

From Star IP to Pure Aesthetics: The Marketing Code behind the Rise of Rhode

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Abstract. In today's society, "clean beauty" has become the beauty principle pursued by women, and women pay more attention to the significance of skincare and makeup itself. Starting from Rhode, an emerging celebrity beauty brand, and using the method of case analysis, this paper discusses how celebrity brands market in the "clean beauty" society to finally realize the change from star IP to pure aesthetics. Through the summary, it is concluded that in order to obtain the dividend of the times, emerging beauty brands need to make full use of social media in marketing, improve brand exposure, and cooperate with celebrities. But marketing should focus on products, not star founders. At the same time, brand products continue to appear on consumers' social platforms to achieve the ultimate goal of stimulating consumption potential. Product appearance, product composition, product texture and color design must be carried out on the premise of the consumption needs of a new generation of consumer groups. The most important thing of celebrity brands is to skillfully combine star IP with brand products, so that star IP plays an auxiliary role, products as the main body, and slowly realize brand transformation.

Keywords: Marketing, celebrity products, celebrity brands, Social media marketing.

1. Introduction

While Rihanna's Fenty Beauty rewrites the rules of the industry with its inclusive makeup, Hailey Bieber's Rhode is tearing up a new track with its "minimalist skincare" - a two-year-old U.S. brand whose sales exceeded a million dollars on its first day thanks to the fissile spread of its social media presence, reflecting the deep-seated displacement of power structures in the beauty industry. Reflecting the deep displacement of the right structure of the beauty industry. In today's changing beauty industry, Rhode's emergence is not only the success of a brand, but also an epitome of the changing times. The rise of Rhode reflects consumers' pursuit of "real" and "health" in the post-epidemic era - people no longer blindly follow complex skincare steps, but prefer streamlined, transparent and trustworthy products.

At the same time, the promotion of women's status and the reconstruction of consumer discourse have injected new vitality into the cosmetic industry, a prerequisite that has provided fertile soil for Rhode's growth. Social media has broken the monopoly of traditional aesthetics, and women are able to express their self-confidence. This psychological shift has given rise to the new trend of "clean beauty", where brands are focusing on ingredient safety, eco-friendly packaging and inclusivity in response to women's expectations of health, sustainability and social responsibility. Hailey Bieber uses her personal influence to endorse the brand, sharing her skincare routine and interacting with her fans through social media, closely connecting the brand with her "real life". This decentralized communication method breaks the authoritative narrative of traditional beauty brands and is closer to the psychological needs of young women in pursuit of personality and independence. Through the analysis of cases, it is concluded that traditional marketing channels are constantly replaced by social media platforms to achieve various marketing objectives from creating knowledge to interacting with consumers to purchasing. To attract consumers, consumers need to become co-designers and co-producers of customized products and services [1]. Rhode grasps the social trend of the rise of women's power and customizes services for consumers. At the moment of the awakening of women's consciousness and sustainable development, Rhode has caught up with the dividends of the times and sought welfare for women.

Rhode, as a new generation of cosmetic brands, is slowly demonstrating the "make-up revolution" of this era. The rise of the concept of clean beauty has pushed brands to rethink ingredients and environmental protection responsibility, and also spawned more novel means of influence. This article will use the case analysis method and secondary data analysis to explain how Rhode's aesthetically specific and different marketing approach made consumers voluntarily want to try Rhode's products, and then further made consumers not just pay for celebrity IP, but also feel Rhode's difference from other celebrity brands, finally realizing a perfect transformation of the industry.

2. Specific Case Analysis

2.1. History of the Rhode

Rhode is a skincare brand launched in June 2022, founded by American model and fashion icon Hailey Bieber. A brand centered on the concepts of minimalism and clean beauty, Rhode was created to reflect Hailey's personal skincare philosophy, as well as contemporary consumer demand for healthy, transparent and sustainable beauty products. Hailey Bieber had already amassed a wide range of influences in the fashion and beauty space before founding Rhode. Inspired by her own skincare experience and needs over the years, she wanted to create a brand that focused on basic skincare with safe ingredients and suitable for daily use. Rhode's name comes from Hailey's middle name "Rhode", which not only gives the brand a personal touch, but also conveys a sense of intimacy and authenticity. The products are designed according to the concept of "less is more", emphasizing efficient, pure ingredients and a minimalist experience. Rhode's products are free of controversial ingredients and have passed the stringent Pure Beauty Certification, which caters to the pursuit of safe and environmentally friendly beauty products by today's consumers.

2.2. Rhode Founder and Influence

Hailey Bieber, the founder of Rhode, as a famous model and self-media personality in the United States, understands the market demand very well. Hailey seized on this social situation and created the brand Rhode. At the same time, with her marriage to the famous artist Justin Bieber, by the whole circle of Europe and the United States attention. Hailey skillfully used the popularity of herself and her husband to make Rhode famous. As the founder, Hailey Bieber played an absolute role in the development and marketing of the brand.

2.3. Consumer Groups for Rhode

First of all, Rhode mainly aimed at consumers pursuing health and skincare. With the improvement of the global health industry's awareness of global warming and animal rights, customers' needs for cleaning and beauty care has also increased. Since the novel coronavirus (covid-19) pandemic in 2019, people began to pay more attention to cleaning and beauty care. Consumers value personal health even more, so they prefer to choose safe and toxic-free products [2]. More and more consumers begin to pay attention to the ingredients and safety of skincare products. Rhode's products are developed and used by Hailey herself, no irritating and controversial ingredients and have passed the stringent Pure Beauty Certification, attracting consumers who are sensitive to chemical ingredients and pursue natural and safe skincare.

Meanwhile, Rhode's mainly faces online customers, so social media has played an important role in Rhode's development. Hailey Bieber, the founder of Rhode, is a fashion icon on social media. The brand interacts directly with consumers through platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and so on, attracting a large number of young users active in social media. These users are not only interested in the products themselves, but also interested in the story and culture behind the brand. Rhode has captured young users of online media platforms and expanded its consumer base.

Minimalism lovers are also a major consumer group of Rhode. Its product line is streamlined and practical, attracting consumers who advocate a minimalist lifestyle and do not like over packaging products. These consumers prefer products that are multifunctional, efficient and minimalist in design.

At the same time, supporters of the concept of environmental protection and sustainability are also willing to buy Rhode's products. Rhode's focus on environmental protection and sustainability in its product packaging and product ingredient selection, appeals to consumers who care about the environment and support sustainable consumption. Such consumers are willing to pay for brands that conform to their own values.

Secondly, Rhode's core consumer groups are the young people of millennials (born in 1981-1996) and generation Z (born after 1997). Compared with the previous generation, millennials and generation Z tend to spend more on cosmetics or personal care products. Millennials and generation Z pay attention to their own health status and the significance of skincare, so this generation has become main advocates of clean beauty [2]. These customers are concerned about the safety, transparency and sustainability of product ingredients, and have high requirements for brand values and culture. Rhode has precisely attracted this group through its minimalist design, pure ingredients and affordable prices.

In general, Rhode's consumer groups are mainly young consumers with strong health awareness and focus on brand culture and values. Through precise market positioning and innovative marketing strategies, the brand has successfully occupied a place in the highly competitive beauty market.

2.4. Rhode's Main Products and Sales in Online and Offline Stores

Rhode's main products are mainly categorized into skincare and daily cosmetics. Skincare products are mainly BARRIER BUTTER, GLAZING MILK, PEPTIDE GLAZING FLUID, and BARRIER RESTORE CREAM. Compared with other celebrity cosmetic products, Rhode's skincare products use completely safe and natural chemical ingredients. Rhode's official website shows that the products contain chemical ingredients include PEPTIDES, SHEA BUTTE, SHEA BUTTER and others. The existence of these substances are very efficient and purposeful to help consumers improve the skin barrier, and further strengthen the health attributes of the products. At the same time, Rhode's daily cosmetics THE PEPTIDE LIP TINTS, THE POCKET FLUSH SET and LIP CASE have received positive reviews from consumers all over the world with very daily color designs and a wide audience. For this reason, Rhode's online official website sales are very considerable. In addition, Rhode will open flash stores around the world from time to time. Now, there are four places including New York, Los Angeles, and Toronto in North America and London in the United Kingdom that have opened temporary stores. There are many people queuing up to buy, and the sales volume is very considerable.

3. Marketing Strategy Analysis

3.1. Celebrity Effect and Social Media Communication

The success of Rhode cannot be separated from the social influence of its founder Hailey, Social media stars are content providers on social media platforms, with considerable influence and a large number of audiences [3]. Nowadays, social media is one of the "best ways" to get in touch with potential customers, and community social interaction. These new media earn the trust of customers by establishing deeper contacts with them [4]. Aware of the influence of social media, Hailey made good use of the personal influence of herself and her husband Justin Bieber to publish a large number of Rhode marketing content on social platforms. Hailey, as the founder of Rhode, has released videos on how to use Rhode products in an account specially opened for Rhode brand. Such videos grow up in about five minutes, the length is moderate, so that consumers are willing to spend time to see how stars use the products. Not only do people who have already bought the products want to follow Hailey in skincare, but also many people will involuntarily want to consume when they see the skin state and makeup effect of Hailey after using the products during the observation period. Many people have the mentality of buying back and trying, and find that after using the products, their complexion has improved or their skin state has improved, they will become loyal consumers. This action has greatly stimulated consumption. The brand share will also increase; at the same time, Hailey as the founder is also the ambassador of Rhode. Celebrity endorsement is a marketing strategy adopted by

many companies to achieve their marketing objectives. Ambassadors have a positive impact on the advertising brand image, resulting in favorable brand association, making the brand story and brand advertising more convincing, eye-catching and attractive to the attention of the target audience [5]. Hailey, as the ready-made ambassador of Rhode brand and the brand's founder, knows the brand purpose and brand's audience very well, which enables Hailey to update the brand purpose and culture in real time according to the consumer demand; Hailey has also mobilized netizens and celebrities, leveraging the influence of Hailey Bieber and Justin Bieber for a "viral" social media transmission, focusing on visual friendly platforms, with short videos, before/after comparisons, users UGC as the main content, emphasizing "share ability". At the same time, Rhode encourages fans to show their orders, and mentioned brand in social media, high-quality UGC will be forwarded to the official account. Hailey are often replies to fans on social media platforms and Hailey's figure can often be seen in the major flash stores, which really shortens the distance between celebrity founders and consumers. This is the first marketing code behind the rise of Rhode.

3.2. Matching Product Design with Consumer Demand

Product design must be based on consumer demand. Design emphasizes "design for consumers", "design with consumers" and "consumer participation in design" and "design for consumers" [6]. Selling things to consumers should take consumer demand as the main body of design, including appearance, texture and smell, all to satisfy consumers. At the same time, it is necessary to think about the concepts that consumers advocate and the reasons for supporting the brand. Rhode takes women's health and pure beauty makeup as its brand tenet. Because Rhode is a brand created by women, and cosmetics and skincare products are daily necessities that women will use, so female are the main customers, and due to the improvement of women's status in society, women pay more attention to their self-confidence and female power, Rhode also has a good grasp of consumer psychology, combining products with female power in product publicity, including women's sense of power and women's unity; Hailey also ingeniously combines product posters with desserts. Rhode selects dessert scents, such as waffles and butter, so Rhode will choose to shoot posters on desserts that match the product's smell, which also caters to the loves of young women. Rhode has achieved a good match between product design and consumer demand. It clearly knows that the sales of the brand mainly come from women and designs products based on women's preferences. This is the second Marketing code behind the rise of Rhode.

3.3. Brand Positioning and Market Competition

Rhode's brand positioning is affordable health beauty. Brand positioning is a very important part. Brand positioning determines the implementation framework related to visual communication and the future brand vision and brand image. It is a very important strategic tool [7]. Lipstick, skincare products and blush creams are daily items for women. They only cost about \$30. Compared with the average price of \$60 for luxury skincare products, they are more affordable. Because they are cheap, so Rhode has a wide audiences. From ordinary people to wealthy people, they can afford it. Especially, they are very friendly to ordinary people. Rhode products are good in quality and low in price. Consumers can buy very healthy products with transparent chemical ingredients at a low price. Consumers are at ease when they buy them. Moreover, the packaging design is simple and advanced, which enhances the user's "sense of luxury experience". It not only meets the skincare needs, but also does not need to spend a high price. Consumers have brand loyalty in the "low price and high quality" consumption experience. Rhode considers a competitive price strategy that can make Rhode's goods more attractive in the online cosmetics industry [8]. Rhode not only responds to market competition with low prices, but also conducts charity, mainly to help social women and promote women's power. In the Los Angeles Fire, Rhode showed on its official website that it donated one million dollars to help displaced or severely affected mothers and families. Rhode said that the brand mission is to help eliminate women's barriers. Rhode caters to the brand concept in action, which provides practical

protection for the masses and is very helpful to stimulate brand consumption potential and consumer loyalty. This is the third marketing code behind the rise of Rhode.

4. Suggestions

4.1. Subdivide Products and Increase Product Categories

Rhode's main products are more popular now, and consumers need to adapt to the products, customization is not strong. Taking Rhode's cream as an example, some consumers think that the cream is too thick, while some consumers figure that the skin will tingle when used, but some consumers are very fond of Rhode's cream, which reflects the problem of weak product customization. Rhode needs more segmented products. In order to meet the needs of different market segments, diversified and customized products emerge in endlessly. It can cover multiple market segments and meet the needs of different consumers [9]. Rhode should also increase its product categories. At present, the main research and development bodies of Rhode are still cosmetics and skincare products, the product limitations are relatively strong. Rhode can properly design some makeup tools, such as makeup brushes, powder puffs, which can be sold in combination with skincare products. The price of matching sets is convenient, and consumers are more willing to try. This is also a way to increase market share. Products should not be too simple. This strategy can help Rhode become a real beauty brand.

4.2. Expand the Market and Raise Awareness

Rhode is now too reliant on the North American market. Rhode must expand its consumer market. Now Rhode is mainly marketed and sold on its official website in North America, and only a few cities in Europe have flash stores. Rhode now lacks direct market share from the Asian market. Rhode is also well-known among young women in Asia, but now Asian consumers can only buy through Asian shopping software or find friends in the United States, which is very inconvenient. Compared with Fenty beauty of Rihanna, it has been sold through SEPHORA, a sales channel directly facing Asian consumers, so as to directly obtain sales from Asia. Asia has a large population base and considerable consumption capacity and potential. Rhode should pay attention to the Asian market. Rhode, like other celebrity brands, can open flagship stores on platforms such as Amazon or Taobao, or cooperate with SEPHORA, which can not only ensure that Asian consumers receive genuine goods, but also directly gain market share in Asia; Rhode's popularity varies greatly by age and region. Rhode is now well known locally in the United States, but it is mainly understood by young women, less by middle-aged women and men, and relatively poor in Europe and Asia. Only a small number of young people have heard of Rhode, and the brand awareness is generally not very high. Rhode can also sponsor more or some activities. Rhode's brand purpose is to promote women's health and women's power, so it can sponsor some international events to spread women's power, such as the women's open, so that spectators can notice Rhode on the sidelines of the game, be curious about Rhode, or use logos, symbols and unique names to enhance brand awareness [10]. This is a good way to increase awareness, and Rhode should take action.

5. Conclusion

Through case analysis, taking Rhode as a specific case, the first part briefly introduces the brand history, brand founders, consumer groups faced by the brand and brand hot selling products. The second part analyzes the brand marketing strategy, and this paper finds that Rhode's marketing methods are very rich, including star personal influence, clever use of social media, full compliance with consumer needs, and clear brand positioning. These marketing methods make the greatest use of the influence of star IP, first let star fans pay for star IP, secondly improve brand awareness through the influence of social media and the interaction between star founders and consumers, and then let consumers participate in the product design stage to truly realize the brand design of consumers.

Finally, according to product design and market research, determine a clear brand positioning, whether it is affordable and low-key, or luxury and high-end. After these basic steps are completed, they will be gradually improved, and finally realize the brand transformation from star IP to pure aesthetics. The third part discusses the points that Rhode needs to improve, such as the popularity of products, there is no strong pertinence, should be more subdivided products, so as to make products better serve consumers; And the consumer market is narrow, dependent on the North American market, ignoring the Asian and European markets, and its popularity is uneven in various regions; Brand significance is not deep enough, and brand heritage should be given to combine with life. The main contribution of this paper to future research is to use Rhode as an example to help star brands achieve brand transformation, and to help star brands clarify marketing methods and aspects that need to be improved, which is conducive to star brand beauty knowing that at this stage, it is mainly marketing subjects and marketing purposes. It is hoped that in the future, social research can be carried out on star brands. The current research is only analyzed through specific cases, which is not conclusive and social enough. Future research can understand consumers' real views on celebrity brands through research, so as to give further insights.

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