

Research on Marketing Strategy Optimization of Compound Condiments

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Abstract. This article focuses on the compound seasoning market. With the development of society, the accelerated pace of life has made it difficult for traditional seasonings to meet demand, and compound seasonings emerged with broad prospects. From the perspective of the Consumer End and Business End, it has huge potential. Still, it faces challenges such as competition, taste homogeneity, innovation, and consumer education under weak terminal consumption. Use SWOT to analyze the market. Advantages include time-saving, good taste, easy to carry, etc; disadvantages include health problems and the impact on mid-range catering; the opportunities are fast industry growth and new technology support; threats from competition from traditional leading companies and emerging companies, and fluctuations in raw material costs. In terms of marketing, the target customers need to be clearly defined at the product level; the price level is affected by various cost factors and competition; there are offline and online related issues at the channel level; there are problems with the form and insufficient publicity at the promotion level. Marketing strategy optimization involves product taste and safety improvements, skimming pricing and treating inferior products with superior products, offline multi-channel and online e-commerce and new media cooperation, cooking competitions, and other promotional methods.

Keywords: Compound seasoning; marketing strategy; market analysis.

1. Introduction

As the pace of life accelerates, the functions of seasonings are becoming more refined. Traditional ordinary seasonings such as soy sauce and salt can no longer meet the needs of the public. Compound seasonings have emerged and developed rapidly, and their status in seasonings has continued to rise. From the perspective of family and personal consumption, seasonings that are both convenient and healthy are becoming more and more important. In the catering industry, especially in chain restaurants, compound seasonings have become an ideal choice to replace high-level chefs to ensure the standardization of dishes in each branch and reduce operating costs. According to market research data, China's compound seasoning market accounts for 34% of the total seasoning market size, an increase of 13.77% year-on-year. The seasoning field has a very broad market development prospect [1].

For Consumer End individual consumers, as young people pursue a healthy lifestyle, independent cooking has become a popular life skill. However, many young people find it difficult to accurately control the amount of seasoning used during cooking. This pain point just provides an opportunity for the expansion of the compound seasoning market. For the Business End catering industry, compound seasonings help reduce cooking time, especially in the fast food industry. Chefs no longer need to add multiple seasonings one by one. They can quickly create a rich flavor by adding the right amount of compound seasoning according to the needs of the dish. This greatly saves cooking time, allowing restaurants to provide customers with delicious dishes in a shorter time. In addition, compound seasonings can also meet the taste needs of customers at the same time. It is professionally formulated with rich and diverse flavors to suit the taste preferences of different customers. No matter what flavor a customer likes, they can taste the food that satisfies their taste buds with the help of compound seasonings. Therefore, compound seasonings have great potential and may even swallow up the market share of basic seasonings.

Although the performance of listed compound seasoning companies is still primarily growing, this 'treasure' track also faces challenges in many aspects amid weak terminal consumption

First, the competition is fierce and the pattern is fragmented. The market concentration is low, and each company competes in different segments. There is no leader with absolute advantages yet. Second, the taste is difficult to standardize. Eating habits and tastes vary greatly across China. However, compound seasonings must be able to meet the different taste needs of different regions. Therefore, the demand for product types is very huge. Third, product innovation is difficult. Consumers have diversified demands for food tastes and put forward more demands for innovation. However, it is not easy to develop new products that meet consumer needs, and a lot of costs need to be invested in product development. Fourth, the cost of consumer education is high. Some consumers' understanding of compound seasonings is still stuck on traditional single seasonings, and they do not know enough about the advantages and usage methods of compound seasonings. Companies need to spend a lot of time and energy on consumer education to improve consumers' awareness and acceptance of compound seasonings. This article aims to explore the marketing issues in the development of the compound seasoning market and provide optimization strategy suggestions.

2. Composite Condiment Market Analysis

2.1. Strength Analysis

First, time can be saved. Compound seasonings greatly shorten the cooking time. For consumers, especially office workers and college students, if the traditional method is used to make boiled fish, it will take at least 1 hour to complete all the processes, and this method also has high requirements for the cooking skills of young people. However, if boiled - fish seasonings are used, a lot of energy and time can be saved. Second, there is a standardized taste, and it is very stable. The standardized process of compound seasonings is beneficial to the stability of food preparation for chefs in the Business End catering industry, ensuring that each dish has the same flavor and increasing the fault-tolerance rate. Third, there are diversified flavors. According to the Business End catering industry, customized products can be obtained from manufacturers and home users, they can quickly make products with different flavors at home. At the same time, different seasonings can be innovated due to different tastes of consumers. Fourth, it is easy to carry and store. Compound seasonings can be taken out for camping or traveling, and users do not need to take various seasonings with them, making travel more convenient. This also reduces the possibility of deterioration and waste.

2.2. Weakness Analysis

First, health issues. Many seasonings add large amounts of salt, oil, or sugar to make the flavor stronger. Data from a test of 27,000 Chinese adults and children by Queen Mary University of London shows that in recent years, the salt intake of Chinese people seriously exceeds the standard by more than double. At the same time, children aged 3 to 6 years old have a daily salt intake that reaches the highest standard for adults, while older children consume nearly 9 grams of salt per day [2]. Considering the current situation and the importance Chinese people attach to health, compound seasonings still need to improve their formulas to produce seasonings that are more suitable for Chinese stomachs. Second, it is not conducive to the development of mid-range catering. The cooking skills of chefs in mid-range catering vary. The introduction of compound seasonings may reduce the cooking skills of chefs, which is not conducive to the development of corporate characteristics.

2.3. Opportunity analysis

In the context of the seasoning industry, the compound seasoning market has maintained a high growth rate, with an increasing variety of products, but a low degree of concentration, and no stable, monopolistic situation has been formed. Therefore, both giant companies and up-and-coming newcomers can take the lead and break through the market development of new categories [3]. In addition, with the continuous development of emerging technologies, the innovation of compound seasonings has been supported. For example, the use of bio-fermentation technology can prolong the

preservation time without the use of preservatives; the popularization of automated factories has reduced a lot of costs while ensuring quality standardization.

2.4. Threat analysis

Although the opportunity analysis shows that there is no monopoly in the compound seasoning market, leading traditional seasoning companies such as Haitian and Lee Kum Kee have all stepped into the research development and promotion of this track. At the same time, the birth of emerging companies has led to fierce competition for market share, and everyone wants to be the leader in the industry. Compound seasonings require a lot of raw materials, and the prices of these raw materials are regulated by factors such as climate and market supply, making the cost very unstable, which is likely to threaten small and medium-sized enterprises with insufficient funds [4].

3. Research on Compound Condiment Marketing Problems

3.1. Product Strategy

First, enterprises must identify the target customer groups. For the Business End market, this article believes that compound seasoning companies should cooperate with hotels and small and medium-sized restaurants. The reason is that the target groups of these two are travelers, conference participants, and residents who celebrate. They do not need too amazing dishes but focus on cost-effectiveness and restaurant services. Suppliers can provide customized services to the Business End and create unique seasonings for them. For the Consume family end, this article plans specific product strategy optimization for target groups of different age groups. As shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Potential customer analysis form.

Potential customer analysis form	Post - 95s	Post - 80s and Post - 90s	Post - 70s	The aged
Age	18-24 years old	25-39 years old	40-49 years old	50-67 years old
consumption characteristics	complex contradiction	backbone of consumption	pragmatist	Not fall behind in digital era.
Population	80 million (5%)	330million (25%)	220million (17%)	380million (28%)
social characteristics	College students in the era of the new economic normal and intelligence or those who have just entered the workplace.	Adjustment of economic structure. The only child in the mobile era. The opening-up of the two-child policy.	Achieving career success in the Internet era	The dividends of reform and opening up, living a carefree and easy life, either being retired.

Data From: Research on the Listing Strategy of HS Company X

3.2. Price

First, the difference in online and offline prices leads to cross-selling, which affects the company's sales reputation. This requires companies to control prices or develop e-commerce products. Second, the cost of raw materials. The current international situation is complex and changeable, which makes the cost of raw materials fluctuate. For example, if some spices encounter disasters or production cuts in the production area, the price will rise sharply, thereby pushing up the production cost of compound seasonings and causing product prices to rise. Third, the transportation and storage of compound seasonings require certain conditions and costs. For example, for some compound seasonings that require refrigeration or special packaging, the transportation and storage costs will be relatively high. Fourth, the market concentration of the compound seasoning industry is low, and there are many small and medium-sized enterprises. To compete for market share, malicious companies often adopt

a price competition strategy and launch some lower-priced products, which may lead to a vicious cycle of prices and affect the reputation of the entire category.

3.3. Channel Layout

First, offline channels, and traditional retail channels such as supermarkets and convenience stores are relatively slow in product updates. As a result, consumers cannot get in touch with the latest products in the first place. This is not conducive to the innovation and development of the compound seasoning market. The payment period of the catering channel is usually long, which puts a certain pressure on the cash flow of compound seasoning companies. Companies need to invest a lot of money in production and inventory management. Second, online channels and compound seasoning products on e-commerce platforms come from a wide range of sources and have varying quality. It is difficult for consumers to directly observe and inspect the quality of the product when purchasing, and they can only judge it through information such as pictures, descriptions, and reviews. Some unscrupulous merchants sell counterfeit and shoddy products, causing losses to consumers and affecting the reputation of the category. In addition, there may also be problems with the after-sales service of e-commerce platforms, such as complicated return and exchange procedures and untimely processing, which further affects consumers' purchasing experience.

3.4. Promotion

First, the forms of promotional activities are relatively simple, mostly limited to traditional methods such as common discounts, buy-one-get-one-free, and lucky draws. With the increasing diversification of consumer demand and the intensification of market competition, these old-fashioned promotional methods are gradually unable to arouse consumers' freshness and enthusiasm for participation. Too frequent promotional activities will cause consumers to have promotion fatigue, reducing their attention to and participation in promotional activities. On the contrary, too long intervals between promotional activities will make it difficult to maintain consumers' continued attention to the brand and their enthusiasm for purchasing, which will make people think that the product quality is low. Many compound seasoning brands do not carry out sufficient and effective publicity when carrying out promotional activities. Simply posting a few promotional posters at the sales venue or publishing a brief promotional announcement on the e-commerce platform cannot accurately convey key information such as the highlights of the promotion and the extent of the discount to the majority of consumers.

4. Optimization Analysis of Compound Condiment Marketing Strategy

4.1. Product Optimization

This article proposes optimization solutions from the following aspects. First, in terms of food experience, due to the serious homogeneity of products, R&D personnel need to further fine-tune the proportion of product ingredients to improve the taste while ensuring health. Record the formula after each R&D experiment and iterate experiments again and again to ensure that the formula reaches perfection. In addition to improving the formula, manufacturers also need to control the quality of raw materials, retain samples for testing, and conduct large-scale tests regularly. Second, in terms of safety testing, and toxicity testing. In this process, experimental animals are tested at high doses for a short period, the effects of long-term or repeated low-dose exposure on organisms are tested, and their physiological changes are observed. Microbiological testing includes routine microbiological testing and preservative effectiveness testing. For heavy metal and pollutant testing, the test results are evaluated by high-precision instruments according to national and international food safety standards. Stability testing. By simulating different environmental conditions (such as temperature, humidity, and light), the physical state and chemical property changes of seasonings are tested to evaluate the product's ability to resist microbial contamination during the shelf life.

4.2. Price Strategy

First, price - skimming. When a product first enters the market, it should leave a high-end impression on consumers. A high-price and high-welfare pricing strategy can be adopted. While ensuring profits, promotions like 'buy one get a few free' can be carried out in various sales channels. Offline, an on-the-ground promotion mode can be carried out to allow the public to try cooking for free and experience the joy of being lazy. Second, drive inferior products with superior products. When the first product is stable, this high-end brand image will penetrate the masses. The brand can launch some lower-priced products. When competing with other brands, buyers will think that the brand is taking a high-end route and that cheap products are also high-quality, thereby achieving a competitive advantage.

4.3. Channel Strategy

For offline channels, companies need to seek direct cooperation with the Business End market, which is conducive to grasping the dynamics of consumers and improving products on time. Second, cooperate with local high-quality distributors to formulate sales strategies that conform to local habits, and at the same time train the distributors' salesmen to build closer relationships and enable them to better understand product concepts. Third, for special channels, cooperate with canteens of large enterprises or government units. This type of channel is the most stable and conducive to the steady development of enterprises. For online channels, companies need to cooperate with e-commerce platforms such as Taobao and JD.com to facilitate repeat customers buying products and increase brand loyalty. Second, publish creative videos on Tiktok, video accounts, etc. to attract users, or cooperate with big anchors for live broadcasts and promotions, or cooperate with bloggers in different tracks with traffic, and place appropriate advertisements in the video to leave a deep impression without affecting the viewing experience.

4.4. Promotion Strategy

First, in a cooking competition, consumers and famous chefs are invited to participate. They are divided into two groups: one uses compound seasonings, and the other does not. The prizes include products regardless of whether the contest is won or lost, which can stimulate consumer interest and participation while increasing brand awareness. Second, a private domain membership system can gain a stable source of customers, while also providing timely feedback, allowing customers to participate in product development, increasing participation and brand loyalty. Using viral marketing strategies, a marketing model that encourages the target audience to pass on market information to others like a virus, so that market information spreads at an exponential rate [5].

5. Conclusion

Compound seasoning is an industry that combines the emerging and the traditional. Its tradition is that it still belongs to the seasoning industry, and its taste is like traditional seasoning. Its novelty is that it combines traditional seasonings in one. It is a brand-new category that has developed in recent years with the mechanization of restaurants and the change in consumers' cooking habits. From the perspective of the category life cycle, compound seasoning is still in its growth stage. The competition pattern of the industry is relatively scattered, and a relatively stable competition pattern has not yet been formed. This article aims to provide market suggestions for compound seasoning companies. From the market analysis, it is found that compound seasoning is still developing at a high speed, and the market capacity is far from reaching its peak, but it is also facing the threat of intensified competition and categories such as pre-prepared dishes. Manufacturers should combine their advantages, such as R&D capabilities, flexible customization capabilities, resource integration, etc., overcome their disadvantages, seize all opportunities as much as possible, use various policies, and adopt a diversified strategy to develop. The in-depth research in this article can not only provide certain guidance for the strategic formulation of manufacturers but also provide some practical

reference value for the transformation of other companies in the industry. However, the seasoning and prepared food industries are currently facing many uncertainties, the competition landscape is fragmented, most companies are still in the IPO sprint stage, and there are relatively few listed companies, so there is less publicly available information. In addition, the authors' level is limited, and there is less in-depth theoretical research. There are more parts based on grassroots research and experience analysis. Therefore, if manufacturers want to implement relevant diversification strategies, they need to make further feasibility analyses.

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