

Analysis on the Paths and Strategies of the Transition of Putian Footwear Wholesale Market to E-commerce

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ABSTRACT

This paper comprehensively and in-depth analyzes the paths and strategies for the transformation of Putian footwear wholesale market to e-commerce. Firstly, through a detailed study of the current situation of Putian footwear wholesale market and the development trend of e-commerce. Then, it elaborately explores the feasible paths in the transformation process involving aspects such as platform entry, marketing promotion, supply chain management, and logistics distribution. Finally, some targeted strategies are put forward, aiming to promote the sustainable development of Putian footwear industry in the field of e-commerce.

KEYWORDS

Putian Footwear; E-commerce Transformation; Paths and Strategies; Industrial Development

As a world-renowned footwear production base, Putian's footwear wholesale market once thrived under the traditional trade model. However, with the surging wave of the Internet and the vigorous development of e-commerce, it has been hit by an unprecedented impact on traditional wholesale markets. Under such circumstances, if the Putian footwear wholesale market wants to maintain and enhance its competitiveness, the transformation to e-commerce has become an urgent and inevitable choice.

1 Analysis of the Current Situation of Putian Footwear Wholesale Market

1.1 Advantages

Putian's footwear industry offers a complete and collective industrial chain. Starting from the footwear design stage, there are professional design teams that closely follow fashion trends and market demands to design a wide variety of footwear products. The production process is even more finely divided, and each processing enterprise has mature production techniques and high production efficiency, enabling them to complete orders quickly and with high quality. Moreover, after long-term commercial operations, Putian has accumulated rich commercial resources, including numerous stable, and reliable suppliers and wholesalers (Cai, M. J. 2024).

1.2 Disadvantages

Putian shoes have long struggled with shoddy products and counterfeits, damaging its brand reputation. The improper behaviors of some unscrupulous merchants have seriously damaged the

overall brand image of Putian shoes, causing consumers to often be skeptical when purchasing Putian shoes. Under the traditional business model, there are serious obstacles to information circulation. The information communication between enterprises and between enterprises and the market is not smooth, making it difficult for manufacturing enterprises to accurately grasp the changes in market demand, which easily leads to inventory backlogs. Meanwhile, with the rise of other footwear industry bases in China and the emergence of numerous competitors on e-commerce platforms, the Putian footwear wholesale market is facing fierce market competition.

1.3 Opportunities

Currently, the e-commerce market is showing an explosive and rapid growth trend, with its scale continuously expanding and the consumer group increasing day by day. This provides an unprecedented broad sales platform for Putian footwear products, breaking the geographical limitations and scale bottlenecks of traditional markets. There have been profound changes in consumers' shopping habits, and more and more people are choosing to purchase footwear products on online platforms. Convenient shopping, rich product information, and diverse choices have made online footwear purchasing mainstream, creating a boosting demand for Putian products. Meanwhile, the rapid development of modern technologies such as big data and artificial intelligence has brought new opportunities for the development of the Putian footwear industry.

1.4 Challenges

The rules of e-commerce platforms are becoming increasingly strict with the development of the market, putting forward higher requirements for aspects such as product quality and intellectual property protection. This poses a major challenge for Putian, which requires investment in resolving counterfeiting issues and improving quality control and intellectual property protection. Due to their relatively large size and heavy weight, footwear products face the problems of high logistics costs and low delivery efficiency during the logistics and distribution process. The increase in logistics costs will compress the profit margins of enterprises, while low delivery efficiency will affect consumers' shopping experience.

2 Analysis of the Development Trends of E-commerce

2.1 Mobile Trend

With the widespread popularity of smartphones and the continuous progress of mobile network technology, consumers' shopping behaviors are gradually shifting to the mobile end. Nowadays, people increasingly use their mobile devices for convenient and on-the-go shopping purchases. Mobile shopping has become a convenient and efficient consumption method. E-commerce platforms have also been increasing their investment in and optimization of mobile applications, continuously improving their functions. For example, they design simple and easy-to-use interfaces, provide fast loading speeds, and implement convenient payment processes, creating a more smooth and comfortable shopping experience for consumers.

2.2 Socialization Trend

Social e-commerce, as an emerging business model, integrates social networks with online shopping and is growing rapidly. Consumers' purchasing decisions are now heavily influenced by different factors such as recommendations from close ones, influencers, and reviews on social

networks. Promoting and marketing footwear products through social media has great potential. Enterprises can establish official accounts on popular social platforms such as WeChat, Weibo, and TikTok, and release a variety of colorful contents, such as fashionable footwear pictures, wonderful product videos, and interesting dressing tutorials. These contents can not only attract users' attention and interest but also stimulate their desire to interact, such as liking, commenting, and sharing. Through this way, this approach is able to establish closer consumer connections and boost sales of Putian footwear.

2.3 Innovative Design Trend

Modern consumers have an increasingly strong demand for unique footwear products. They are no longer satisfied with the stereotyped mass-produced styles but pursue distinctive and personalized footwear designs. E-commerce platforms, with their powerful data collection and analysis capabilities, can gain an in-depth understanding of each consumer's preferences, purchasing history, browsing behaviors, and other information. Based on these data, the platforms can achieve targeted recommendations and push footwear products that match consumers' styles and needs to them.

2.4 Quality Trend

Against the backdrop of consumption upgrading, consumers have higher and higher requirements for the quality and grade of footwear products. They are willing to pay higher prices for high-quality shoes and no longer focus solely on the price factor. To meet this demand of consumers, e-commerce platforms have strengthened their control over the quality of goods. Platforms can meticulously review product quality, requiring merchants to provide inspection and certification reports. In terms of after-sales service, they provide more convenient return and exchange services for goods with quality problems. For the Putian footwear wholesale market, this means that it must raise the product quality standards and strictly control every link from raw material procurement, production process to quality inspection, so as to win the trust and favor of consumers with high-quality products.

3 Analysis of the Paths for Putian Footwear Wholesale Market to Embrace E-commerce

3.1 Path of Platform Entry

Entering well-known third-party e-commerce platforms is a relatively convenient way (Mai, L. Y. 2024). Mature e-commerce platforms such as Taobao, JD.com, Pinduoduo, and TikTok possess huge user traffic and sophisticated operating models. When footwear enterprises in Putian enter these platforms, they can quickly leverage the traffic advantages of the platforms to showcase their products to a large number of potential consumers and swiftly enter the e-commerce market. Meanwhile, these platforms also provide reliable systems for payment, logistics distribution, and after-sales, reducing operational burdens for enterprises. However, introducing third-party platforms also comes with some challenges. Enterprises need to strictly abide by the rules of the platforms, including product release rules, trading rules, and quality supervision rules. Moreover, due to the large number of merchants on the platforms, the competition is extremely fierce. To stand out among numerous peers, enterprises need to put in more efforts in aspects such as product differentiation and marketing promotion. The following is the statistics of some platform entry data

related to shoes, See Table 1 for details.

Table 1 Statistics on Shoe-related Data of Platform Settlements

Platform Name	Number of Users (in hundreds of millions)	Number of Shoe-related Stores	Daily Page Views of Shoe Products
Taobao	About 8.46	About 50,000	About 3 million
JD.com	About 5.30	About 20,000	About 1.5 million
Pinduoduo	About 7.88	About 35,000	About 2 million
TikTok	About 6.00 (Daily Active Users)	About 25,000 (Shoe-related Live- streaming and Short-video Accounts)	About 2.5 million (Page Views of Shoe-related Videos)

It can be seen from the above tabular data that these well-known third-party e-commerce platforms have excellent performances in terms of the number of users, the number of shoe-related stores, and the page views of shoe products. Taobao, as an established giant in the domestic e-commerce industry, has a huge user base, numerous shoe stores, and correspondingly very high product page views, which provides enormous market potential for footwear merchants in Putian. JD.com, with its high-quality service and the image of guaranteeing genuine products, has attracted many consumers who pursue quality, and its shoe market scale should not be underestimated either. Pinduoduo, by virtue of its low-price strategy, has attracted a large number of price-sensitive users and has a very good promotional effect on some Putian shoe products that focus on cost performance. TikTok, as an emerging social e-commerce platform, with its powerful traffic and unique video marketing model, offers shoe merchants more opportunities to showcase their products. They can directly reach consumers through forms such as short videos and live broadcasts, thus promoting the sales of products. The different characteristics of these platforms offer diverse choices for the wholesale market of Putian footwear industry when it is stepping towards e-commerce.

3.2 Path of Marketing Promotion

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and Search Engine Marketing (SEM) are important means to increase the traffic of e-commerce platforms (Chen, W.F. 2022). Through search engine optimization, enterprises can optimize the content, structure, and keywords of their websites to improve their rankings on search engine results pages. For example, by thoroughly researching the keywords commonly used by consumers when searching for footwear products and reasonably distributing these keywords in the titles, descriptions, and bodies of the websites, while also optimizing factors such as the loading speed and page layout of the websites, so that the websites can obtain higher weights in search engine algorithms. Search engine marketing, on the other hand, involves purchasing keyword advertisements on search engines through paid advertising. When users search for relevant keywords, the advertisements of the enterprises can be displayed preferentially. This can attract more potential customers to click and enter the e-commerce platforms of the enterprises, increasing the traffic and exposure of the platforms.

3.3 Path of Supply Chain Management

Establishing a digital supply chain system is the key to enhancing the efficiency of the supply chain. By introducing advanced information technology to integrate the information of footwear production and wholesale links, digital management of the entire process can be achieved. In the raw material procurement stage, the price fluctuations of raw materials, the supply capacity and quality status of suppliers can be monitored in real time, thereby enabling timely adjustment of the

procurement plan to ensure the stable supply and reliable quality of raw materials. As for the production progress, digital systems can track it, identify delays or quality issues, and enable timely resolutions. For inventory management, the digital supply chain system can update inventory information in real time, achieve precise inventory control, avoid the occurrence of inventory backlogs or stockouts, and improve the operational efficiency of the entire supply chain.

3.4 Path of Logistics Distribution

Cooperating with professional logistics enterprises is an important way to ensure the quality and efficiency of logistics distribution. Partnering with established logistics companies like SF Express, YTO Express, or ZTO Express can make use of their sturdy distribution networks. These logistics enterprises have extensive distribution stations and transportation routes across the country and even globally, enabling them to quickly and accurately deliver Putian footwear products to consumers. Establishing regional logistics centers can further optimize the logistics distribution process. According to the market distribution situation, setting up logistics centers in major sales areas, storing goods in advance in these centers, and when receiving orders, shipping from the nearest logistics center can greatly shorten the delivery time, improve the timeliness of logistics distribution, and enhance the shopping experience of consumers.

4 Analysis of the Strategies for Putian Footwear Wholesale Market to Embrace E-commerce

4.1 Brand Building Strategies

Rebuilding the brand image is an important task for the Putian footwear wholesale market to enter the e-commerce field (Li, Z. (2023)). Firstly, it is necessary to strengthen the protection of intellectual property rights and severely crack down on counterfeit and shoddy products. The government, industry associations and enterprises should join hands to establish and improve the intellectual property protection mechanism and intensify the crackdown on infringement behaviors. Secondly, enterprises should change consumers' negative perceptions of Putian shoes by promoting genuine and high-quality Putian footwear products. Promotion channels for Putian shoes can include displaying certifications and brand stories online, taking advantage of social media's influence, and participating in footwear exhibitions.

Developing their own brands is the key to increasing the added value of Putian footwear industry. Footwear enterprises are encouraged to increase their investment in brand research and development. From brand positioning, brand name, brand logo to brand culture, everything should be carefully designed. The brand positioning should be clear, determining whether it is aimed at high-end consumer groups, young consumers who pursue fashion or other specific consumer groups. The brand name should be simple, easy to remember and distinctive, and the brand logo should have high recognizability. More importantly, rich cultural connotations should be endowed to the brand, integrating elements such as Putian's regional culture and footwear-making traditions into the brand culture. Through unique brand design and cultural connotations, the added value of the brand can be increased and its competitiveness in the market can be enhanced (Lin, K., & Mi, Y. T. 2022).

4.2 Talent Cultivation Strategies

Strengthening e-commerce training for traditional footwear practitioners is an important

measure to improve the overall e-commerce level of enterprises. Although traditional footwear practitioners have rich experience in footwear production and sales, their understanding and operational skills of e-commerce may be insufficient. By conducting e-commerce training, key e-commerce skills can be conveyed through targeted training. Internal training courses can be organized, e-commerce experts can be invited to give lectures or employees can be encouraged to participate in external e-commerce training courses. Through training, traditional footwear practitioners can adapt to the new business model and combine their traditional experience with e-commerce knowledge to better serve the e-commerce transformation of enterprises.

5 Conclusion

The transformation of Putian footwear wholesale market to e-commerce is an inevitable choice to adapt to the development of the times. To successfully transition to e-commerce, Putian footwear must capitalize on its strengths, address its shortcomings, and adapt to e-commerce trends. This includes choosing appropriate platform strategies, improving marketing efforts, optimizing supply chains and logistics, and emphasizing brand promotion, talent development, policy support, and quality control to increase competitiveness and achieve long-term success in the global market. Meanwhile, during the transformation process, continuous attention should be paid to market changes and technological developments, and the paths and strategies should be continuously adjusted and optimized to adapt to the constantly changing e-commerce environment.

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