

Analysis of Nongfu Spring's Digital Marketing Strategy

Yuzhu Huang^{1,*}

¹UON Business School, The University of Newcastle, Australia (Singapore) at PSB Academy, Singapore

*Corresponding author: c3506577@uon.edu.au

Abstract:

Conventional fast-moving goods firms need to adapt in various ways as digitization changes buying habits. This study analyzes how Nongfu Spring's online advertising plan might boost its value and user relationships. This study combines literature review, case analysis, and empirical evidence to focus on four core tactics, instructing brand stories through micro-documentaries to build mental resonance; a tracking system to build scientific trust; scenario-based targeted marketing to reach precise audiences; and user creation devices to promote social fission interaction. NetEase Cloud Music and the Palace Museum of Arts are two interconnected tales that demonstrate how businesses employ feelings and beauty to attract users and create User-Generated Content (UGC) stuff. The study revealed that Nongfu Spring's success depends on its ability to naturally connect technology with narrative creativity, promoting trust and user connection. With its success, the company still struggles with expressiveness weary and low costly products online sales. For a unique taste and brand sticking, this research offers AR content gains, bespoke packing, and smart Artificial Intelligence (AI) suggestions.

Keywords: Nongfu Spring; digital marketing strategy; online strategy.

1. Introduction

In the past few years, digital marketing has come to serve as a critical instrument for enterprises to acquire users, sustain brand loyalty, and achieve consistent growth, because of the rapid popularization of mobile Internet and the continuing advancement of technology. More and more organizations and brands around the world are using technological resources like social media, entertainment software, and AI rec-

ommendation systems to make it easier for customers to interact with them and keep them coming back. Digital marketing is growing much quicker, especially in China. The decision-making process of Chinese customers is becoming increasingly "digitalized" due to the growing usage of WeChat, the development of different platforms like Douyin and Rednote, and the ongoing enhancement and optimization of e-commerce platforms like Taobao and JD.com. This strategy has also completely changed how companies

in the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) market talk to each other. “Value beyond products” is now a crucial factor in rivalry between companies. According to recent industry reports, China’s internet advertising market reached approximately ¥1.13 trillion in 2023, representing a 12.4% increase from the previous year [1]. Short video marketing and social content marketing are the two categories that are expanding fastest.

In this situation, Nongfu Spring, a well-known and top brand in the Chinese drinking water market, has shown that it can easily adapt to digital marketing. Nongfu Spring has always kept its important traditional image as a “natural water source” and “high-quality water source.” At the same time, the company has used brand micro-documentaries. One of Nongfu Spring’s key digital advertising strategies is the development of a long-lasting relationship with customers via emotional resonance. Nongfu Spring cares more about the brand’s history so that consumers can feel connected to nature, clean water sources, and leading healthy lives than other businesses that solely concentrate on how well their products function [2]. The “Water of Changbai Mountain” micro-documentary series is among the best cases of the brand.

The film depicts the natural environment of the real water source, where the water is gathered, and the everyday lives of those who labor there to keep it safe [3]. The terms “natural,” “pure,” and “sense of responsibility” are all strongly woven within. Customers who acquire the bottle can view clips shot at Changbai Mountain, Qiandao Lake, and other locations by scanning the Quick Response (QR) code on the outside. They get an expanded and genuine understanding of the brand culture as a result. This method can not only provide the product with a stronger narrative, but it can also encourage people to share and connect their emotions to it.

When it comes to how this film has helped people communicate, similar topics on the Douyin platform have been watched more than 2 billion times. Many people who have left comments have said that the source of water deeply moved them, and some have even said that they think it’s more like a documentary than an ad [4]. This non-advertising strategy works well to get around some consumers’ dislike of advertising content and sends brand value without being seen.

According to consumer psychology, this storytelling approach not only meets the psychological requirements that customers have for safety and reliability, but it also makes users feel more connected to the brand and helps them remember it emotionally by helping them picture where it came from [5]. Because of this, Nongfu Spring can stand out in the very similar bottled water market of today by moving from selling water to sharing stories

about water. QR code traceability systems, and social media marketing to build trust and encourage people to use the brand. The brand’s “Changbai Mountain Water” series of content, which includes cross-border partnerships with NetEase Cloud Music and “blockchain traceability” and other examples, shows how a traditional fast-moving consumer goods brand uses digital marketing to connect with and interact with young users in a new way. This event is important for business today, but it also serves as a great example of how to use digital technology in education. Some studies have looked at how new brands can use digital marketing, but there aren’t many that delve into how established fast-moving consumer goods brands may change their strategy to work with new media. So, this analysis looks at the Nongfu Spring brand to see how its digital marketing methods work together and how valuable the brand is as a product. The research methods used are a review of literature, an analysis of cases, and data research that uses qualitative as well as quantitative approaches. For example, it includes classifying social media marketing content (like UGC, micro-documentaries, etc.), comparing data on important marketing metrics (like Douyin playback volume and interaction rate), and some extra materials like links to questionnaires or interview content. This time, the focus of the study was on Nongfu Spring since it is a leader in the drinking water business, and its strategic use of different digital platforms is an example that may be followed. This paper looks at how Nongfu Spring makes this brand more competitive in the digital world through “content empathy,” “technical trust,” “precise push,” and “user co-creation” by checking the information from different points of view.

The next segment will look at this from four different angles. First, the main part will talk about Nongfu Spring’s specific practices and results in content strategy, blockchain technology, precision advertising, and social fission. Second, it will look at the user participation and effect of brand cross-border communication through the case comparison of the joint project of NetEase Cloud “Le Ping” and the Forbidden City. This article also points out some of the problems that Nongfu Spring is currently facing, such as the “water source story” may become aesthetically boring and the low conversion rate of high-end product lines and offers some suggestions for how to improve innovation. Finally, the final section will summarize the main findings and look forward to the brand’s potential in the fields of AI empowerment and sustainable communication in the future. This study not only gives traditional firms a useful guide for going digital, but it also adds to the body of academic research on incorporated content marketing, technology utilization, and user behavior analysis.

2. Nongfu Spring's Strategic Marketing

2.1 Content Empathy Strategy: Documentary Marketing

One of Nongfu Spring's key digital advertising strategies is the development of a long-lasting relationship with customers via emotional resonance. Nongfu Spring cares more about the brand's history so that consumers can feel connected to nature, clean water sources, and leading healthy lives than other businesses that solely concentrate on how well their products function [2]. The "Water of Changbai Mountain" micro-documentary series is among the best cases of the brand.

The film depicts the natural environment of the real water source, where the water is gathered, and the everyday lives of those who labor there to keep it safe [3]. The terms "natural," "pure," and "sense of responsibility" are all strongly woven within. Customers who acquire the bottle can view clips shot at Changbai Mountain, Qiandao Lake, and other locations by scanning the QR code on the outside. They get an expanded and genuine understanding of the brand culture as a result. This method can not only provide the product a stronger narrative, but it can also encourage people to share and connect their emotions to it.

When it comes to how this film has helped people communicate, similar topics on the Douyin platform have been watched more than 2 billion times. Many people who have left comments have said that the source of water deeply moved them, and some have even said that they think it's more like a documentary than an ad [4]. This non-advertising strategy works well to get around some consumers' dislike of advertising content and sends brand value without being seen.

According to consumer psychology, this storytelling approach not only meets the psychological requirements that customers have for safety and reliability, but it also makes users feel more connected to the brand and helps them remember it emotionally by helping them picture where it came from [5]. Because of this, Nongfu Spring can stand out in the very similar bottled water market of today by moving from selling water to sharing stories about water.

2.2 Technology Trust Strategy: Blockchain Traceability System

The brand's "verifiable transparency" has become an increasingly significant method of establishing trust as consumers prioritize product safety and authenticity. Nongfu Spring's innovative approach in this area includes the implementation of a based on a water in bottles traceability

system that "empowers trust" in each product.

As an example, Nongfu Spring puts a unique accountability code on the caps of some of its products. By scanning the QR code, customers can see the water source recognition report, the date and time the water was collected, the details of the public transport track, and other details concerning the bottle of water in real time [6]. This approach not only makes it possible to see the whole process of the product from source to terminal, but it also stops problems like channel fraud and information tampering. Nongfu Spring has created a "trust mechanism" that customers may check at any moment using the technology of distributed ledgers. This makes the details very clear for consumers.

Including this traceability system not only makes the brand's promise of "safety," "naturalness," and "traceability" stronger, but it also gives customers a deeper sense of psychological security and involvement when they use the items. Nongfu Spring's strategy is more "data-persuasive" and "operable" than that of typical businesses that only use ads to establish trust. This is especially appealing to Generation Z consumers who appreciate logical judgment and verifying knowledge.

From a marketing point of view, blockchain technology traceability is not just a separate thing; it is now part of the brand's digital marketing content [7]. As an example, Nongfu Spring has consistently disseminated instructional content on the topic of "scanning the code to verify the water source" on graphic social media platforms and brief video platforms. This material enables consumers to verify the information in person, thereby enabling them to establish trust in the brand through "participation behavior." This idea that "trust is content" combines technical value and exchange value in a way that gives brands a new way for standing out.

2.3 Data Precision Strategy: Scenario-Based Push

In a smart digital marketing world, individual push alerts are crucial for firms to interact with consumers. Nongfu Spring excels at understanding customer groups' purchase reasons, issues, and use conditions. It used informed ads to promote „by scenario, by population“.

Nongfu Spring promotes „electrolyte replenishment“ ads on gym software, health websites, and sports short films to attract fitness buffs. These directions will stress fluid equilibrium and rapid water intake after activity. To target moms and babies, the brand would advertise „baby making water“ on online stores, mother and baby neighborhoods, and mother Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs). Spots will highlight „aseptic packaging“ and „natural low sodium“ and other security aspects. Nongfu Spring can

efficiently target appropriate groups with ads by analyzing users' search history, item choices, and behaviors.

In the user surfing path of the Tmall flagship shop, the program can simply propose „special water for brewing baby milk powder“ or „special water for sports hydrating“ to create an integrated marketing path of „search-recommendation-conversion“. Ad location refers to this suggestion. These suggestions improve the platform's ability to match advertisements with user needs.

Nongfu Spring employs „scenario-based dynamic adaptation“ in addition to targeted supply. It will suggest „lemon-flavored natural mineral water“ for cooling in hot weather. However, hiking and climbing focus on mobile or outdoor water devices [8]. The holistic analysis of „time + place + behavior“ data make advertisement distribution easier and real-time, driving clicks and sales.

The user's psychological „felt relevance“ and „data matching“ are increased by Nongfu Spring's push way, making advertising more relevant to the user's interests and needs and increasing clicks. Timely delivery improves user interface and lowers recruiting costs, helping Nongfu Spring connect better online in the tough drinking water business.

2.4 Social Fission Strategy: A Mechanism for Universal Co-Creation

As opposed to being a one-way product in the digital age of highly active social media, brand communication now prioritizes engagement from users, content co-creation, and feelings. Following this trend cautiously, Nongfu Spring aggressively advocates for the „all-people co-creation“ strategy, and this transforms users from passive consumers into active speakers and boosts brand influence through social fragmentation.

For the purpose of developing passion for participation, Nongfu Spring first encourages people to post UGC on its products on social media sites like Rednote, Weibo, and Douyin [9]. It does this by using registration systems, topic challenges, and other strategies. On Rednote, for example, the rise of „national style water bottle“ trends was sparked by the „Emperor's Water“ joint event, where users took pictures to check in and uploaded pictures of the joint bottles with the Forbidden city. At the „Happy Bottle“ event, Nongfu Spring collaborated with NetEase Cloud Music to introduce a bottle with lyrics printed on it, which prompted users to post images and comments on Weibo. Enthusiasm for second invention and emotional resonance.

Nongfu Spring not only works with others to supply visuals, but they also use the „topic fission“ characteristic of social media platforms in a smart way. For example, they put subject mentions to get others to comment, share, and

interact with the content, which helps it go online. This kind of system makes full use of the user's social circle's reputation chain, allowing company data to flow quickly in a more natural and genuine way.

Further, Nongfu Spring considers UGC as a representation of „user value recognition“ and not merely a marketing tool. To improve users' feelings of participation and engagement and to fortify the brand's psychological connection with customers, the company will frequently select content created by users to showcase on its official system.

By use of these creation processes, Nongfu Spring has successfully converted „users“ into „brand communicators“ and achieved the shift in interaction from „brand talk“ to „user talk.“ Not only can national shared creation increase customer engagement, but it also quietly finishes brand idea' social penetration.

3. Case analysis: Dual Driving Forces of Cross-Border Collaboration and User Participation

Cross-border links with music and culture have helped Nongfu Spring increase networking and user participation in its digital marketing approach. In the two partnerships with NetEase Cloud Music and the illegal city, the brand integrated „emotional resonance + social fission,“ broadening young clients' mental limitations and visual linkages.

One typical case is „Music Bottle“ working with NetEase Cloud Music. Nongfu Spring's bottle user area shows „My heart melts when you smile“ and „The drizzle stops, but the story is not over“ to evoke strong feelings. In addition to buying things, users take photos of these „lyrics bottles“ and post them on Weibo and Rednote, creating a lot of user-generated content. Many users have made brief films and poems around the tunes, strengthening the brand-emotional express connection. This activity increases product visibility, user participation, or brand loyalty.

Nongfu Spring and Palace Museum culture share the „Emperor's Water“ duty. The event combines traditional Chinese culture with the water's presentation and attracts young customers who check in and contribute images to Rednote. Younger consumers want „national style aesthetics,“ thus the bottle's design includes lines like „I allow you to drink water“ and „Seal with the style of the imperial seal,“ solar term copywriting, color layering, and Palace Museum-approved symbols [10]. Users freely photoshoot, promote, and rate products, making it an online marketing area. This indigenous communication method gives the product social and collecting value and grows the brand's value.

Both joint projects have shown high fission interaction efficiency and social platform participation. “Emperor’s Water” emphasizes visual impact and cultural placement, but “Happy Bottle” emphasizes psychological connection and content co-creation. The latter tensions check-in behavior and visual contact, whereas the former focuses on emotion and content co-creation. The two build brand feelings and young purchasers’ perception of the brand. In the initial seven days, public social media systems saw over 100 million “Happy Bottle” readings and 100,000 photo comments. The drinks category’s rare cultural hit “Emperor’s Water” had over 40,000 check-ins on Rednote. These group names expand the brand image and serve the brand’s progressive communication path from practical utility to emotional value to cultural belonging and identity, putting Nongfu Spring into another era of brand creation and cultural leadership.

4. Challenges and Optimization Suggestions

4.1 Today’s Challenges: Brand Fatigue and the Difficulty of Converting High-End Products

Despite its digital marketing efforts prevailing, Nongfu Spring may still struggle with growing online sales and new buyers.

The brand feels apparent tiredness with the material plan’s “water source story” representation approach. The “natural water source” and “original ecological environment” have been Nongfu Spring’s key stories in visual talks micro-documentaries, and other means to emphasize the water source’s purity and rarity. But a few customers, especially younger ones, grew tired of this “natural narrative” because it repeated the same sentiments. Most said its emotional effect was waning and the topic was unoriginal. This “expression path reliance” may make the brand’s long-term sales less lasting.

Design appeal and brand image are good for Nongfu Spring’s high-end product line, featuring glass bottles of natural water, but its digital buy rate is poor [11]. Some high-end products in online malls have an uptake rate of less than 5%, which is far lower than standard Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET) bottle series. High-end water may be less likely to be purchased as people are price-conscious, only use it for certain times (like presenting gifts or hosting business events), or lack an “instant use drive” for it.

There is also a “misalignment risk” between online platforms’ content and user needs. Certain ads remain business-focused, can’t encourage social sharing and busy discourse, and lack user involvement capabilities. Due to

the lack of feedback, messaging services hinder content creation.

Nongfu Spring must restructure its connection system, improve its top-end product website and create media that meet digital client’s needs and tastes.

4.2 Suggestions for Breaking the Impasse: Innovation in Content and Multi-Faceted Upgrades in Channel Reconstruction

If Nongfu Spring wishes to maintain its digital marketing advantage, it must optimize and innovate in material form, business model, or channel interaction method.

First, marketers should move beyond „water source documentary“ content strategy and use immersive, interactive dialogue. In mixture with Augmented Reality (AR) technology, create lightweight interactive products like „water source exploration game“ or „digital water search journey“ so users can see the real source of water after examining the code, join a virtual check-in, answer questions, fade levels, etc., to make the content more memorable and enjoyable. This „content + technology + gamification“ reduces content weariness and boosts user engagement [12].

High-end products can use scene-oriented channels of distribution. To boost social and emotional value, promote „customized bottle“ solutions for special situations like the marriage customization, water bars, business meetings, etc., such as printing the newlyweds’ names on the glass bottle or customizing the company’s LOGO packaging. Online channels can try „on-demand personalized combination packs“ or „high-end limited pre-sales“ to lower the single purchase limit and enhance user desire to try.

Lastly, upgrade social interaction using „event trigger + user co-creation“. For example, „temperature customized water“ can be intelligently pushed through vending machines or online shopping platforms’ websites to recommend lemon-flavored waters and sports electrolytes water above 32°C in hot weather, and „social challenge tasks“ or „emotional water bottle pairing“ can be launched with festivals and scenes to spark spontaneous sharing and participation. Evaluation-type interactive information like „Which water is suitable for me today?“ is fun and easy to share.

Furthermore, Nongfu Spring may develop AI recommendation systems, realize the „smart water recommendation“ function in e-commerce platforms or APPs using user portraits and customer behavior forecasts, offer specific options, and create a positive closed loop between automation tools and content feedback systems to increase marketing Return On Investment (ROI) [13].

Thus, Nongfu Spring could solve the interaction block and extend brand value in future competition by systematic iteration in content, channels, and innovation.

5. Conclusion

Content sympathy, gadgets trust, specific push, and social fission are used to analyze Nongfu Spring's complex online advertising tactics and show how the brand could shift from a rapidly evolving goods brand to an online natural brand. The four strategies include topics and technological levels and better integrate buyer patterns with new media communication mechanisms, demonstrating strong integration and adaptability.

The company Cloud's „Happy Bottle“ project creates UGC and additional traffic through resonant emotions, while the Inner City-co-branded „Emperor's Water“ drives check-in activity with visual cultural emblems. All confirm that cross-border co-branding can boost user participation and platform dissemination. These acts show that Nongfu Spring has moved from „talking about a brand“ to „letting users talk about the brand together“, completing the company's shift from an outputter to a social creation platform.

With this, the company faces issues like aging express material, poor online sales of expensive goods, and a single active mechanism. The study proposes optimizing user experience and marketing efficacy with AR multimedia, smart scene push, and unique bottle design.

In conclusion, Nongfu Spring's digital marketing practice suggests that a brand's online presence depends on severe synergy between content, technology, and users. As robotics, immersive media, and viable communication ideas advance, brands should explore customized, sustainable, and even long-term digital marketing models to build more powerful and vital brands.

References

- [1] Dai Hao. Research on Nongfu Spring Brand Content Marketing Strategy. *Advances in Economics, Business and Management Research*, 2024, 518–530.
- [2] Dou Tong. Market Repositioning and Strategic Adaptation: A Case Study of Nongfu Spring's Return to the Purified Water Market. *SHS Web of Conferences*, 2024, 207, 03010.
- [3] Hou Yang. Research on the Application of Emotional Marketing Strategy in the Brand Development Process of Nongfu Spring. *Proceedings of the 2022 4th International Conference on Literature, Art and Human Development (ICLAHD 2022)*, 2023, 586–595.
- [4] Hu Yang. Analysis of Nongfu Spring Brand Marketing Strategy Based on Changes in Consumer Behaviour During the Epidemic. *Highlights in Business, Economics and Management*, 2022, 2: 269–276.
- [5] Liu Wei. Film Marketing in the Age of the Mobile Media How the Chinese Effectively Promote Their Films Through Douyin (Tik Tok). *Lecture Notes in Education Psychology and Public Media*, 2023, 4(1): 378–385.
- [6] Mandung Feby. The Influence of Storytelling Techniques in Digital Marketing on Brand Loyalty: A Consumer Psychology Perspective. *Golden Ratio of Marketing and Applied Psychology of Business*, 2024, 5(1): 66–78.
- [7] Mustafa Nazeer, Hameedat Blessing Opeyemi, Tolulope Tolulope, Afua Winfred, Ofodile Onyeka Chris, Oyewole Temitope. E-commerce and consumer behavior: A review of AI-powered personalization and market trends. *GSC Advanced Research and Reviews*, 2024, 18(3): 66–77.
- [8] OctoPlus Media. 2025 China digital marketing trends: Insights for global brands. *OctoPlus Media Global*, 2025.
- [9] Thakkar Khushbu Yogeshkumar, Joshi Bhumika Bharatbhai, Kachhela Pankti Prakashbhai. Consumer engagement with augmented reality (AR) in marketing: Exploring the use of AR technology in marketing campaigns and its impact on consumer engagement, brand experiences, and purchase decisions. *Journal of Management Research and Analysis*, 2023, 10(2): 99–105.
- [10] Wasiq Muhammad, Bashar Abu, Akmal Saman, Rabbani Mustafa Raza, Saifi Mohammed Abul, Nawaz Nida, Nasef Yousra Tarek. Adoption and applications of blockchain technology in marketing: A retrospective overview and bibliometric analysis. *Sustainability*, 2023, 15(4): 3279.
- [11] Zhang Xin, Guan Xinyue, Zhao Wen. Study on the Perceived Brand Image of Nongfu Spring based on UGC Data. *Frontiers in Business, Economics and Management*, 2023, 10(2): 67–75.
- [12] Zhao Rui. Analysis of Cultural and Creative Products in the Palace Museum. *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research*, 2021.
- [13] Zou Lin. Analysis of Bottle Packaging Marketing Strategy of NONGFU SPRING in Chinese Market. *BCP Business & Management*, 2022, 20: 336–340.