



Research on Market Operation Strategies of Fitness Clubs under the Upgrading of Sports Consumption

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Abstract: This paper focuses on the market operation strategies of fitness clubs under the background of sports consumption upgrading, combining industry practices to explore the implementation paths of user operation, digital transformation, brand marketing, and professionalization of coaching teams. The study shows that by building a full lifecycle user management system, deploying intelligent hardware and data platforms, creating scenario-based experiential marketing, and establishing standardized coach training mechanisms, the service quality and market competitiveness of clubs can be effectively improved. The research results provide practical reference for the fitness industry to respond to changing consumer demands, emphasizing the key role of systematic operations centered on professional value for the sustainable development of the industry.

Keywords: sports consumption upgrading; fitness clubs; market operation strategies

1. Introduction

With the improvement of residents' health awareness and upgrading of consumption structure, sports consumption shows trends of quality and personalization, while fitness clubs face dual challenges of service upgrading and model innovation. Currently, the industry faces problems such as insufficient user stickiness, low degree of digitalization, and brand homogenization, which restrict sustainable development.

2. Overview of the Background of Sports Consumption Upgrading

Against the backdrop of steady socio-economic development and gradual improvement in residents' living standards, the wave of sports consumption upgrading is rapidly sweeping across. In recent years, the state has attached great importance to the development of the sports industry, issuing a series of favorable policies intensively. For example, the "Healthy China 2030" Planning Outline clearly sets the promotion of deep integration between sports and health as a key goal, laying a solid policy foundation for the prosperous development of the sports consumption market. Public health awareness has significantly increased, and more and more people regard sports as a key way to improve life quality and pursue a healthy lifestyle [1]. This shift in perception has greatly stimulated people's enthusiasm and demand for sports consumption. With the progress of the times, consumers no longer satisfy themselves with purchasing traditional sports goods; sports consumption has gradually expanded deeply toward diversification, personalization, and intelligence. The cross-industry integration of sports with culture, tourism, healthcare, and other industries has continuously deepened, giving rise to a variety of emerging formats such as sports tourism, sports entertainment, and sports training. Consumers' demands for sports service experiences are increasingly high, emphasizing emotional resonance, social interaction, and personalized customization in the consumption process. This trend of consumption upgrading provides broad space for the innovative development of the sports industry and poses new challenges to the operation models and service quality of sports enterprises. Under this background, analyzing the market operation strategies of fitness clubs holds key practical significance and value.

3. Market Segmentation and Consumer Demand Analysis of Fitness Clubs

3.1 Dimensions of Market Segmentation

The market segmentation of fitness clubs shows multidimensional and intersecting characteristics, with its core logic based on service types, user attributes, and consumption scenarios. From the perspective of service types, the market can be divided into basic categories such as membership fees, personal training, and coaching services, while also extending to value-added service modules such as rehabilitation training and nutritional consulting, constructing a differentiated product matrix. In terms of user attributes, age and occupation have become key dividing criteria: student groups tend to prefer cost-effective fragmented courses; office workers tend to favor group classes that combine convenience and social attributes; middle-aged and elderly groups pay

more attention to low-intensity health preservation programs. Regional differences are also obvious, with consumers in first-tier cities valuing brand endorsement and intelligent experiences, while the market in second- and third-tier cities is mainly community-based clubs emphasizing venue convenience and affordable prices. The integration of online and offline consumption scenarios is accelerating, promoting the “in-club fitness + home training” hybrid model as a new segmentation area, such as the combined use of smart fitness equipment and live streaming courses [2].

3.2 Insights into Consumer Demand

Current consumer demand shows a trend of deep integration among professionalism, personalization, and technology. Professional service capability has become the core appeal, with users raising requirements for coach qualifications and the systematization of courses. Participation in specialized courses such as functional training and sports rehabilitation has shown significant growth. Personalization is reflected in customized program design; consumers are no longer satisfied with standardized training but turn to precise guidance based on their own health data. Some clubs have already introduced technological tools such as body fat monitoring and motion trajectory analysis. The application of technology has reshaped the consumption experience; the popularization of intelligent access control and VR immersive training equipment reduces users' time costs and enhances interactivity, with young groups showing particularly strong acceptance of such innovative services. The integration demand of social attributes and health management has grown, as consumers build community relationships through group classes while expecting clubs to cooperate with medical institutions to provide closed-loop services from exercise to health monitoring, such as chronic disease exercise intervention programs. Price sensitivity shows stratified characteristics: the high-end market is willing to pay extra for exclusive services, while the mass market tends to favor flexible payment models, promoting the popularization of monthly payment plans and single-course purchases.

4. Market Operation Strategies of Fitness Clubs under Sports Consumption Upgrading

4.1 Product Innovation Strategy

Product innovation should center on the stratification of consumer demands, constructing a three-dimensional system of “basic courses + value-added services + scenario extension.” The course system design can adopt a modular combination model, breaking down traditional group classes into segmented modules such as functional training, sports rehabilitation, and posture adjustment, allowing users to freely combine according to their own goals. For example, developing a “spine care + core activation” combined course for office workers, and launching a “periodized strength training + nutrition meal plan” package for competition preparation groups, enhancing product adaptability through course modularization [3].

Before class, introduce body composition analyzers and exercise risk assessment systems to generate personalized reports including indicators such as muscle distribution and joint mobility; during class, use motion capture technology to correct training posture in real time, such as recognizing knee valgus during squats through cameras and providing instant reminders; after class, push exercise data reviews combined with sleep monitoring devices to adjust the next day's training intensity. Some clubs have tried cooperating with wearable device brands to integrate users' daily activity data into training systems for comprehensive health management. Meanwhile, develop lightweight home training product packages, including portable resistance bands, yoga balls, and supporting video courses, maintaining user stickiness through regular live Q&A sessions. For corporate clients, launch “office micro-fitness” services by dispatching coaches to provide 15-minute fragmented training guidance on-site and designing illustrated manuals for workstation stretching exercises. Cooperate with commercial complexes to create pop-up experience spaces equipped with AR virtual coach trial zones, where consumers can scan codes to experience core course segments, forming traffic conversion entry points.

4.2 User Operation Strategy

User operation needs to build a data-centered full lifecycle management system, achieving refined services through precise segmentation. First, establish a user tagging system. Divide user groups based on dimensions such as consumption frequency, course preferences, and training goals. For example, users training more than three times per week and purchasing personal training courses are defined as core users, receiving exclusive benefit packages including priority booking of star coaches and free use of rehabilitation equipment. For low-frequency users, implement reactivation plans by analyzing their historical course participation and pushing targeted trial classes, such as sending “spine care special class” invitations to users who previously took yoga courses, along with friend referral coupons. Second, design a membership system. Adopt a level-up mechanism where users upgrade levels by accumulating training hours and completing challenge tasks. Different levels correspond to differentiated benefits, such as silver members enjoying free membership suspension in their birthday

month, while diamond members receive annual physical examination services. Set up non-transactional achievement systems, for example virtual badges like “check-in for 30 consecutive days” or “complete 10 different courses,” which can be exchanged for customized sports gear or course discounts to enhance user engagement. Some clubs have attempted to visualize members’ exercise data by generating annual fitness reports and producing physical commemorative albums to strengthen emotional retention. Third, community operation creates online-offline integrated interactive scenarios. Online, build vertical interest communities such as marathon training camps and Pilates enthusiast groups, with coaches serving as group owners who regularly share professional content and initiate topic discussions. Offline, organize themed salons, invite sports medicine experts to give health lectures, or hold member achievement exhibitions to promote experience exchange among users. Establish a community honor system by selecting “monthly fitness stars” and offering venue advertising opportunities to stimulate user activity. Rapidly iterate services based on community feedback, such as adding “family fitness days” allowing members to bring family for parent-child exercise courses. Fourth, private domain traffic operation focuses on deep relationship maintenance. Use corporate WeChat to build 1-on-1 connections between coaches and users. Coaches send personalized weekly advice based on user training data, such as specific diet adjustment plans or next day training precautions. Set up layered outreach mechanisms, conducting monthly phone follow-ups for high-value users and using a combination of intelligent customer service and manual response for ordinary users. Develop member-exclusive mini-programs integrating course booking, training records, and community interaction, enhancing open rates through check-in points redeemable for rewards [4].

4.3 Digital Transformation Strategy

Digital transformation needs to be based on intelligent infrastructure, building a full-process data-driven system. In terms of venue hardware renovation, IoT sensor networks can be deployed to achieve real-time monitoring of fitness equipment usage status. For example, embedding motion data collection modules in equipment such as treadmills to automatically record user exercise duration, calorie consumption, and other indicators, synchronizing data to cloud platforms. Introduce AI visual motion capture systems that analyze users’ training posture in real time through cameras, providing instant voice corrections for issues such as abnormal knee angles during squats and deviation in dumbbell bench press trajectories, improving training scientificity and safety. Some leading brands have piloted 5G+AR technology, allowing users wearing smart glasses to see virtual coaches demonstrating movements, solving the problem of limited visibility for students in the back rows of traditional group classes. At the same time, establish unified data standard interfaces to break down data barriers among membership management systems, course booking platforms, and smart device terminals, forming a comprehensive database containing user basic information, consumption records, and exercise preferences. Use federated learning technology to achieve multi-store user feature joint modeling without sharing raw data, accurately identifying segmentation tags such as “potential churn customers” and “high-value conversion groups”. Build a visual analysis platform that automatically generates operation dashboards such as member activity trend charts and course popularity rankings, assisting management in dynamically adjusting marketing strategies. Meanwhile, establish a data security management system, ensuring compliance with personal information protection laws through measures such as data desensitization and access permission hierarchies, for example converting user ID numbers into virtual codes for storage [5].

4.4 Brand and Marketing Strategy

Brand and marketing strategies should focus on value delivery, building differentiated recognition and multi-touchpoint communication systems. First, brand positioning focuses on core advantage scenarios. For example, clubs specializing in professional rehabilitation can strengthen the “sports medicine endorsement + customized programs” label by co-establishing training bases with rehabilitation departments of top-tier hospitals and publicly displaying cooperating experts’ qualifications and successful intervention cases on official websites. Brands targeting the mass market can highlight the “community health hub” positioning by setting up free body testing areas and health consultation desks in stores, allowing non-members to book basic assessment services and creating a friendly brand image. Second, content marketing builds a professional and communicative knowledge system. Assemble a content team composed of exercise physiology experts and registered nutritionists to regularly produce practical articles such as “Office Shoulder and Neck Relaxation Guide” and “Common Mistakes in Post-Exercise Stretching,” distributing them via WeChat official account matrices to community groups in different city stores. Develop a series of micro-documentaries tracking members’ real transformation processes, emphasizing professional coaching details such as principles of movement adjustment and logic of diet recommendations. Cooperate with fitness vertical platforms to open columns analyzing industry topics like “Differences between Functional Training and Traditional Fitness,” establishing the brand’s professional discourse power. Third, scenario-based experiential marketing breaks through traditional customer acquisition models. Set up smart fitness cabin pop-up stores in commercial

complexes, equipped with AI personal trainer systems and portable training devices; consumers can scan codes to complete a 5-minute physical fitness test and receive personalized training suggestions, while simultaneously pushing discount coupons for experience classes at nearby stores. Host city-level outdoor fitness challenges featuring low-threshold events such as “family parent-child obstacle courses” and “community group exercise performances,” with participants receiving brand-customized sports gift packages, expanding brand exposure through mass participation.

4.5 Professionalization of Coaching Teams

The professionalization of coaching teams requires building a standardized training system, forming closed-loop management from qualification certification, skill enhancement to career development. First, a strict admission mechanism should be established in the recruitment process. Candidates are required to hold the Social Sports Instructor professional qualification certificate issued by the General Administration of Sport of China and possess at least one internationally authoritative certification, such as certification from the American College of Sports Medicine or the National Strength and Conditioning Association. Priority is given to those with a bachelor’s degree or above in sports training or sports rehabilitation from sports universities, while background checks verify work experience and client evaluations to ensure both professional foundation and professional credibility. Second, the training system should cover a full-cycle cultivation integrating theory and practice. The initial training is set as an intensive three-month course, including theoretical modules such as applied sports anatomy and training program design for special populations, as well as practical assessments like functional training demonstration and emergency skills drills. Quarterly refresher trainings focus on industry frontier technologies, inviting sports medicine experts to conduct workshops on kinesiology taping and joint mobilization, while arranging coaches to participate in clinical internships at rehabilitation hospitals to improve injury prevention and treatment capabilities. An internal knowledge-sharing platform should be established, requiring senior coaches to regularly upload training case analyses and course innovation plans. Newly hired coaches must complete designated case studies and submit reflection reports. Third, performance evaluation should balance professional ability and service quality dimensions. Design a “three-dimensional evaluation system” assessing accuracy of movement demonstration and scientific nature of course plans in the professional dimension; membership renewal rates and training goal achievement rates in the service dimension; completeness of teaching records and compliance with safety regulations in the compliance dimension. Conduct anonymous member satisfaction surveys monthly, with feedback directly linked to performance ratings. Coaches scoring below standards for two consecutive quarters must attend intensive training. Establish a “star coach” selection mechanism combining professional assessment results and member recommendations; award-winning coaches may participate in course development projects and enjoy additional training funds.

5. Conclusion

The upgrading of sports consumption drives fitness clubs to shift from "hardware competition" to "service and experience competition." The user segmentation operation, full-process digitalization, scenario-based brand communication, and professional coaching development strategies proposed in this paper require systematic planning and implementation at the enterprise strategic level. Future research can further expand to comparative studies of differentiated strategies across cities of different tiers and clubs of varying scales. Fitness clubs need to focus on user demands, continuously iterate service systems, and while meeting diversified fitness needs, promote the industry toward professionalization and quality enhancement.

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