

## Research on the marketing strategy of agricultural product community e-commerce

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### Abstract

*With the continuous progress and development of the “global e-commerce era”, China's community e-commerce of marketing environment of agricultural products is growing rapidly. At present, the level of e-commerce development in various regions of China is not balanced, resulting in farmers in many regions still lacking marketing awareness of community e-commerce. Through the analysis of the current status of China's e-commerce development of agricultural products, this study found that there are existing problems such as: the imbalance of agricultural products e-commerce development scale in various regions, the difficulty of agricultural products logistics and distribution, the uneven quality level of agricultural products, the lack of community marketing awareness among merchants, and the gap in e-commerce talents. Based on the content marketing theory, this paper draws research conclusions and puts forward suggestions for optimizing community e-commerce marketing.*

### Keywords

*community e-commerce, rural e-commerce, content marketing, marketing strategy.*

### 1. Introduction

With the rapid development of the e-commerce and logistics industries, e-commerce sales channels for agricultural products have been realized. At present, there are many problems in China's agricultural product marketing, such as: lack of connection between production and sales, many circulation links, weak infrastructure, etc. The industry barriers of agricultural products are relatively low, and it is increasingly competitive in the e-commerce market. It is very important to establish a stable customer base and increase effective sales channels. Therefore, community e-commerce marketing of agricultural products has become a hot topic.

This study, through the combing of community marketing theory and combining the characteristics of the agricultural product market, constructs a theoretical framework for agricultural product community e-commerce marketing, enriches the existing agricultural product marketing theory system, and deeply explores the practical path of agricultural product community e-commerce marketing strategy. At the same time, this study will provide some practical community marketing plans for farmers and agricultural product e-commerce platforms, and provide some reference suggestions for relevant government departments and

agricultural product e-commerce platforms. Specifically, this study will propose an effective agricultural product community marketing strategy, aiming to help farmers use Internet tools in the Internet era, broaden information dissemination channels, increase product sales channels, improve the efficiency of agricultural product sales, and enable more consumers to access high-quality and low-cost agricultural products, ultimately achieving a win-win situation.

## **2. Related concepts and theories**

### **2.1. Agricultural Products E-commerce**

Agricultural product e-commerce refers to a series of electronic transactions and management activities carried out around the production and operation of agricultural products in rural areas, including agricultural production management, online marketing of agricultural products, electronic payment, logistics management, and customer relationship management. It is supported by information technology and network systems to manage agricultural products in an all-round and full-process manner from the production site to the hands of customers.

### **2.2. Community Marketing**

The concept of community marketing was proposed in 2006, and later became popular through the development of mobile community networks. It is still unclear who explicitly proposed the concept of community marketing. In addition, before the concept of community marketing was proposed, American scholar Bustin had proposed the concept of "Consumption Community" in 1974. He believed that consumer community is an invisible community created and formed by people in the process of deciding what to consume and how to consume. Later, Muniz and O'Guinn proposed the concept of "brand community" in 2001. This concept emphasizes the various relationships between brands and consumers and between consumers, rather than just the discounts and discounts emphasized by the customer membership system at that time. Both concepts provided an important theoretical basis for the later concept of community marketing.

Community marketing refers to a marketing method that brings together people with common interests through the creation, operation and maintenance of community media platforms, thereby achieving the goals of brand promotion, product sales and service provision. Community marketing breaks through the limitations of traditional advertising, provides consumers with a more personalized and interactive shopping experience, and establishes a closer connection between consumers and businesses through the internet and community media.

### **2.3. Content Marketing**

Content marketing refers to the use of various forms of media content to deliver valuable and entertaining content through various channels. A marketing method that uses product or brand information to trigger customer participation and build and improve the brand during the interaction. When implementing content marketing, companies need to consider the needs and interests of the target audience, as well as their search and browsing habits. Companies need to develop a clear content marketing plan, including content creation, publishing channels, and publishing schedules. At the same time, companies need to track and

evaluate the effectiveness of content marketing, and continuously optimize and improve marketing strategies based on feedback and data analysis.

Content marketing is of great significance to the operation of enterprises. It can not only help enterprises improve their brand awareness and reputation, but also attract a large number of potential customers for enterprises and improve customer conversion rate, while enhancing the interaction between buyers and sellers, consumers and consumers. Therefore, enterprises should regard content marketing as an important part of their marketing strategy, and continue to invest energy and resources to optimize and improve their content marketing strategies to attract more consumers. Fang Yuanna (2020) proposed that in the context of today's consumption upgrade and mobile development, although the forms and technologies of content marketing are constantly changing, the essence is to better serve "users" and "content", and value of content has become the core factor of marketing. It can be seen that content marketing is an area that every company must plan for in today's era of rapid development of the internet.

### **3. Analysis of the marketing status of agricultural product community e-commerce**

This study will analyze from four aspects: marketing scale, marketing effect, marketing difference and marketing awareness.

#### **3.1. Marketing Scale**

Many fast fashion brands, chain restaurant brands, cultural and creative brands, etc. are establishing their own private domain space, usually in the form of WeChat groups. It is not difficult to see that community marketing has strong feasibility in all walks of life. Community marketing not only achieves close connection between merchants and consumers, but also the business form is dominated by users themselves. It is a marketing method with low cost and high return, high user participation, and easy to receive feedback from user.

Agricultural products are perishable and have a short shelf life. Community marketing can meet consumers' demands for fruits of different qualities and prices. At the same time, it also achieves inventory management, handles unsalable products, and attracts more consumers to join the community. Therefore, whether it is a chain brand franchisee or an individual operator, they are creating their own private domain traffic, trying to improve services, promote sales, strengthen connections with community consumers, and enhance consumer loyalty through community marketing. Community marketing of agricultural products e-commerce not only brings economic benefits to e-commerce platforms and farmers, but also caters to consumers' purchasing needs.

#### **3.2. Marketing Effect**

In 2022, China's agricultural products e-commerce online retail sales reached 531.38 billion CNY, and agricultural network retail sales reached 2.17 trillion CNY, which has been increasing steadily for several consecutive years. Farmers' sales channels mainly included: large e-commerce platforms (such as Taobao, JD.com, etc.), community media marketing (such as Xiaohongshu, Douyin, etc.), and community e-commerce (such as WeChat groups, Douyin fan groups, etc.).

Taobao, JD.com and other platforms can provide consumers with high-quality products and services. In view of China's actual situation, small farmers rarely cooperate with large e-commerce platforms. Because their agricultural products lack certification from relevant national institutions, it is difficult to pass the platform review and difficult to put the products on the shelves. The operating regulations of large e-commerce platforms are relatively complicated and are not suitable for small farmers' sales.

Although sales through platforms such as Xiaohongshu and Douyin can gain greater exposure, due to the fierce competition in the industry, competitors often know better how to use platform rules to obtain more traffic, and commodity homogeneity is relatively serious. Consumers and farmers have lacked close connections and trust between the two parties, and it is usually difficult to achieve a large number of long-term and stable transactions.

Community e-commerce through WeChat groups and Douyin fan groups can provide most non-scale agricultural operators with a marketing method with low barriers to entry and high returns. The advantage of community e-commerce is that it can closely connect farmers and consumers, allowing both parties to communicate efficiently, and the degree of trust will continue to grow with interaction, which is not only conducive to the stability of small farmers' income, but also helps consumers buy high-quality and low-priced goods.

### **3.3. Marketing Differences**

Agricultural product e-commerce faces many challenges. First, due to the relatively scattered population in rural areas, the production areas of agricultural products are also relatively scattered. This leads to high logistics and distribution costs. In addition, the complex terrain and inconvenient transportation in some rural areas have brought considerable challenges to the logistics system of e-commerce.

In terms of electronic payment, compared with urban residents, many rural consumers are still accustomed to cash transactions and are not very receptive to mobile payment and other methods, which to a certain extent makes e-commerce transactions in rural areas difficult. At the same time, due to the limited education and training resources in rural areas and the lack of sufficient e-commerce talents, the development of rural e-commerce is restricted.

Compared with urban areas, e-commerce in rural areas also faces many challenges in terms of service quality. As mentioned above, the limited education and training resources in rural areas result in a lack of professional after-sales service teams when conducting e-commerce activities in rural areas, making it difficult to promptly solve problems that may affect transactions before, during, and after sales for consumers. This not only affects consumers' shopping experience, but also hinders the development of rural e-commerce.

### **3.4. Marketing Awareness**

At present, many farmers lack a deep understanding of the concept and importance of community marketing. They still remain in the traditional sales thinking, and most of their sales channels are fairs, farmers' markets, etc. Their sales channels and sales prices lack stability. Farmers and consumers have not achieved long-term and effective communication, and it is difficult to establish a good trading relationship. In addition, farmers' awareness of

community marketing is polarized. Most farmers and agricultural product sales companies lack recognition of community marketing and do not apply information technology in the sales process. This has led to fewer information dissemination channels and lack of interaction between buyers and sellers, making it difficult to achieve long-term transactions.

#### **4. There are problems with the marketing strategy of agricultural product community e-commerce**

##### **4.1. Regional Differences**

The scale of agricultural product e-commerce development in various regions of China is uneven. First, there are large differences in development between the east and the west. The eastern coastal areas have developed economies, convenient transportation, and fast information flow, and agricultural product e-commerce has developed earlier. However, in the central and western regions, especially in remote mountainous areas and poor areas, agricultural product e-commerce development is relatively lagging due to backward infrastructure, inconvenient transportation, and lack of information.

Second, there are differences in the types of agricultural products in different regions. Regions with rich agricultural product varieties have higher market value and a better foundation for e-commerce development. Regions with relatively single types of agricultural products have lower market visibility and weaker market competitiveness, making it more difficult to develop e-commerce.

Third, e-commerce talents are unevenly distributed. The development of agricultural product e-commerce requires talents in e-commerce operations, marketing, agricultural product quality control, e-commerce live streaming, etc. E-commerce talents are mainly concentrated in some economically developed coastal cities. There is a relative shortage of e-commerce talents in remote areas, which also restricts the development of agricultural product e-commerce.

##### **4.2. Logistics and distribution issues**

Most agricultural products are fresh products, which are prone to spoilage and mold during long-term transportation. They are easily damaged during transportation. The production and sales places of agricultural products are usually far apart, and the production places are in rural areas with underdeveloped transportation conditions. The long transportation distance and complex terrain increase the difficulty and cost of logistics transportation. In addition, the output of agricultural products is also affected by factors such as season and climate. The demand for agricultural products is affected by marketing factors (such as festivals, promotional activities, etc.), and the demand fluctuates greatly. These factors will bring challenges to the transportation and storage of agricultural products.

##### **4.3. Agricultural product quality issues**

Rural areas are usually widely distributed and scattered, and farmers generally adopt

decentralized production models and independent management models. As a result, there is a lack of unified production organization and supervision system, and the quality of agricultural products is difficult to reach a unified standard. The quality differences between different agricultural products are significant. This phenomenon leads to the lack of standardization of the quality of agricultural products and the low added value of products. This not only affects the market competitiveness of agricultural products, but also brings potential risks to the health and safety of consumers. In addition, agricultural products lack unified standards and supervision. The same type of agricultural products have different qualities and large price differences. This not only brings troubles to consumers in choosing agricultural products, but also affects fair competition in the market.

#### **4.4. Merchants lack community marketing awareness**

Merchants in rural areas are usually accustomed to self-production and self-sales, and their target consumer groups are relatively small. Community marketing is a new marketing strategy that uses community media and community platforms to accurately locate target user groups and promote products or brands through interaction, sharing, and dissemination. For most farmers, due to the long-term influence of traditional business models, they focus more on the production and supply of products, while neglecting the marketing and brand building of products. Due to the limitations of information acquisition and dissemination channels, the new concept of "community marketing" has not been widely spread to rural areas.

## **5. Conclusion**

In summary, there are many advantages to the marketing strategy of agricultural product community e-commerce. First, precision marketing can be achieved, that is, small farmers or agricultural products e-commerce companies can continuously narrow the distance with consumers through the community, so as to accurately lock in the target consumer group, understand their needs and preferences, and provide personalized products and services. Secondly, community e-commerce enhances the communication and stickiness between consumers and between buyers and sellers through community interaction and content sharing, which not only forms a stable consumer group, but also improves the repurchase rate. Thirdly, compared with traditional marketing methods, the marketing cost of community e-commerce is lower, because it can acquire a large number of new users at a lower cost through word-of-mouth communication and sharing within the community. Finally, through community e-commerce, agricultural product brands can interact with consumers more deeply, show brand stories, cultural concepts, etc., thereby enhancing the overall image and market awareness of the brand.

At the same time, there are still some challenges in the marketing strategy of agricultural products community e-commerce. For example: community e-commerce requires a lot of

initial investment; agricultural products community e-commerce needs to continuously improve consumers' trust in products; market competition is increasingly fierce, etc. Therefore, based on the above research results, the following optimization suggestions are put forward:

### **5.1. Improving infrastructure**

The government and enterprises need to evaluate the existing infrastructure and understand the status of the existing e-commerce infrastructure, including hardware equipment, network connection, data processing capabilities, payment systems, logistics systems, technical standards, policies and regulations. For farmers, long-term cooperation with stable logistics service providers is conducive to ensuring the stability of logistics. Due to the perishable characteristics of agricultural products, it is necessary to improve the construction of cold chain logistics infrastructure in rural areas and develop a rural e-commerce cold chain logistics system. In addition, to meet the current consumer demand for logistics services, the construction of rural e-commerce logistics informatization is also very important.

### **5.2. Improving the quality of agricultural products**

First, introduction of modern agricultural technology for farmers. Small farmers may lack sufficient funds or resources to purchase large machinery or equipment, but farmers can improve the yield and quality of agricultural products by introducing some cost-effective and easy-to-operate modern agricultural technologies, such as precision fertilization and water-saving irrigation. Second, participation of farmers' cooperatives. Farmers can join local farmers' cooperatives so that they can share resources, technology and market information. Through cooperatives, they can access more agricultural experts and consultants and get advice on how to improve the quality of agricultural products. Third, improvement of production skills and knowledge. Farmers can improve their production skills and knowledge reserves by participating in agricultural training courses organized by government agencies or agricultural assistance enterprises, reading agricultural-related books, or learning from experienced farmers. In this way, they can better understand and apply modern agricultural technologies and improve the quality and yield of agricultural products. Fourth, focus on agricultural product branding. Promote and promote your own brand through community media and e-commerce platforms.

### **5.3. Cultivate farmers' community marketing awareness**

First, organize regular agricultural marketing and community marketing training courses, and invite experts or experienced marketers to provide guidance and advice to farmers. The course content includes the use of community media platforms, how to create and share content, how to interact with consumers, how to build and operate communities, etc. At the same time, invite successful community marketing case sharers, such as other farmers or agricultural product e-commerce companies, to share their experience and achievements;

they can also invite failures to discuss the reasons for their failures to prevent other farmers from repeating the same mistakes. Through actual cases, farmers can see the actual effects and value of community marketing, as well as understand possible problems and solutions, which will stimulate their interest and motivation.

Secondly, help farmers build their own communities, such as WeChat groups, to provide a platform for mutual communication, sharing and learning. Encourage farmers to communicate more, share their experiences, problems and solutions, and create a good learning atmosphere. In addition, provide farmers with necessary community marketing tools and resources, such as community media account management, content creation tools, data analysis tools, etc., and teach them some necessary related skills, such as how to use the tools mentioned above. At the same time, provide technical support and consulting services to help farmers solve problems encountered in the process of community marketing.

Finally, an incentive mechanism should be established to further encourage farmers to actively participate in community marketing activities. A selection and reward system for outstanding community marketing farmers should be established to allow other farmers to see the value and results of community marketing. In addition, farmers should be encouraged to establish cooperative relationships and jointly carry out community marketing activities. Through cooperation, resource sharing and mutual benefit can be achieved, and the marketing level of the entire agricultural community can be improved. At the same time, continuous tracking and feedback are also required. Farmers' community marketing situation should be tracked regularly to understand their progress and difficulties and provide feedback and suggestions in a timely manner to help them improve and optimize their marketing strategies.

#### **5.4. Establish a community management system**

First, clarify the community's goals and positioning, determine the community's main members, service content and target audience, and formulate appropriate community management norms. At the same time, it is necessary to clarify the community's rules, such as speech norms, prohibited behaviors, and penalties. The rules should be fair, reasonable, and comply with laws, regulations and ethical requirements. At the same time, ensure that all members can easily understand and abide by these rules.

Second, establish a management team. It is very important to establish a responsible management team. The members of the management team need to be responsible for the daily management and maintenance of the community, and should have community management knowledge and experience, and be able to handle various issues and disputes. In addition, in order to ensure the quality and security of the community, a member review mechanism should be established to review and screen members who join the community to prevent non-target consumers from entering the community and destroying the atmosphere and order of the community. For example: separate old customers from new customers, lower the member review threshold for the new customer group, mainly used to cultivate old



customers to reduce costs; pull repeat customers into the VIP group to provide better services.

Third, promoting active interaction. Through some methods, such as coupon distribution and lucky draws, encourage members to actively participate in discussions and activities within the group and share their purchasing and eating experiences. At the same time, regularly organize community activities, such as online exchanges and offline gatherings, to enhance the cohesion and activity of the community. At the same time, establish an effective feedback mechanism to provide community members with channels to feedback problems and provide suggestions to managers. The management team should respond to and deal with these issues in a timely manner, and continuously optimize the management and services of the community. In addition, it is necessary to regularly evaluate and adjust the community management system to adapt to the development and changes of the community. The evaluation can be combined with information such as feedback from community members and conclusions from consumption data analysis to ensure the scientific nature of the community management system.

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