Analysis of Digital Marketing Strategies in the Interactive Entertainment Industry: A Case Study of 'Valorant'

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Abstract:

This study aims to analyze the digital marketing strategies in the interactive entertainment industry and to conduct an in-depth discussion using Valorant as an example. With the advancement of technology and the change in people's online habits, digital marketing plays an increasingly important role in the interactive entertainment industry. Understanding consumer behavior and intentions can help reflect and improve advertising and related fields. By distributing questionnaires to collect and analyze consumers' attitudes and reactions to different marketing strategies, the study finds that the synergy between digital marketing and outdoor advertising significantly increased brand awareness and user engagement. Social media advertising attracts potential users, while outdoor advertising enhances brand visual impact and loyalty. Through the analysis of the successful "Valorant" case, this study reveals the critical factors of digital marketing in user acquisition, retention, and stickiness. It explores these strategies' replicability and innovation in other interactive entertainment products. Meantime provides a valuable empirical reference for the industry.

Keywords: Interactive Entertainment; Digital Marketing; Marketing Strategy; Brand Awareness; User Engagement

1. Introduction

The interactive entertainment industry has developed rapidly in recent years and has become one of the fastest and most stable areas of economic growth. However, with the continuous advancement of technology and the change in people's online habits, the influence of digital marketing in this industry increases daily. Digital marketing refers to using information, networks, and other digital technologies to market products or services through technologies and digital communication channels such as Internet platforms [1]. As consumers have more channels to access and experience corporate brand images, the contact points between customers and companies are no longer limited to the traditional forms of advertising. Still, they are transformed into digital marketing in cases like new media. Driven by this environment, as the diversity and complexity of brand image communication continue to increase, this has also invisibly accelerated digital marketing transformation [2]. Due to the characteristics of the interactive entertainment industry, consumers can only experience goods or services through online platforms and cannot directly contact the products. In the consumption process, consumption behavior is more out of trust in the seller's company, so a good corporate image is a core factor in gaining user trust. Digital marketing helps companies increase brand awareness through intelligent advertising design, real-time interaction, and data-driven strategies. It helps companies build a good brand image and improve impression, narrowing the distance between the company and its customers.

In the interactive entertainment industry, Valorant, a tactical shooting game launched by Riot Games, has become a successful player in digital marketing. Since its release, the game has quickly accumulated a considerable player base and is still very popular. The success of the digital marketing used by the company speaks for itself. Behind its success is a well-planned and flawlessly executed digital marketing strategy. Therefore, based on the analysis and exploration of digital marketing model methods, this paper takes the e-sports game "Valorant" as a case study to explore the comprehensive application methods and effects of its digital marketing methods. By studying the marketing model of "Valorant," this study can reveal the critical success factors of digital marketing in user acquisition, user retention, and user stickiness. At the same time, explore these strategies' replicability and innovation space in other interactive entertainment products. Demonstrate how digital marketing can help game companies achieve sustainable growth amid fierce market competition and

provide valuable empirical references for the industry.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Definition of the Interactive Entertainment Industry

The interactive entertainment industry is a service industry that provides entertainment content to consumers in an interactive form through the Internet, electronic devices, and digital platforms. Among the emerging sectors, the digital interactive entertainment industry is the most creative, dependent on high technology, and has the most direct penetration into daily life [3]. The interactive entertainment industry has evolved into many different forms as time progresses. The interactive entertainment industry has covered many fields, such as electronic games, virtual reality, augmented reality, and interactive movies. However, its core feature is to enable consumers to gain a more profound sense of participation and experience by interacting with content in real time while enjoying the services provided by the industry. Compared with other traditional industries, the interactive entertainment industry has always been characterized by high interactivity, globalization, rich social elements, and data-driven decision-making.

2.2 Definition of Digital Marketing and Relationship with Interactive Entertainment Industry

Digital marketing encompasses all digital technologies used to efficiently acquire and maintain customer relationships while promoting brands and driving sales growth. Digital marketing tools are seen as the best way to engage with customers and maintain the credibility of an organization because they enable quick responses to customers' changing needs [4]. It is worth mentioning that in the process of digital marketing, having detailed consumer data is a prerequisite for data-driven marketing [5]. In other words, in the process of designing service content and digital marketing in the interactive entertainment industry, it is very necessary to refer to and analyze the specific data of the target consumer group. The interactive entertainment industry and digital marketing are inextricably linked. An excellent digital marketing strategy is a core factor for interactive entertainment companies to establish a stable brand image and gain user favor. Therefore, in today's market environment, consumers' shopping habits and information acquisition methods have changed significantly, and companies need to adjust their marketing strategies to adapt to the new market environment [6].

3. Research Design

3.1 Research Methods

The data collection for this article was conducted using questionnaires, which asked about the respondents' basic information, gaming habits, attitudes toward digital marketing, and responses to different marketing strategies. There are 21 questions in total, covering age, gender, occupation, weekly gaming time, willingness to participate in offline and online activities, willingness to purchase gaming peripherals, etc. The questionnaire was collected in July 2024 and distributed to multiple channels via mobile devices to ensure coverage of gamers with different backgrounds and habits. A total of 113 valid questionnaires were collected to ensure that the sample size was sufficient to support subsequent statistical analysis.

3.2 Case Selection

There are two main reasons why this article chooses Valorant as the research object. First, Valorant's market influence is highly representative. Valorant has gained worldwide recognition, especially in North America and the Asia-Pacific market. Its success is reflected in the rapid growth in the number of players and its influence in esports events. Today, many internationally renowned esports teams and event organizations have joined its esports events, further proving its market influence. In addition, continuous content updates have successfully maintained the activity and participation of players. The high level of interaction inside and outside the game provides players with a diverse experience and enhances player stickiness. At the same time, the marketing strategy of "Valorant" is also unique and representative. It is outstanding in the coordinated use of digital marketing and outdoor advertising. The diversity and innovation of its marketing strategies provide rich analytical materials for research. As new technologies such as visual intelligence and motion capture continue to emerge, these technologies will have a long-term disruptive impact and lay the foundation for more extensive industry promotion [7]. Riot Games adopted innovative advertising methods to promote its products. For example, game characters and dynamic advertisements can be displayed on large LED screens in city commercial centers. The advertisements used enhanced visual effects to promote the products and attract the attention of passersby. Not only that, but Riot Games also promoted and interacted with players through social media platforms and local cultural links, attracting a lot of attention.

4. Result and Discussion

4.1 Survey Results Analysis

According to the survey results presented in this paper, approximately 80.53% of respondents (Figure 1) indicated a willingness to learn about a new game through advertisements. This underscores the undeniable impact of marketing strategies. In the realm of digital marketing, outdoor electronic billboards represent a novel promotional approach. Valorant's strategy involved placing dynamic advertisements featuring game characters in high-traffic areas. Due to their strategic locations, these ads are more likely to capture the attention of passersby. Additionally, the survey results show that 49.55% of respondents (Figure 2) reported increased attention to advertisements when familiar game characters appeared on outdoor LED screens. This indicates that such ads can provide additional exposure to existing customers.
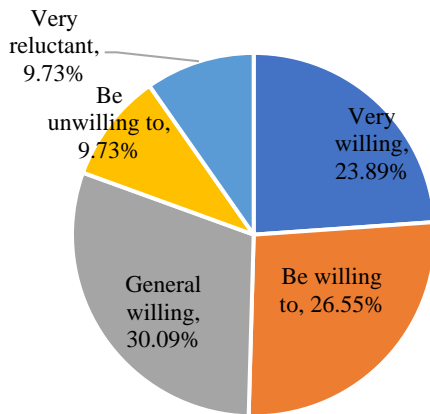
Visual aesthetics have long been considered a crucial determinant of advertising effectiveness [8]. The advanced display technology used in these advertisements creates an immersive effect, making it appear as though game characters have stepped into the real world and are attempting to interact with players. The use of dynamic images aims to psychologically engage viewers, making the advertisement more memorable and fostering a sense of psychological identification with the game. This, in turn, enhances customer loyalty. Customer loyalty is another key aspect of digital marketing, reflecting the ability to attract potential consumers.

The survey also revealed that 33.63% of players (Figure 3) learn about new games through recommendations from friends. Notably, 53.98% of respondents (Figure 4) expressed a willingness to recommend games they enjoy to others. This suggests that increasing brand loyalty and maintaining the engagement of existing players can help attract new players. In conclusion, the strategic use of outdoor electronic billboards, combined with the psychological impact of visual aesthetics and dynamic content, plays a significant role in enhancing brand awareness, customer loyalty, and overall user engagement.

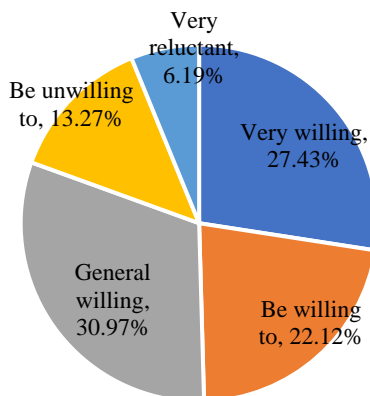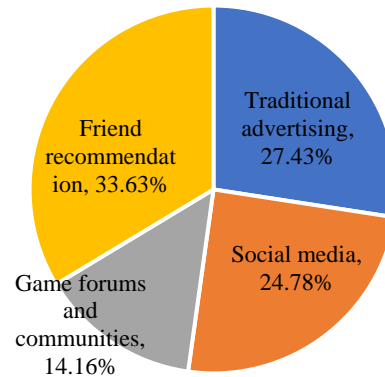**Fig. 1 Respondents' willingness to learn about a new game through advertisements (Photo credit: Origin)**

Fig. 2 Respondent's attention to advertisements when familiar game characters appeared on outdoor LED screens (Photo credit: Origin)

Fig. 3 Players learn about new games through recommendations from friends (Photo credit: Origin)
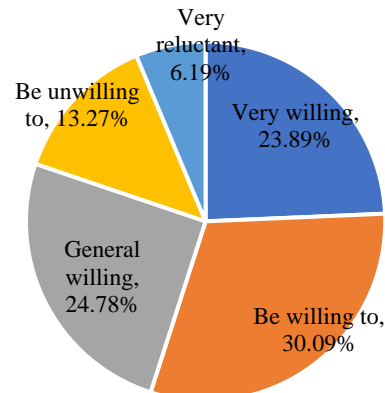
Fig. 4 Respondents expressed a willingness to recommend games they enjoy to others (Photo credit: Origin)

With the development of social media, advertising strategies have undergone significant transformations [9]. The focus has shifted from merely selling products to enhancing user experience and increasing consumer interaction [10]. Active engagement on social media aims to frequently appear in the view of both existing and potential customers, thereby enhancing brand recognition. According to the survey conducted in this study, 70.79% of respondents (Figure 5) spend at least six hours per week on social media. Additionally, 84.07% of respondents (Figure 6) indicated a likelihood of following official game company accounts on social media.
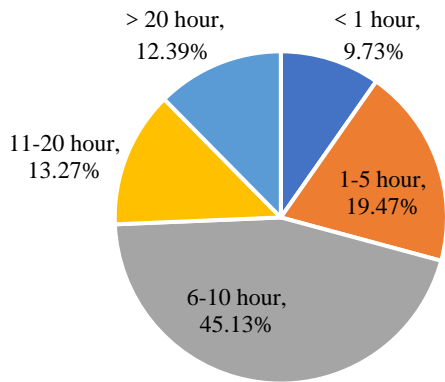

Fig. 5 Respondents spend time per week on social media (Photo credit: Origin)
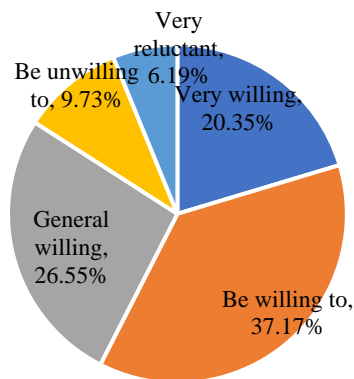

Fig. 6 Respondents following official game company accounts on social media (Photo credit: Origin)

Since the launch of Valorant on the mainland China serv-

er, the game has been actively advertised across various social media platforms in the region. A portion of these advertisements highlights the game's stunning graphics, high playability, and compelling character backstories, aiming to attract players by showcasing the game's overall quality. Another segment of the advertisements depicts scenes of friends and family playing Valorant together, emphasizing the game's social aspects. Social connectivity is a crucial factor in determining a game's success, particularly in cultures that value interpersonal relationships and social skills. For Chinese players, the social nature of a game is of paramount importance. Promoting the high social interactivity of the game can attract a significant number of players who seek to make friends through interactive entertainment. In the survey, 51.33% of respondents (Figure 7) expressed a willingness to make new friends through gaming, and 66.37% found it easier to make friends in the gaming world than in real life.
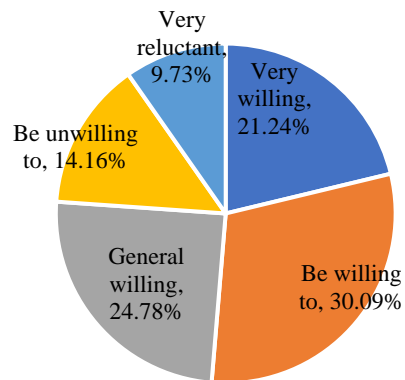

Fig.7 Respondents' willingness to make new friends through gaming (Photo credit: Origin)

The interactive entertainment industry, which has emerged with the times, inherently possesses a high degree of globalization. On its journey to implement digital marketing, Valorant has leveraged this characteristic to expand its market. To celebrate the launch of Valorant in the mainland China market and attract more local consumers, the game introduced a commemorative skin pack. The design of this pack incorporated Chinese cultural elements. According to the consumer interviews conducted in this study, 59.29% of respondents (Figure 8) expressed a willingness to purchase this product. This indicates that incorporating cultural elements can significantly aid game companies in entering new markets.
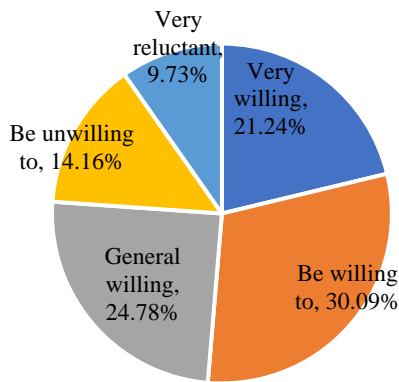
Fig. 8 Respondents' willingness to purchase this product

Finally, the survey results showed that the preference for social media advertisements and outdoor billboard advertisements is nearly equal, with 50.44% and 49.56% of respondents favouring each, respectively. This suggests that, in current advertising strategies, social media advertising and outdoor billboard advertising hold almost equal importance.

In summary, the evolution of advertising strategies in the digital age emphasizes user experience and social engagement. Valorant's marketing efforts, which strategically combine social media presence with outdoor advertising and culturally resonant products, illustrate the multifaceted approach necessary for success in the interactive entertainment industry.

4.2 Strategy and Recommendations

The first is to enhance marketing effectiveness through a combined approach to digital and outdoor advertising. In the current landscape of digital transformation, it is crucial for companies to adopt a multifaceted marketing approach that incorporates both digital marketing and outdoor advertising. This combined strategy can create a synergistic effect, leveraging the strengths of both channels to maximize marketing effectiveness.

It is second, using outdoor advertising to strengthen brand loyalty and initial perception. The strategic placement of outdoor advertisements plays a significant role in reinforcing the connection between a brand and its existing customers, thereby enhancing brand loyalty. Outdoor advertisements serve as tangible touchpoints that keep the brand present in the daily lives of consumers. The physical and often repetitive nature of these ads ensures that the brand remains top-of-mind, fostering strong and lasting brand associations. For example, a billboard in a high-traffic area can serve as a constant reminder of the brand, encouraging repeat interactions and purchases. Moreover, outdoor advertising is instrumental in helping potential customers form an initial perception of the brand. This

preliminary awareness is crucial as it lays the groundwork for deeper engagement through other marketing channels. When potential customers repeatedly encounter outdoor advertisements, their familiarity with the brand increases, making them more receptive to further marketing efforts.

Further, digital marketing is used to reach and engage a vast audience. Digital marketing, on the other hand, excels in its ability to reach a vast audience quickly and efficiently. It is inherently interactive, allowing companies to engage potential customers in ways that traditional outdoor advertising cannot. Through targeted campaigns, personalized content, and real-time engagement, digital marketing can effectively convert potential customers into active consumers. One of the key advantages of digital marketing is its precision targeting. By leveraging data analytics, companies can refine their marketing strategies to ensure that advertisements are directed toward the most relevant audiences. This data-driven approach not only enhances the return on investment for advertising expenditures but also allows for continuous optimization based on performance metrics.

Additionally, there is a synergistic effect of combining digital and outdoor advertising. The synergy between digital marketing and outdoor advertising can significantly amplify marketing efforts. Outdoor advertising creates initial brand awareness and interest, while digital marketing nurtures and converts that interest into customer action. This dual approach allows for more precise marketing targeting, making advertising efforts more impactful and efficient. For instance, a potential customer who sees an outdoor advertisement for a new game may later encounter targeted digital ads for the same game on their social media feeds. This coordinated exposure across multiple channels reinforces the brand message and increases the likelihood of conversion.

Finally, engagement can be expanded through events and community building. Given the high level of interest expressed by respondents in brand activities, interactive entertainment companies should explore more opportunities to host related events. These activities not only build a solid marketing foundation but also foster a sense of community and engagement among consumers. Events such as game launches, fan meet-ups, and online tournaments can create memorable experiences that resonate with consumers, further solidifying their connection to the brand. Hosting events allows companies to engage directly with their audience, providing opportunities for interaction and feedback. This direct engagement can deepen the emotional connection between the brand and its consumers, leading to increased loyalty and advocacy. Additionally, events can generate buzz and excitement, driving word-of-mouth promotion and attracting new customers.

In conclusion, a comprehensive marketing strategy that combines the strengths of both digital marketing and outdoor advertising can significantly boost brand visibility, loyalty, and customer acquisition. By creating multiple touchpoints and engaging consumers through various channels, companies can establish a robust marketing framework that drives sustained growth and success. This integrated approach ensures that the brand remains relevant and compelling in the minds of consumers, ultimately leading to a stronger market presence and competitive advantage. The interplay between digital and outdoor advertising, supported by community-building events, offers a holistic approach to marketing that can adapt to the dynamic needs of the market and consumer preferences. By leveraging the unique advantages of each channel, companies can create a cohesive and effective marketing strategy that resonates with their target audience and achieves their business objectives.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Key Findings

The influence of social media promotion on players is significant. Most respondents rely on social media to obtain information about games and are willing to engage with the content. In particular, game-related short videos and live streams effectively capture players' attention and spark their interest. Additionally, innovative outdoor advertisements significantly enhance player awareness of the game. Placing such ads in high-traffic areas can effectively increase brand exposure and strengthen brand loyalty. The synergy between digital marketing and outdoor advertising can enhance overall marketing effectiveness. Multi-channel promotion ensures comprehensive coverage of the target user group, thereby amplifying the brand's overall influence. Lastly, most respondents express a high willingness to participate in online or offline events hosted by game companies, especially those that are interactive and competitive.

5.2 Limitations and Future Study

This study's limitations include reliance on a single data source, namely questionnaire surveys, and a limited sample size, which may not fully capture the diverse opinions of all players. Furthermore, the focus is solely on the game "Valorant," lacking comparative analysis with other games or products. Future research should aim to expand the sample size and diversify data sources to encompass a broader range of player perspectives. Additionally, examining a variety of games can provide a more comprehensive understanding and further validate the universality of digital marketing strategies within the interactive entertainment industry.

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