Transforming Real Estate Marketing: Strategies and Innovations in the Digital Intelligence Era

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Abstract. In the context of economic downturn and weakened consumer spending, the rapid development of digital-intelligent technologies presents new opportunities for industrial transformation. This study examines innovative marketing strategies for the real estate sector in the digital-intelligent era through case studies. The research reveals that by integrating digital-intelligent technologies, real estate marketing strategies can significantly enhance user experience and satisfaction. Specifically, adopting live broadcasting and community interaction within an omnichannel marketing framework has proven effective. The findings demonstrate a notable increase in customer conversion rates when these strategies are implemented. This transformation not only offers actionable insights for real estate enterprises navigating the post-pandemic market landscape but also highlights the potential of digital-intelligent technologies to drive innovation and maintain competitiveness in an evolving economic environment. The study provides valuable guidance for real estate companies seeking to adapt to changing market conditions and leverage digital tools to improve their marketing efforts and achieve sustainable growth.

Keywords: Real estate, marketing, digital intelligence era.

1. Introduction

In recent years, economic depression and weak consumption have led to a sluggish real estate sector, where traditional marketing models are no longer sufficient to support industry recovery and development. In traditional consumption models, insufficient release of consumption potential, a single structure of consumption formats, inadequate supply of new consumption, and low consumer satisfaction are the main factors hindering the expansion of demand and promotion of consumption in various regions and industries. Digital intelligence, as the integration of the Digital Intelligence Era, leverages digital intelligence technologies to deeply integrate various e-commerce platforms with commercial entities and service enterprises, creating innovative digital intelligence technology scenarios. This enables a more precise capture of consumer demand, thereby promoting the transformation and upgrading of consumption structures and models, including those in the real estate sector.

Meanwhile, the rapid development of digital intelligence has transformed marketing approaches in a variety of industries including logistics, power supply, and even agriculture, driving the transformation and upgrading of traditional industries. Therefore, it has become imperative to leverage digital intelligence to revolutionize marketing models in the real estate sector. The aim of the study on the influence of the digital intelligence age on the marketing strategy of the real estate industry is to stimulate the buyers' consuming desire, address the issue of property stagnation amid difficulties in selling homes, accelerate the transformation and upgrading of the real estate industry, and inject vitality into the real estate economy. Theoretically, the digital intelligence transformation of marketing strategies has precedents in many industries. However, its application in the real estate sector remains insufficient. Regarding the role of digital intelligence in real estate marketing strategies, significant research gaps and exploration opportunities still exist in academic studies. This paper is committed to providing new perspectives and substantial research materials for the application of digital intelligence in real estate marketing strategies through systematic research and analysis. Practically, the rapid development of digital intelligence has demonstrated significant positive impacts on the real estate industry and China's overall economic growth, including but not limited to stimulating consumption willingness, driving technological innovation, enhancing market vitality, and improving economic efficiency. This paper focuses on the influence of the digital intelligence era on real estate marketing strategies, revealing the main problems and challenges currently faced while proposing a series of targeted and highly operational suggestions and countermeasures. These recommendations aim to provide effective solutions for addressing the issues encountered in integrating digital intelligence into real estate economics. Not only do these suggestions help enhance the vitality and sustainable development capacity of the real estate industry, but they also provide strong support for the sector's transformation and high-quality development.

2. Theoretical Foundations: From 4P to 4E in Marketing Evolution

In 1960, the 4P model was first put forth by Professor Jerry McCarthy in his book "Marketing". The 4P model is a marketing theory, which emphasizes determining distribution channels and sales strategies for the product and service from the perspective of the enterprises [1]. Professor McCarthy summarized its core content into four key elements: Product, Price, Place, and Promotion. Product Strategy involves the goods or services that a company offers to consumers. Companies need to continuously adjust product features based on market conditions and competitive landscapes to meet consumer demands. Price Strategy refers to the monetary value consumers pay to obtain the product and its functions. A reasonable pricing strategy not only reflects the value of the product but also ensures profitability for the company. Place Strategy mainly focuses on the distribution channels through which products move from producers to consumers. Companies must ensure that products reach consumers in the right place, in the right way, and at the right time. Promotion Strategy mainly involves the various marketing methods companies use to promote their products and stimulate consumer purchasing desire. Effective promotional activities help enhance product visibility and sales.

The 4P Theory provides a foundational framework for companies to make marketing decisions, enabling them to systematically analyze market conditions and develop corresponding marketing strategies [2]. The 4P theory, as a classic marketing framework, has been widely applied in almost all industries due to its broad applicability, including but not limited to the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) industry, retail industry, luxury goods industry, and real estate industry.

Marketing theory entered China in the 1990s, but it was not until the 21st century that it gradually began to be applied in the real estate industry. The rapid development of the real estate sector has led to an increasing number of enterprises entering market competition, which in turn has given rise to competitive behaviors within the industry. These changes have compelled real estate companies to place greater emphasis on systematic operations and brand management. For consumers, the underlying motivations behind purchasing behavior have also undergone significant shifts. The transformation of lifestyles, consumer purchasing power, the concept of asset replacement, and technological advancements have fostered diversified demands in the real estate market, with purchasing behavior becoming increasingly rationalized.

Currently, most real estate companies in China approach the marketing of property projects from the perspective of the 4P theory, prioritizing corporate profitability—a key reason for the theory's enduring popularity in the sector.

The 4P theory, as a classic marketing framework, has been widely applied across multiple industries. However, it has also revealed certain limitations with the evolution of market environments and consumer behavior. First of all, the 4P theory primarily emphasizes achieving sales goals through product, price, place, and promotion; however, it neglects the real needs and experiences of consumers. Meanwhile, the 4P theory focuses on short-term transactions and sales, overlooking the importance of building long-term relationships with consumers. In addition, the 4P theory mainly concentrates on internal controllable factors within the enterprise, ignoring the impact of external environments such as policies, economics, culture, and technology. Last but not least, in today's globalized, diverse, and rapidly evolving market landscape, the static framework of the 4P theory struggles to flexibly adapt to complex competition and changes in consumer behavior.

The 4E theory is an extension and upgrade of the traditional 4P theory, better suited to the digital age and changes in consumer behavior. The core of the 4E theory is Experience, Exchange, Evangelism, and Every Place. Experience emphasizes the overall consumer experience during the purchasing process, rather than just the product itself. Brands can enhance consumer satisfaction through personalized services, interactive experiences, and emotional connections. Customer satisfaction has surpassed the product itself, indicating that the 4P theory, which focuses solely on products and business interests, is no longer adequate [3]. Exchange focuses on the two-way exchange of value, rather than just monetary transactions. Consumers may exchange not only money for products but also data, time, or social interactions for value. Evangelism encourages consumers to become brand advocates and spreaders. Through word-of-mouth marketing, social media sharing, and user recommendations, consumers are motivated to actively disseminate brand information. Every Place emphasizes that consumers can interact with the brand anytime, anywhere. Traditional brick-and-mortar stores have faced declining fortunes in recent years as conventional single-channel marketing approaches no longer meet market demands. Meanwhile, the rise of online shopping platforms has provided consumers with unprecedented convenience; physical stores continue to play an irreplaceable role in delivering experiential services. This convergence of online and offline channels has given birth to the concept of omnichannel marketing, where businesses interact with consumers through multiple integrated channels including websites, mobile apps, social media, and physical stores to deliver a seamless shopping experience.

For instance, Nike, the sportswear brand, expanded both mobile apps and live streaming to drive online engagement while maintaining the service advantages of physical stores. This synchronized approach of live streaming and in-store consultants capitalizes on the strengths of both digital and physical retail.

The 4E theory is a marketing strategy framework that is better suited to the modern market environment. Compared to the traditional 4P theory, the 4E theory is more consumer-centric, emphasizing interaction and emotional connections. It enables brands to build long-term relationships with consumers and enhance competitiveness in the digital era.

The 4E marketing framework has seen extensive adoption in diverse industries, particularly demonstrating transformative value in retail, automotive, FMCG, and service sectors, where digital-consumer integration is the most advanced. The application of the 4E theory in the real estate industry has significantly untapped potential. Currently, traditional real estate marketing strategies face a series of pressing challenges. The government policies prohibit direct price reductions—leading to property sales stagnation, but incidents like unfinished buildings have also triggered a crisis of consumer trust. Integrating the 4E theory into real estate marketing strategies through reform and adjustment would significantly mitigate existing problems. These adjustments aim to provide the underlying logical framework for addressing the issues encountered in integrating digital intelligence into real estate economics. Not only can they help enhance the vitality and sustainable development capacity of the real estate industry, but they also provide strong support for the sector's transformation and high-quality development.

3. Applications of the 4E Theory in Real Estate Marketing Strategy

3.1. Experience

In-person property viewings, which have been the cornerstone of real estate transactions over the years, have revealed multiple limitations in the digital age. First of all, In-person property viewings can become inefficient and consume a lot of time. According to a 2023 survey by Beike Research Institute, the average in-person property viewing takes approximately 3.5 hours, including travel time. Yet only 15 minutes are spent effectively evaluating the property. In addition, interactive experience is often limited to in-person property viewings. For example, buyers cannot simulate furniture placement or visualize real spatial dynamics in a house without decoration. However, customers can use virtual reality technology in apps to simulate what their house would look like after renovation and furniture arrangement, making their ideal living environment more concrete and tangible. Last but not least, psychological and emotional biases can affect buyers in some ways. A consumer psychology study by Beijing Normal University has found that 67% of buyers admit their judgment is influenced by agent persuasion tactics.

With the increasing maturity of virtual reality (VR) technology, more and more mobile house-selling apps are introducing VR house-viewing features. "Beike Zhaofang" (Shell House Hunting) is a typical real estate sales app with a high market share. Beike's VR house-viewing feature includes three main functions: VR Viewing, VR Explanation, and VR Guided Tour.

The VR Viewing function uses fixed-point VSLAM technology to integrate virtual reality into the house-viewing process. When customers open the VR listing feature in the app, they can drag the screen to view the property from different angles, presenting a comprehensive view of the house. They can also access detailed information about the property, including its actual size, orientation, and surrounding facilities. The VR Explanation function allows agents to pre-record audio files based on the tour route. Users can listen to the explanations while browsing, helping them gain a more comprehensive understanding of the property. The VR Guided Tour function adopts an interactive scene mode, enabling customers to schedule real-time interactions with agents online. They can also invite friends or family to join the tour, enhancing the experience. This not only saves time but also improves the efficiency of house viewing. It is evident that Beike's VR house-viewing feature focuses on improving the customer's viewing experience and meeting their needs, offering multiple modes [4].

Many realtors and homeowners view staging a home with furniture and decorations as a core part of the sale process given that it can help increase prospective buyers' impressions of the home. VR house viewing improves time efficiency by allowing users to virtually simulate home furnishing scenarios and interact effectively. It also enhances customers' autonomy in property searching and touring, reducing the influence of external persuasion.

3.2. Exchange

In-person property viewings have some drawbacks, such as low-effect, time-consuming, and interactive experience. In the real estate industry, the application of electronic trading platforms is becoming increasingly widespread. They simplify the property transaction process through digital technologies, enhancing efficiency and transparency.

Beike Zhaofang (Shell House Hunting) is a leading real estate trading and service platform in China, integrating resources from multiple property brokerage companies, including Lianjia. It not only offers immersive virtual house-viewing experiences through VR technology but also provides detailed property information such as price, layout, and surrounding facilities. Additionally, it supports online consultations, house-viewing appointments, and transaction facilitation, making property searches and inquiries more convenient for users.

Open-door Labs introduced a unique model for buying and selling homes. It has risen as much as $350 million in three years. Its business model includes purchasing a home directly from the homeowner, improving it by installing the latest technologies and gadgets for virtual tours, and listing it on the market as fast as possible. It might be called tech-enabled house flipping. The company gains from the appreciation in the property price and protects itself from losses by taking a fee from the homeowner related to the estimated value of the property and associated market risks. For the home seller, potential benefits include faster and simpler sales and lower real estate transactions because the model avoids commissions.

Zillow uses websites to provide prices for existing properties and predict new prices in any given neighborhood through its "Zestimate" function. Other information that can be delivered online includes crime rates, walking scores, and transit scores that tell consumers the safety, walkability, and ease of travel in a particular neighborhood [5].

These electronic trading platforms have significantly improved the efficiency of real estate transactions and the user experience. They not only offer convenient services for homebuyers but also reduce costs and increase efficiency for developers and agents, providing more effective marketing and trading tools. With the further development of technology, the functions and services of real estate electronic trading platforms will become more diverse and intelligent.

3.3. Evangelism

At the same time, live streaming in the real estate market has become increasingly widespread. Leading developers such as Vanke and Country Garden, as well as intermediary platforms like Beike and Anjuke, have adopted live streaming as a routine marketing tool. Some local governments have also promoted property fairs through official live broadcasts [6].

Beike Zhaofang leverages VR Tours and Live-streaming Sales to drive social sharing reformation, addressing the time and space constraints of traditional home viewings and improving decision-making efficiency. By utilizing the real-time interactivity of live streams, such as inviting friends for group discounts or joint viewings, it achieves low-cost customer acquisition through social networks.

Longfor Real Estate’s “Little Dragon Plan” focuses on parent-child community engagement, targeting high-net-worth families by building emotional connections through family-friendly activities rather than direct property sales. High-quality parent-child videos attract traffic, naturally guiding viewers to property tours, and converting video views into physical visits.

The U.S. platform Compass employs an “AI + Social” property recommendation system, using AI to analyze users' social circles and browsing history to deliver hyper-personalized listings. It also recommends homes in neighborhoods where friends live, leveraging social trust to reduce decision-making risks.

Singapore’s Squarefoot introduces a gamified property-viewing challenge, incorporating point systems, leaderboards, and virtual rewards to transform a tedious process into a competitive experience. This aligns with Gen Z’s preference for interactive and entertaining engagement, boosting participation.

Live streaming in the real estate market breaks spatial and temporal constraints, allowing potential buyers to watch anytime, anywhere. It also significantly reduces costs and improves efficiency. A single live stream can attract tens of thousands of viewers at a lower cost than an offline exhibition. Live streaming can boost short-term sales, with time-limited discounts accelerating inventory clearance. It also helps build long-term brand recognition by educating audiences and nurturing potential clients, contributing to market recovery. Additionally, it encourages developers to optimize their online service chains, driving digital transformation and upgrading.

3.4. Everyplace

Omni-channel marketing in the real estate industry emphasizes seamless integration between online and offline channels to enhance customer experience and drive transaction conversions.

Platforms such as Open-door (US) digitize the entire real estate transaction process while seamlessly integrating offline home inspections. Sellers receive instant algorithmic offers, and Open-door directly purchases the property. Through its app, users can schedule inspectors, with reports synced in real-time to potential buyers. REA Group (Australia) combines AR-powered home viewing with financial services—users can scan empty lots to overlay 3D models of planned developments. It partners with banks to enable mortgage pre-approval directly on listing pages, including monthly payment calculators.

4. Responds to the Transforming Real Estate Marketing

From a practical application perspective, digital intelligence has already brought new growth momentum to real estate marketing.

The government is supposed to continue to promote digital infrastructure development. The deployment of 5G, IoT, and big data platforms to support smart real estate transactions is to be accelerated. Data security and AI ethics guidelines to ensure transparent and fair digital marketing practices should be also established.

Enterprises are supposed to innovate marketing models such as adopting VR or AR viewings, AI-driven recommendations, and live stream sales to enhance customer engagement. Big data analytics can be also utilized to personalize offerings and predict market trends.

As the wave of digital intelligence continues to develop, digital intelligence technologies will inevitably support and empower the entire real estate marketing process. Efficiency improvements, intelligent decision-making, optimized experiences, and revenue generation will become key priorities for the efficient development of real estate enterprises. A case study from Mr. Ye Real Estate MCN agency demonstrates that short videos primarily serve to build trust, while live streaming focuses on conversion. Through optimized live streaming scenarios, sales scripts, and data analytics, some projects achieved a 2-3 times higher lead conversion rate compared to traditional models. Zhixun Holdings proposed a content + live streaming dual-engine approach. By synergizing public traffic, such as using Douyin and Kuaishou with private traffic such as corporate apps, certain projects reduced their online exposure-to-offline transaction cycle by 50%, while achieving a 25% year-on-year increase in transaction volume. Under government guidance, digital platforms have enhanced market transparency through dynamic updates of transaction data on major urban property information platforms. In Q1 2025, Guangzhou saw a 36.8% year-on-year growth in new home sales and a 26.2% increase in secondary home transactions - improvements partially attributable to digital-intelligent marketing's precise matching of customer needs [7].

Consumers are also encouraged to learn to evaluate online property listings, virtual tours, and e-contracts critically, and strengthen rights protection.

5. Conclusion

The integration of digital and intelligent development, known as "digital intelligence", is an inevitable trend in real estate marketing. Digital intelligence will also serve as a crucial tool for enhancing user experience, improving the efficiency of homebuyers’ property searches, and advancing the industry toward low-carbon development. Developers are increasingly focusing on investing in and building online digital intelligence marketing capabilities. The industry is transitioning from single-dimensional basic information digitization to comprehensive multi-dimensional digital intelligence development.

The rapid development of digital intelligence has demonstrated significant positive impacts on both the real estate industry and China’s overall economic growth, including but not limited to stimulating consumption willingness, driving technological innovation, enhancing market vitality, and improving economic efficiency. By integrating digital-intelligent solutions, the real estate industry can deepen technology-driven marketing and innovate social interaction formats and therefore strengthen omnichannel customer relationship management. Not only do these suggestions help enhance the vitality and sustainable development capacity of the real estate industry, but they also provide strong support for the sector's transformation and high-quality development.

The digital-intelligent transformation of the real estate industry has significantly enhanced marketing efficiency, but it also raises certain concerns. Technologies like facial recognition and VR property viewing behavior tracking may lead to privacy breaches. Additionally, virtual experiences still have limitations, VR renderings might embellish properties, resulting in discrepancies during physical viewings, while elderly and other non-digital-native groups may find them less accessible, potentially exacerbating the digital divide. Therefore, while enhancing user experience, we must strike a balance between innovation and privacy protection. Although the digital and intelligent transformation is irreversible, there remains a long journey ahead to make marketing technology better serve people and drive the economic development of the entire real estate industry.

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