacks a systematic customer relationship management (CRM) system. Please. CRM is the general name of a set of management concepts, mechanisms and software systems for enterprises to enhance their core competitiveness, take customers as the center, and use information technology to coordinate and integrate customer information, sales process, marketing, customer service and other full process resources, so as to achieve customer acquisition, customer retention, and customer value improvement. The customer management system should be reasonably applied to centrally manage customer information, improve customer satisfaction and support the business growth of enterprises. It is suggested to build a customer Portrait System Based on big data to achieve more accurate service recommendations and personalized interactions, record customer service history, provide after-sales follow-up and problem handling, and improve customer satisfaction and loyalty.

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3.3. Scenario extension and innovation of convenience services

Under the trend of "residential economy" and community consumption, consumers' demand for catering services has extended from "dining in the store" to "full scene coverage", and convenient service has become the key to building the core competitiveness of catering enterprises. Haidilao can further break through the boundaries of traditional food scenes and expand diversified service forms around high-frequency scenes such as family consumption and community life:

Launch family hot pot set meal: for family dinner, weekend leisure and other scenes, a one-stop set meal including pot bottom, dishes, dipping ingredients and supporting tools can be designed to simplify the family cooking process and meet the convenient demand of consumers for "eating hot pot at home";

Layout of community group buying and community stores: relying on community traffic, carry out community group buying business, reduce costs through centralized procurement and distribution, and set up small community stores to provide semi-finished products, self-mention and instant delivery services, so as to achieve "the last mile" service.

4. Conclusion

This paper takes Haidilao as the research object and systematically analyzes the construction logic and practice path of its service marketing system based on the 4C marketing theory. The study found that Haidilao has successfully built a differentiated service competitive advantage through personalized service with customer demand as the core, comprehensive cost optimization, convenient coverage of the whole process and two-way communication mechanism; However, in the process of scale expansion, it still faces challenges such as the imbalance between cost and service quality, the fragmentation of communication system, and the lack of convenient scene expansion. This study only uses case analysis method, without quantifying customer perception and strategy effect through questionnaire survey, empirical modeling and other methods, nor in-depth comparison of the 4C strategy implementation differences in stores in different regions. The universality of the research conclusion needs to be further verified. In the future, we can focus on the iterative innovation of the 4C strategy under the digital transformation, the perception differences of different consumer groups on services, and the balance mechanism between service standardization and personalization in the process of scale-up of chain catering enterprises.

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