

Sustainable Brand Marketing Strategies and Future Development Trends on RedNote: A Brief Literature Review and Prospective Analysis

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Abstract: In the background of the post-greenwashing era, consumers have a strong ability to identify the brand's environmental protection concept. RedNote has attracted a large number of young consumers and become a powerful platform for sustainable brands to carry out green marketing. At present, many scholars have focused on the analysis of marketing data, but they do not have enough analysis of platform-based communities. This paper uses content analysis method to conduct a detailed analysis of RedNote, combined with manual coding and word frequency statistics, and takes 40 innovative brands as research objects, focusing on the analysis of their marketing strategies, and analyzing the changes in three aspects, including brand value, scenario and operation, and putting forward reasonable suggestions for the development of enterprises. The research results show that enterprises should strive to improve their transparency, be close to consumers, and create a good community in the long term, which is conducive to the improvement of consumer trust. This research conclusion can play a reference role in the development of green brands, and also helps to broaden the research framework.

Keywords: sustainable brands; RedNote; post-greenwashing; green marketing; content analysis

1. Introduction

Against the background of continuous deterioration of the global ecological environment, the concepts of low-carbon, environmental protection, recycling and so on have attracted people's attention, and more and more people have been influenced by these concepts in their daily lives. Consumers in China are willing to buy green products, and the demand for such products is increasing. In recent years, online content platforms have developed rapidly, and many well-known brands no longer rely solely on traditional sales channels to carry out marketing, but make full use of various community platforms to share pictures with consumers, and guide them to live an eco-friendly life. The community has a perfect ecological system and a large number of young users who are willing to share their experiences with each other, and they have a strong awareness of environmental protection and actively pursue a low-carbon life. Many enterprises with a strong sense of social responsibility are willing to create long-term accounts on this platform and publish green products to consumers. However, in the initial stage of development, the phenomenon of "greenwashing" appeared in the industry, which was recognized by the public, and consumers had a strong sense of skepticism towards green marketing activities. Under this background, the original marketing mode can no longer play a role.

In this case, the changes in the domestic green consumption market are analyzed, and the shortcomings of the current academic circles are pointed out. RedNote has a unique operation mode, which is analyzed in this paper, the user demographic characteristics are identified, the brand communication methods are summarized, the promotion strategies are analyzed, and the development trend of the whole industry is predicted. In this case, the conclusions put forward in this paper can provide support for the sustainable development of enterprises, and also make up for the shortcomings of relevant research, which has high theoretical significance.

2. Updates in Local Sustainable Consumption and Research Status of RedNote Marketing

2.1. Renewed Public Perception of Green Consumption in the Post-Greenwashing Era

China's sustainable consumption market entered a phase of rapid expansion years ago, drawing brands from beauty, home goods, apparel, food and other sectors to launch products labeled eco-friendly, natural, low-carbon or biodegradable. Many brands merely added environmental buzzwords to packaging and promotional copy without making corresponding assessments to raw material selection, production processes, or waste disposal, resulting in pervasive, exaggerated, and unsubstantiated environmental marketing across major online content platforms.

Years of homogeneous deceptive promotion have eroded public trust. With accumulated market experience and popular science content online, consumers have become better able to distinguish authentic marketing from greenwashing. Rather than judging brands solely by environmental slogans on posters and product titles, consumers proactively check product details, authentic user reviews, and corporate publicly released environmental reports, carefully verifying raw material sources, pollutant emission figures during production, and post-consumption recycling services [1]. Today's consumers are very intolerant towards brands that do not match their advertising promises with actions. As soon as consumers find out that the brand used green marketing deceptively, they will share their doubts through comments and posts and such messages will effectively affect how consumers view the brand.

2.2. Limitations of Existing Research Paradigms for Sustainable Marketing on Social Media

Currently existing academic studies devoted to environmental marketing on social media platforms investigate traditional e-commercial sites and short-video entertainment channels that operate using algorithmic traffic promotion. There is a lack of thorough and comprehensive research that has only been conducted on RedNote as a unique community. Most studies currently available assess the sales dynamics driven by single marketing campaigns in short time periods and transactions.

Conventional marketing theories are made for traditional advertising, where advertising is prevalent. The established theories do not fit the attributes of RedNote, such as voluntary sharing, peer recommendation, and free exchange in communities established on the common interest [2]. The existing models are unsuitable for analyzing how sustainable brands exist in RedNote from publishing to community interaction, which means there are notable discrepancies between the theoretical paradigms and the environment of RedNote.

2.3. Deficiencies in Research on Sustainable Marketing on RedNote

The present scholarship focused on RedNote in the realm of sustainable brand marketing concentrates predominantly on a single product category or short-term projects, without examining cross-industry overviews of long-term developments of the market. Numerous articles just collect popular environmental notes released at this web platform to count frequently used words and formats of pictures employed, overlooking thorough exposition of high consumer distrust and the market credibility crisis caused by the phenomenon of greenwashing.

In addition, almost all the studies are limited to two sources of information, which cover the brand's official accounts and the user-generated content (UGC) by users, thus failing to conduct thorough analysis of all brand communication channels. Such absence of research fails to give marketers a complete understanding of how to communicate the sales of sustainable products.

3. Ecosystem Characteristics of Sustainable Marketing on RedNote

3.1. Demographic Traits of Green Consumers on the Platform

Users actively engaging with sustainable lifestyle content are predominantly young people, including students and young office workers in first- and second-tier cities with independent, stable disposable income. They willingly devote spare time to learning about low-carbon living, minimalism, and circular reuse. This group regularly saves environmental popular science notes, participates in platform environmental topics, and browses dozens of authentic user reviews before purchasing goods, making them far more sensitive to greenwashing than average platform visitors.

Their consumption demands extend beyond green products to encompass sustainable lifestyles, prompting them to seek eco-friendly solutions in home decor, skincare, daily meals, and short-distance travel [3]. They regularly document DIY upcycling projects, household waste reduction, and the use of biodegradable supplies on their personal accounts, and readily recommend long-tested sustainable brands to friends and family. They have consistent, long-term brand followings whose values align with their own. They tend to accept public welfare and lifestyle-focused environmental information, resisting impulsive consumption driven by exaggerated sales pitches, and invests more time comparing brands' tangible environmental commitments before making purchase decisions.

3.2. Authentic Interactive Atmosphere of Segmented Communities

RedNote naturally forms independent communication circles based on user interests and preferences, with dedicated communities centered on zero-waste living, natural organic skincare, upcycling crafts, low-carbon plant-based diets, outdoor conservation, and more. Intra-community exchanges prioritize real-life experience sharing. In there users share affordable eco-friendly goods, simple household waste-reduction tips, and offline environmental volunteer recruitment posts. The atmosphere is relaxed, with minimal intrusive commercial advertising.

When enterprises create brand accounts and join such communities, they are no different from ordinary users, do not sell aggressively, and are willing to provide users with recycling services and introduce product components to users. The trust between users is relatively high, and the user's words are more convincing than the official advertising, and the information is spread more widely through comments and reposts, and the ecosystem created in this way is more genuine and mild [4].

3.3. Long-Term Stable Operational Model of the Community

RedNote's operation logic is completely different from other platforms. It does not rely on the hot spots of virus transmission to attract users, but updates life-related content in a regular way, which can make the platform have a longer development time. In the process of content distribution, the platform is not attracted by commercial advertisements, but encourages users to post real and reliable notes and introduce scientific and technological content. At the same time, the platform also formulates and implements a series of rules to avoid exaggerated propaganda, and regularly deletes suspicious marketing notes, in order to reserve enough room for sustainable development.

In the process of retaining users, peer communication is a reliable way, which can not be replaced by Internet trends, and the slow operation of RedNote can promote the sustainable development of enterprises.

4. Research Methods

In this study, content analysis method is used to analyze the text, and manual coding and word frequency statistics are carried out at the same time. The research corpus is composed of public promotional notes of sustainable ecological material brands, which are randomly selected from 40 brands, and five samples are randomly selected from each brand, a total of 200 valid samples.

In this study, a theoretical framework is constructed, which includes three aspects: waste utilization, circular design and biological materials. In the study, the research object extracts keywords from the notes, extracts keywords from the text, and uses case analysis to analyze the communication path of each brand and the

proportion of each marketing strategy, which is conducive to deepening the understanding of brand communication strategy, and grasping the operation of users, the value of expression, and the narrative framework. There are many ways.

In the analysis of the proportion of marketing tactics, the pie chart can reflect the communication methods of the sample brands, including environmental stories, technological innovation, ESG communication, closed-loop recycling, waste valorization, natural beauty and so on. The proportion of environmental stories is the largest, as high as 35%, followed by technological innovation and ESG communication, which are 25% and 20% respectively. Closed-loop recycling has a proportion of 12%, while the other three have a proportion of only 8% each (as shown in Figure 1).

The implementation logic of the marketing model is analyzed in detail in the following Table 1, which involves the use of a variety of materials, such as marine plastic waste, coffee grounds, mycelium, garment scraps, crustacean shells and fruit peels, which have a significant impact on the communication tactics used by enterprises. Some brands use marine waste, which can better convey the concept of corporate social responsibility through the story, enhance their influence in the eyes of consumers, and bring them a sense of protection to the ocean. Some brands use mycelium and other materials to enhance their technological innovation ability, introduce high-tech new materials to consumers, and give consumers a sense of high technology. Some brands use recycled textiles or clothing scraps, have a large-scale recycling framework, and use ESG to carry out supply chain communication, which can enhance consumer trust. Some brands use coffee waste, which is a closed-loop recycling marketing, which requires the participation of consumers. Some brands use natural raw materials, which can give consumers a sense of safety, and their products have a strong natural aesthetic appeal.



Figure 1. The proportion of marketing tactics of the chosen sample.

Combining the logical model of transmission, marketing ratio, brand practice and other data, it is known that in the post-greenwashing era, material brands have formed a sound and effective marketing system, which has obvious stratification, can explain the environment from the consumer's point of view, and can implement circular recycling strategy, so that consumers have a strong sense of identity and can trust the brand (see Figure 2).

Table 1. Detailed Case Profiles of Selected Brands.

Brand/ Project	Core Material	Primary Marketing Approach	Communication Keywords	Consumer Perception
Flotsam	Ocean-bound plastic waste	Eco-storytelling marketing	Upcycled marine debris/ Marine conservation	Conscious design, aesthetic integrity
GoBean	Spent coffee grounds	Closed-loop recycling marketing	Store take-back to be made new product	Engagement in the circular system
Ecovative	Mycelium-based material	Tech-driven innovation marketing	Biofabrication/Biotechnology	Futuristic aesthetic/High-tech sensibility
ChitoTinkering	Shrimp & crab shells	Waste Valorization	Natural/Compostable	Perceived safety
SCHOTEX Global	Regenerated textile/ Recycled fiber	ESG supply-chain marketing	Large-scale recycling	Brand credibility
Marisfrolg	Pre-consumer textile waste	Brand ESG communication	Full-chain recycling	Brand credibility
PEEL	Fruit-peel-based material	Biophilic aesthetics marketing	Native bio-texture	Perceived safety
A Baby, A Beast	Mycofilm material	Avant-garde concept marketing	Next-generation material	Futuristic feel/High-tech

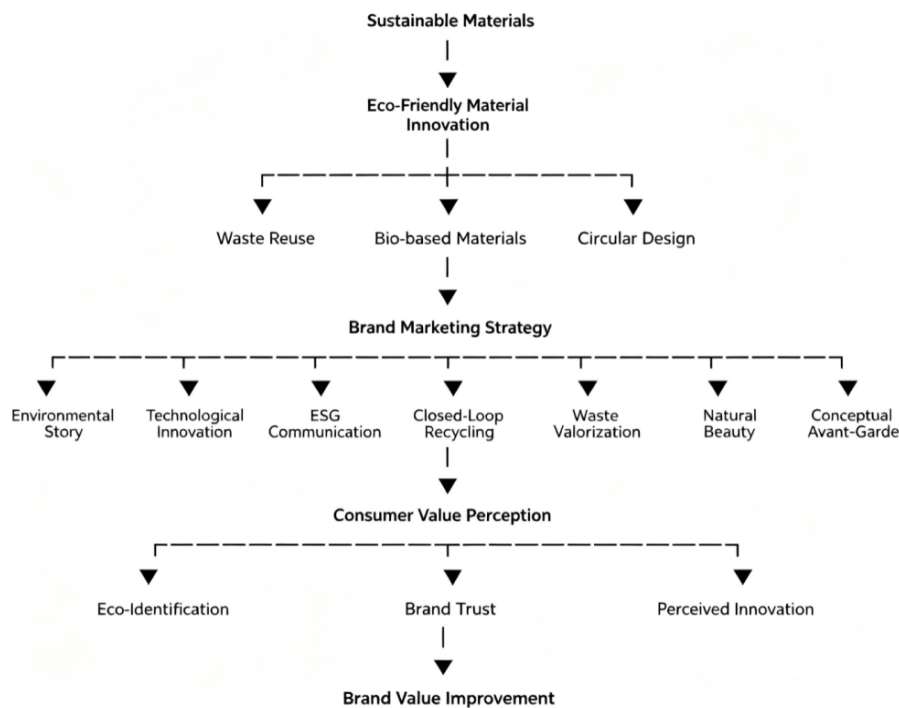


Figure 2. Tree diagram (Transmission Logic Model—Sustainable Materials → Brand Marketing → Consumer Perception).

5. Shifts in Sustainable Brand Marketing Logic on RedNote in the Post-Greenwashing Era

5.1. Shift in Value Logic: From Concept Packaging to Authentic Transparency

Early sustainable brand promotion relied on superficial concept packaging—green visual design and scattered environmental copy—with minimal disclosure of tangible corporate environmental action. In the post-greenwashing era, consumer trust benchmarks have shifted dramatically. Brands must proactively disclose verifiable, comprehensive information, including raw material sourcing channels, production carbon emissions statistics, post-consumption recycling roadmaps, and biodegradable packaging test certifications [5].

Brand values should not just stop at the promotion of ideals, but should be substantiated by actionable evidence.

Brands, for instance, conduct factory tours or publish monthly status reports regarding their environmental projects in order to gain consumers' trust through transparency and real-world accountability. Consumers themselves share comparisons of brands' environmental filings and independent testing results on social media channels, thus making it possible to quickly discard brands only engaged in superficial green marketing.

5.2. Shift in Scenario Logic: From Product Selling to Lifestyle Empowerment

Traditional marketing focuses on the sale of a single product and regards it as the ultimate goal. All contents are related to product functions and sales prices, and there is no obvious connection with people's daily life. The concept of sustainable development has been deeply rooted in people's hearts, and the content scope of enterprises has been continuously expanded, covering the whole life scenario, and can provide consumers with low-carbon solutions, including reducing waste, low-carbon travel, reusing items, and personal care.

In the process of selling products, we should not place sales first, but guide users to change their consumption behavior through short videos, and make consumers resonate with the brand with the help of ecological lifestyle [6]. Many brands have launched a series of tutorials to guide users to reduce waste, which can be used by non-purchasers, thus extending the user dwell time.

5.3. Shift in Operational Logic: From Traffic Hype to Community Stewardship

In the past, many well-known brands promoted their own products through a series of measures, such as topic creation and content publishing, to attract the attention of more audiences, but they only paid attention to the number of likes and views, but did not take the audience's feelings into account. In the current stage of operation, community construction should be carried out to keep a high degree of attention to the circle of friends all the time, guide users to reflect their pain points, and carry out a series of online and offline activities [7].

In the process of development, enterprises do not pursue the so-called "viral" traffic, but create a good community, interact with users in depth, and bring more word-of-mouth for the long-term development of enterprises. Community operators listen to the suggestions of users and pass them to the production and design personnel, so as to formulate reasonable products and improve the recycling services [8].

6. Implementation Paths and Future Development Trends of Sustainable Brand Marketing on RedNote in the Post-Greenwashing Era

6.1. Content Production: The Content Produced in This Way Is More Professional, Which Can Not Only Change the Mindset of Consumers, but Also Promote the Development of the Industry

Enterprises should make efforts to build diversified content pipelines, which can be divided into three modules:

(1) Popular Science Module: Introduce expert knowledge in depth, including the identification of biodegradable materials, the harm of plastic pollution, and the calculation of carbon footprint.

(2) On-site documentation module: Take videos to record the whole process of factory transformation, and record the workflow of waste recycling and the process of testing packaging materials.

(3) Lifestyle module: This module can help users renovate in a low-carbon way, guide users to shop without plastic products, and guide users to recycle idle items.

All the content must be supported by video, reports and logs to ensure consistency, so that upstream enterprises will use more environmental materials, take effective measures to deal with pollution, and guide consumers to form good low-carbon habits, so that their lives and purchases will become more eco-friendly.

Looking forward, the platform will make full use of user behavior data and industry expertise to improve the quality of environmental content, and will use objective and reasonable numerical metrics to reflect the value of a single product, the rate of packaging recycling, and the amount of emissions reduced in a year, to enhance credibility and reduce the impact of greenwashing. Based on user interaction data, brands can adjust the content they create and prioritize environmental topics that are consistent with the information needs of users.

6.2. Community Operation: Curate Long-Term Tiered Communities to Build Inclusive User Communication Channels

In the process of building online communities, enterprises should not only pay attention to environmental preferences, but also guide consumers to form consumer groups, including outdoor conservation, home minimalist, organic skincare and other groups, and carry out activities for each group:

(1) Novice groups: Introductory waste reduction guides and online item swap events.

(2) Veteran eco-enthusiast groups: Offline factory tours and community waste recycling volunteer drives.

All brands organize topics regularly and encourage users to share their personal experiences in a sustainable way, which can attract outstanding submissions and give users physical products and traffic support. Sales staff should pay attention to the control of advertising in the process of community management, be good at solving user problems, and guide users to improve the channel feedback to the design and production teams.

The stability of long-term community participation is conducive to the formation of a harmonious relationship between consumers and brands, and the establishment of a good relationship of trust between the two sides, which is conducive to the improvement of the user's credibility in the process of consumption, and the formation of a good community atmosphere. With the gradual weakening of the traffic investment of the brand, it should not only allocate a reasonable budget, but also manage the relationship between users for a long time, and the community system should be upgraded to attract consumers with high value, and maintain a good public opinion for a long time through long-term interaction, rather than only one-time.

6.3. External Communication: Drive Organic UGC Sharing + Value-Aligned Celebrity Collaboration Frameworks

In order to obtain good product reviews, the brand should formulate reasonable incentives, guide consumers to describe their low-carbon life in detail, reward contributors with points, allow them to try new products, and participate in offline events. Content sharing and purchasing are fully integrated, and notes, product entry points and eco-set landing pages are set below to form a natural link between sales and lifestyle.

In the process of external communication, enterprises need to cooperate with celebrities, and choose partners with a complete set of evaluation criteria [9]. Such celebrities should be committed to environmental protection for a long time, reduce plastic products in their daily lives, save resources, and have a good public image. Evaluation should not only pay attention to the image presented by celebrities in public places, but also evaluate their performance in environmental protection, charity and other fields. Enterprises should choose celebrities with high credibility, and use them to spread positive energy to the public.

After signing, the brand will co-develop a number of environmental protection initiatives with celebrity partners, which will be carried out in the long term, and the popularity of low-carbon science and technology will be promoted offline. The daily behavior of celebrities can reflect the value of the brand, weaken the suspicion of consumers, and achieve the purpose of sustainable development.

From the current development situation, the external communication of enterprises needs to rely on the support of UGC, which can achieve the purpose of promotion. With the rapid development of the network, the decisions made by celebrities in cooperation with enterprises are no longer measured by whether they are popular online, but by the image of enterprises in the public and the effectiveness of environmental protection.

7. Conclusions

In the context of greenwashing, the platform has built a good community communication system, which has attracted the attention of sustainable brands with its unique characteristics, and these brands are willing to use this platform for promotion. In the development process, the brand should analyze the three trends as follows. The first is to create content with professional connotation. The second is to manage the community in layers and improve its attractiveness. The third is to communicate with users in an organic way and cooperate with celebrities for a long time.

Brands must abandon outdated marketing tactics centered on superficial environmental-concept packaging and instead earn consumer recognition through complete, verifiable, real-world environmental action. This strategy simultaneously guides mainstream green consumption habits and drives upstream industrial production

optimization, achieving a tripartite win win, which are sustainable brand growth, widespread adoption of eco-lifestyles among consumers, and steady advancement of the green industry.

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