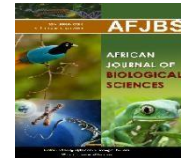


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Marketing Development for the Healthy Chinese-Dishes Catering Business in Nakhon Pathom Province

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Abstract

The purposes of this paper are to 1) create three offline and online marketing channels for the Nakhon Pathom province-based company that caters healthy Chinese dishes, 2) create a business plan and offline and online marketing strategies for the company, and 3) gain knowledge of the value and performance measurement of the company's marketing channels. Entrepreneurs will be able to adapt to the new norm by using the findings from this research to make traditional marketing channels (offline marketing channels) more efficient and to develop online marketing channels that can reach all customer groups and fit the current environment. The process of combining offline and internet marketing channels is known as Omni-channel marketing. Healthy Chinese-dishes Catering enterprises may gain a sustained competitive advantage by building proactive marketing strategy management skills and controlling costs, returns, and break-even points to produce value.

Keywords: Marketing Development, Healthy Chinese-dishes Catering Business, Nakhon Pathom Province

Introduction

In Nakhon Pathom province, there is a large number of Chinese residents. Their Chinese culinary wisdom has been developed into a Chinese-dishes catering business in the form of a full-service mobile restaurant. According to customer opinions about the Nakhon Pathom Chinese-dishes catering business, the food is delicious; the price is reasonable; the service can be served anytime and anywhere the customer wants, saving time in preparing the banquet and allowing cost control. These are the reasons for this business's widespread popularity. As a result, the number of Chinese catering entrepreneurs has increased in line with the market demand. The Chinese-dishes catering business involves many sectors. It distributes income to people of various occupations and levels, from grassroots, such as farmers, unemployed, students, factory workers, and hiring, to skilled labor, such as cooks and assistant cooks. Chinese catering entrepreneurs are large consumers of agricultural products in Nakhon Pathom, which helps to add many times value to these products and can generate income of at least 1,000 million baht annually for the province. Therefore, it can be regarded that the Chinese-dishes catering business is one of the important small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Nakhon Pathom province.

For business operations, more than 80 percent use the traditional business model, i.e., family businesses that use offline marketing channels to sell face-to-face or through acquaintances and focus on existing customers by mostly relying on a word-of-mouth strategy. At the same time, the Chinese-dishes catering industry is highly competitive. Nakhon Pathom holds the largest market share. While other provinces, including Ratchaburi, Suphan Buri, Chonburi, and Nakhon Ratchasima have more than 600 entrepreneurs who run Chinese-dishes catering businesses, which can be considered significant competitors. This led to entrepreneurs implementing various marketing strategies such as cutting prices, hiring with no deposit, or offering installment payments to compete for customers nationwide. Many large business entrepreneurs are looking for new opportunities to expand into foreign markets such as Laos, Malaysia, and Cambodia. They have innovative solutions by adjusting the service model to serve a buffet, Thai buffet, vegetarian food, cocktail, meal box, and snack menu. It includes full-service event management that functions from event theme design, lighting and sound equipment supply with singers and dancers, venue setting with flower arches and backdrops, costume rental services with hair and make-up artists, etc., to accommodate the needs of diverse customers. The main customers of the Chinese-dishes catering business are wedding ceremonies, Buddhist ordination ceremonies, alumni parties, housewarming parties, New Year parties, etc., with a proportion of 85 percent of the domestic market and 15 percent of the foreign market (Prachachat Online Business, 2019). In 2016, the Chinese-dishes catering business brought more than 2,000 million baht in revenue to Nakhon Pathom province from approximately 200 entrepreneurs. The trend of growth in both domestic and foreign markets is increasing. At the same time, entrepreneurs will face challenges of raw material costs, rising transportation costs, poor food quality, and capital constraints. (Tridaengnoi, 2016) The peak season for the domestic Chinese catering market is from December to May each year, or around five months. During the rainy season, roughly three to four months, there will be a decline in the event hire. Entrepreneurs with long experience in the business field will be familiar with the business cycle and able to manage their business. Nevertheless, the incidence of the COVID-19 pandemic from 2020 until now has severely impacted Chinese catering entrepreneurs, costing them more than 1,000 million baht in lost revenue. Although entrepreneurs have transitioned their business model to delivery services, the income still cannot compensate for the lost revenue (Atkhathon & Phochana, 2020). According to the spatial data of the Chinese-dishes catering business in Nakhon Pathom province, the business problems were caused by the following factors: entrepreneurs' lack of knowledge of strategic management, limited marketing channels, and lack of diversity in marketing channels. Significantly, entrepreneurs cannot effectively use online marketing channels due to the lack of knowledge and competence in technology and modern online marketing models and a lack of proper cost management analysis. Most Chinese catering entrepreneurs operate as a family business, so they do not have a business plan or set a clear strategy because they do not value management planning. Additionally, Chinese catering entrepreneurs currently experience difficulties in their operations due to the COVID-19 pandemic, greatly affecting their income. The key point is the need to assess the economic impact arising from such operations in terms of costs, returns, and economic value of entrepreneurs in the healthy Chinese-dishes catering business. The assessment uses criteria that include Net Present Value (NPV), Internal Rate of Return (IRR), Benefit-Cost Ratio (B/C Ratio), and Payback Period to decide whether the investment is appropriate to undertake and analyze its financial value.

The current Chinese-dishes catering industry still lacks many components that are necessary for it to survive and continue to grow. This consists of a lack of proactive marketing channels, business plans, marketing strategies that reach consumers, and business value analysis for entrepreneurs to make decisions. Another aspect is to expand to niche markets, both consumers in outdoor catering events and those who order Chinese table food for delivery to their homes or offices, through offline and online marketing channels with a focus on social media such as exhibitions, booths, websites, and the Blockdit platform. The problems mentioned above inspired the research project on marketing development for the healthy Chinese-dishes catering business in Nakhon Pathom province. The research purposes are 1) develop three offline and online marketing channels for the healthy Chinese-dishes catering business in Nakhon Pathom province, 2) a business plan and offline and online marketing strategies for the healthy Chinese-dishes catering business in Nakhon Pathom province, and 3) knowledge of value and performance measurement of marketing channels of the healthy Chinese-dishes catering business in Nakhon Pathom province. Benefits from this research will enable entrepreneurs to improve traditional marketing channels (offline marketing channels) to be more effective and create online marketing channels that can reach all customer groups and correspond to the current situation for entrepreneurs to adapt to the new normal. It can be achieved by integrating offline and online channels, called Omni-channel marketing. Additionally, developing proactive marketing strategy management knowledge and managing costs, returns, and break-even points to create value in Chinese catering operations creates a sustainable competitive advantage.

METHODOLOGY

This research used a research and development (R&D) model to develop online and offline marketing channels for the healthy Chinese-dishes catering business in Nakhon Pathom province, to develop business plans and online and offline marketing strategies for the healthy Chinese-dishes catering business in Nakhon Pathom province, and to analyze the value of the healthy Chinese-dishes catering business in Nakhon Pathom province. The details of the research are as follows.

Key informants of qualitative research consist of two main groups:

1) Nakhon Pathom Chinese-dishes Catering Club/Chinese catering entrepreneurs in Nakhon Pathom registered with the Nakhon Pathom Provincial Public Health Office and certified by the Nakhon Pathom Provincial Public Health Office using purposive sampling, 19 cases

2) Personnel from the public and private sectors with support roles in academic, safety certification, marketing for Chinese catering entrepreneurs in Nakhon Pathom, food and beverage ordering website, organizing Chinese-dishes catering using purposive sampling, 6 cases

RESULTS

Development of online and offline marketing channels for the healthy Chinese-dishes catering business in Nakhon Pathom province

In focus groups and in-depth interviews, the research tools were semi-structured interviews conducted with 19 samples of Chinese catering entrepreneurs in Nakhon Pathom province. The details are as follows.

Advantages of offline marketing channels for the Nakhon Pathom Chinese-dishes catering business: They are traditional channels or forms of trade, communication, information dissemination, and public relations between buyers and sellers that can be directly discussed face-to-face in different locations. Both buyers and sellers have been familiar with such methods for a long time, resulting in customer trust and confidence. Frequently, a group of existing customers return to use the service and, if satisfied, recommend it to other customers. It can be considered that customers have high brand loyalty.

Disadvantages of offline marketing channels for the Nakhon Pathom Chinese-dishes catering business: In the COVID-19 pandemic, which is an unpredictable situation, entrepreneurs do not have any risk management plans. The use of offline marketing channels is impossible due to limitations in service and face-to-face communication.

Advantages of online marketing channels for the Nakhon Pathom Chinese-dishes catering business: According to interviews with Chinese catering entrepreneurs, they are modern marketing channels that reach a wide range of target customers, have low operating costs, and can operate 24 hours a day. Online channels correspond to the current COVID-19 situation in which most people engage in more online activities. Entrepreneurs can combine this channel with offline ones.

Disadvantages of online marketing channels for the Nakhon Pathom Chinese-dishes catering business: According to interviews with Chinese catering entrepreneurs, the ability of each entrepreneur to use online marketing channels varies. Entrepreneurs who can use online channels well will have a competitive advantage over those with lower capabilities. Online channels are at risk due to the rapid dissemination of information. If it is negative information that is detrimental to the business, it will cause widespread impact and difficulty in solving problems. Additionally, online marketing channels must be connected with effective logistics management; otherwise, delivery issues and issues maintaining the quality of the food served to customers may arise.

Development of offline marketing channels

1. Providing Chinese-dishes catering as a box set to take home is a new service introduced in response to the COVID-19 pandemic situation. This service can be provided for both indoor and outdoor catering. The Chinese food will be arranged in sets at different prices for customers to choose from, such as 350 baht, 500 baht, etc. The food served in the box set is still the same Chinese-dishes catering menu, such as hors d'oeuvre, fish maw soup, fried rice, Chinese-style fried noodles, etc. In organizing a banquet, there is 50 attendees maximum, with safety control standards from the screening process by checking attendees' second vaccination status and taking their temperature before entering the event. During the event, attendees wear masks and minimize talking, drinking, or eating inside. The duration of the event should not exceed 1–2 hours.

Chinese table food box sets are offered in two types: one for banquet attendees, with the price of 129 baht and 350 baht, and the other for monks at 350 baht.

2. Organizing standard full-service Chinese-dishes catering is a new service introduced in response to the COVID-19 pandemic situation. This service can be provided for both indoor and outdoor catering. Entrepreneurs plan events with consideration for safety and hygiene standards from the screening process by checking attendees' second vaccination status and taking their temperature before entering the event. During the event, attendees keep

their masks on. For seating arrangement, the distance between tables is about 0.5–1 meter, and each table contains six seats. The tableware on the table is wrapped in plastic, and the cutlery is for personal use only. The Chinese table food served at the event remains the same, which is chosen based on customer preferences. The Chinese catering service rate is constant, with the price range from 1,800–3,000 baht. There is an illustration, which is the event held during the Songkran Festival under the theme of “Minimal Songkran Day, cares for the world, cares for oneself”. This event meets the specified model of catering service, with clear procedures for using services under the “Minimal Theme”, a clean and hygienic venue, standardized food and beverage, along with services according to the agreement.

Development of online marketing channels

1. Developing a central website for the Chinese catering entrepreneur market. The development process starts with interviewing entrepreneurs about their information, such as addresses, contact channels, product descriptions, images of the food, prices of each dish, promotions, and their requirements for the presentation. Then, the given information will be used to design the website.

2. Developing online marketing channels via Blockdit for the healthy Chinese-dishes catering business in Nakhon Pathom province. It is a platform for individuals to create diverse content based on a specific target audience. Readers are quality people who enjoy reading, writing, and telling stories to create interesting things for society. This research involves writing content related to public relations and knowledge about Chinese table food in various aspects, Chinese cuisine, and entrepreneurs in Nakhon Pathom province.

Development of business plans and online and offline marketing strategies for the healthy Chinese-dishes catering business in Nakhon Pathom province

In developing a business plan and online and offline marketing strategies for the healthy Chinese-dishes catering business in Nakhon Pathom province, a qualitative research process was employed. The tools used for data collection are in-depth interviews conducted with 19 Chinese catering entrepreneurs in Nakhon Pathom province via telephone, LINE, and Zoom, face-to-face interviews, and focus groups. Then, the collected data was analyzed using the SWOT analysis to see an overview of the Chinese-dishes catering business in Nakhon Pathom province regarding strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The results can be summarized as follows.

Table 1. Summary of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT analysis) and formulating online and offline marketing strategies for the healthy Chinese-dishes catering business in Nakhon Pathom province

	<p>Strengths (S)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The quality and taste of food are acceptable to consumers. 2. Pricing by Chinese catering entrepreneurs in Nakhon Pathom varies from low to high. 3. A word-of-mouth strategy was used as the distribution channel to continuously build a good relationship between Chinese catering entrepreneurs and customers. 4. The reputation and credibility of Chinese catering entrepreneurs in Nakhon Pathom province. 5. The Chinese-dishes catering business is run by expert entrepreneurs, together with experienced cooks and complete equipment. 	<p>Weaknesses (W)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Most Chinese catering entrepreneurs still lack the skills and knowledge of modern information technology. 2. The cooking process and service do not meet the standard. 3. Preserving the freshness and freshly-cooked taste of food and ingredients constantly is impossible. 4. Capital constraints as most entrepreneurs operate as sole proprietorships. 5. The business model is a family business with an unclear management structure. 6. The distribution channels are limited; most of them are offline channels. 7. Lack of quality control for food ingredients. 8. Waitpersons and cooks lack service quality and standards. 9. Lack of integration with effective marketing strategies. 10. High production costs and transportation costs.
<p>Opportunities (O)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nakhon Pathom province is home to many people related to the Chinese catering industry, 	<p>SO Strategies</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> S1O2. Creating awareness about the history of Chinese table food, food quality, and 	<p>WO Strategies</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> W1O6. Training Chinese catering entrepreneurs to use information technology in their operations and creating training

<p>such as skilled cooks and experienced workers, contributing to income distribution and job creation.</p> <p>2. Most Thai cultures and traditions, such as wedding ceremonies, housewarming parties, and various celebrations, use Chinese catering to feast on guests.</p> <p>3. Nakhon Pathom area and nearby provinces are an important source of food ingredients, such as pork, duck meat, chicken, seafood, and vegetables that are high quality, accessible, diverse, and inexpensive.</p> <p>4. The government has a policy to support the Chinese-dishes catering business.</p> <p>5. Food sanitation standards provide consumers with clean and safe food.</p> <p>6. Technology is becoming more accessible, making it easier for communication or marketing to reach more consumer groups.</p>	<p>food safety for the general public.</p> <p>S2O3. Creating competitive advantages in terms of price by managing production costs to connect quality material sources.</p> <p>S3O6. Developing diverse marketing strategies and marketing channels by integrating online and offline channels to work together effectively to create Omni-channel marketing.</p> <p>S4+O1+O2+O4. Organizing a national Chinese table festival to promote the reputation and credibility of Nakhon Pathom Chinese catering entrepreneurs by linking the public and private sectors.</p> <p>S5O5. Raising the quality of Chinese table food to food sanitation standards that allows consumers to access clean and safe food by organizing training programs for interested entrepreneurs and the general public.</p>	<p>programs to develop skills and knowledge relevant to entrepreneurs' requirements so that they can be used for real benefits.</p> <p>W2+O1+O5. Developing courses for food sanitation standards and services through the cooperation of multi-sectoral expertise and training for Chinese catering entrepreneurs.</p> <p>W3+W7+W8+O3+O5+O6. Developing the quality of Chinese table food comprehensively from upstream to downstream of the sourcing process of local food ingredients, including bringing innovation and technology to help maintain food quality and ingredients and service to meet food sanitation standards, giving consumers access to clean and safe food.</p> <p>W4O4 The government sector supports funding sources with soft loans for entrepreneurs in business operations.</p>
<p>Threats (T)</p> <p>1. More direct competitors operate the same Chinese-dishes catering business and indirect competitors operate similar catering businesses. The restaurant business also competes in the market because of the simple and uncomplicated operating model.</p> <p>2. Restrictions on transportation under the Land Traffic Act and the Land Transport Act limit the use of cars, including the requirement to comply with regulations correctly and adequately for road safety for each service.</p> <p>3. Emergency measures due to the COVID-19 pandemic have prevented catering businesses from operating.</p> <p>4. increasing material costs and transportation costs.</p> <p>5. Consumers pay more attention to their health. They</p>	<p>ST Strategies</p> <p>S1+S4+S5+T1+T4+T5+T6. Developing competitive advantages with premium food quality, taste, safe ingredients, and standardized services and penetrating the niche market in addition to the primary target group.</p> <p>S3+S5+T2. Developing transportation systems, logistics, and route planning using information technology to help save transportation costs.</p> <p>S1+S5+T3. Focusing on providing delivery service and Chinese table food box sets for outdoor events.</p>	<p>WT Strategies</p> <p>W10T4. Educating entrepreneurs on advance production planning and linking to safe food ingredient sources using alliance trading, futures contracts, or pooling multiple entrepreneurs' purchases with farmer groups with reliable supplies.</p> <p>W6T5. Expanding communication and public relations channels, both online and offline, to raise awareness of safety among consumers.</p> <p>W5T4. Developing a standard Chinese-dishes catering business management system and passing on knowledge to the successor to continue the family business.</p>

have a negative attitude towards Chinese catering food as it is unhealthy and fattening. 6. Strict standard inspection from the Ministry of Public Health.		
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Value analysis of the healthy Chinese-dishes catering business in Nakhon Pathom province

Assessing the value of the Chinese-dishes catering business is essential for investors or business owners to consider before making investment decisions in any project. This is because investments lead to acquiring returns or benefits and incurring expenditures or costs from implementing investment projects. Investment project assessment is conducted on past, present, and future information that the business owner must research, compile, and make decisions under the decision-making criteria of various investment analysis tools. As investment is a project in the future, risks may arise, whether the risk of expected returns or benefits not going according to the plan or expenses or costs of all project life increase due to unforeseen circumstances. Therefore, entrepreneurs should understand the principles of risk assessment and the tools or techniques used to analyze investment projects to make investment decisions consistent with the investment objectives.

Table 2. Financial performance measures in normal circumstances

	Year 0	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Net Profit	-	1,616,700	1,865,660	2,176,860	2,425,820	2,861,500
Add Depreciation	-	144,900	144,900	144,900	144,900	144,900
Change in Net Working Capital	-	-46,680	-4,668	-5,835	-4,668	-8,169
Investment in Fixed Asset	(797,000)	-	-	-	-	-
Free cash Flow	(797,000)	1,714,920	2,005,892	2,315,925	2,566,052	2,998,231
Net Cash Flow	(797,000)	917,920	2,923,812	5,239,737	7,805,789	10,804,020
Break-even Point (Table)	-	649	673	703	728	770

According to the project’s value analysis, the business had an initial investment of 1,000,000 baht for preparing the location and buying assets and equipment for business use. The first-year revenue is estimated to reach 7,780,000 baht and rise yearly in line with a 10% volume increase. From the above revenue projection, the business will have a net profit of 1,616,700 baht in the first year, the second year at 1,865,660 baht, the third year at 2,176,860 baht, the fourth year at 2,425,820 baht, and the fifth year at 2,861,500 baht respectively. It was found that the business will have a payback period of 0.46 years, a positive net present value of 5,807,723 baht, a benefit-cost ratio (B/C ratio) of 8.29, and an internal rate of return of 230%, which is higher than the weighted average cost of capital of 20%.

Table 3. Financial performance measures in the post-COVID-19 situation

	Year 0	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Net Profit	-	-623,940	-462,116	-250,500	-32,660	247,420
Add Depreciation	-	144,900	144,900	144,900	144,900	144,900
Change in Net Working Capital	-	-4,668	-3,034	-3,967	-4,084	-5,251
Investment in Fixed Asset	(797,000)	-	-	-	-	-
Free cash Flow	(797,000)	-483,708	-320,250	-109,568	108,156	387,069
Net Cash Flow	(797,000)	-1,280,708	-1,600,958	-1,710,526	-1,602,371	-1,215,302
Break-even Point (Table)	-	430	446	466	489	515

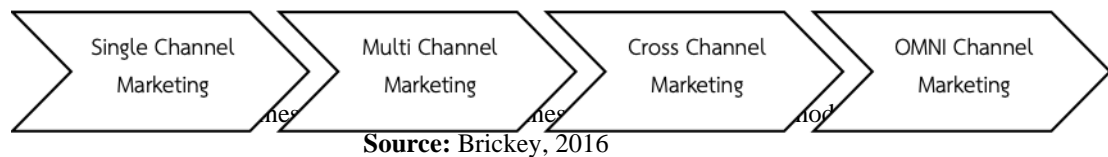
According to the project’s value analysis, the business had an initial investment of 1,000,000 baht for preparing the location and buying assets and equipment for business use. The first-year revenue is estimated to reach

778,000 baht and rise yearly in line with a 10% volume increase. From the above revenue projection, the business will have a net loss of 623,840 baht in the first year, the second year at 462,116 baht, the third year at 250,500 baht, the fourth year at 32,660 baht, and a net profit of 247,420 baht in the fifth year, respectively. It was found that the business will have a payback period of 3.21 years, a positive net present value of 117,395 baht, a benefit-cost ratio (B/C ratio) of 1.15, and an internal rate of return of 25%, which is higher than the weighted average cost of capital of 20%.

CONCLUSION

In analyzing the marketing channels of the Chinese-dishes catering business, the 4M principle and fishbone diagram were employed. The problems encountered are inefficient marketing channels caused by four issues: 1) entrepreneurs' lack of knowledge and skills and changes in customer behavior (Man); 2) capital constraints and lack of proper capital management (Money); 3) rising cost of raw materials (Material); and 4) limited marketing channels that lack diversity and technological and environmental changes (Method).

The analysis of the problem of inefficient marketing channels led to this research to improve the efficiency of the marketing channels of the Chinese-dishes catering business in Nakhon Pathom province. The goal was to develop offline and online marketing channels for the business, which can be classified into four types as follows: 1) single-channel marketing, 2) multi-channel marketing, 3) cross-channel marketing, and 4) Omni-channel marketing (Brickey, 2016), as shown in Figure 1.



1) Single-Channel Marketing for Chinese-Dishes Catering Business

The Chinese-dishes catering industry has used single-channel marketing since its inception to the present. The original marketing strategy of the prior Chinese-dishes catering business was only an offline channel. Entrepreneurs used to deal with customers directly through face-to-face communication. Only 10 percent of Chinese catering entrepreneurs have a physical store, compared to 90 percent who do not. Each banquet hire would focus on a large number of tables to provide full service. This research has developed offline marketing channels as follows. Entrepreneurs have also adopted face-to-face communication through the application of mobile phones. Word-of-mouth strategy continues to be used by existing customers with brand loyalty to help businesses acquire new customers. Additionally, entrepreneurs can adjust their service model by reducing the number of tables in each catering event, enhancing the quality and safety of food, and providing standardized service to build customer confidence through increasing safety measures. Then, all staff at the event are vaccinated, and all waitpersons wear masks and plastic gloves. All attendees wear masks and take their temperature before entering the venue. To comply with distance measures in seating arrangements, there are 4–6 seats per table. Tableware is wrapped in plastic, serving spoons are provided for each guest at the table, and no alcoholic beverages are served. In some cases, box sets are given out to guests to take home instead of eating inside.

2) Multi-Channel Marketing for Chinese-Dishes Catering Business

The prior Chinese-dishes catering businesses used multi-channel marketing in direct contact between buyers and sellers through both offline and online channels. This research has developed multi-channel marketing by developing offline marketing channels, as mentioned above, and online marketing channels. It consists of creating a central website named “Nakhon Pathom Chinese-dishes catering” to gather Chinese catering entrepreneurs participating in this research, creating LINE Official Account for each entrepreneur, and creating Facebook Page named “Nakhon Pathom Chinese-dishes catering, Chinese catering entrepreneurs”. The business model has also been adjusted to reach customer groups and create more sales opportunities. However, this channel has limitations as customers can use only one channel at a time, and each channel is disconnected. Thus, consumers cannot use cross-channel services. Information on each channel is inconsistent due to a lack of synchronization between channels and changes in technology and environment.

3) Cross-Channel Marketing for Chinese-Dishes Catering Business

It is a channel for customers to communicate with entrepreneurs in purchasing products through many channels combined to maximize consumer convenience. However, from the entrepreneurs' perspective, there is still a lack of a management system for linking each channel. This is the reason why the system has not reached optimal performance, leading to development.

4) Omni-Channel Marketing for Chinese-Dishes Catering Business

This research has developed additional online marketing channels: selling Chinese table food through the food delivery platform (Grab) and arranging small Chinese table food sets that customers can select when placing an online order via Google Forms, where the entrepreneur is the delivery person. Adopting Omni-channel marketing has linked the effective actions of all channels, reinforcing the ability to overcome the weaknesses of each channel. Customers will have a good experience buying products and services with easy and fast access because the information from all channels is systematically linked, allowing customers to close the deal completely. A further integration uses content marketing writing on the Blockdit platform to raise awareness of and publicize the Chinese-dishes catering business.

The results show that ten Chinese catering entrepreneurs use multi-channel marketing (53%), seven use cross-channel marketing (36%), and two use Omni-channel marketing (11%). From the performance measurement of the use of marketing channels of Chinese catering entrepreneurs in Nakhon Pathom province, the overall picture is as follows: single-channel marketing ($\bar{X} = 4.09$, S.D. = 0.82), multi-channel marketing ($\bar{X} = 3.89$, S.D. = 0.83), cross-channel marketing ($\bar{X} = 3.82$, S.D. = 0.82), and Omni-channel marketing ($\bar{X} = 3.69$, S.D. = 0.84). Therefore, developing offline and online marketing channels for the Chinese-dishes catering business in Nakhon Pathom in line with the changing environment has resulted in the unceasing development of new technologies. The proliferation of diverse channels, good customer relations, and Internet trading are crucial methods for selling consumer goods (Pentina & Hasty, 2009) and profoundly impact the supply chain (Johnson & Whang, 2002). Integrating offline and online channels creates a difference in service through different channels and targets in terms of age groups. The Chinese-dishes catering business has researched, compared, reviewed, and contacted popular entrepreneurs to add value in terms of service and good customer relations in parallel with traditional channels such as confirming purchase by sampling the food or negotiating with the seller in the final stage. However, this research has limitations in measuring performance due to the incidence of COVID-19, resulting in the suspension of Chinese catering operations under government measures. This increases the uncertainty of profit and cost measurement.

DISCUSSION

The development of offline and online marketing channels for the Chinese-dishes catering business eliminates the limitations of traditional marketing channels (offline marketing channels), which sell through only one channel via physical stores or entrepreneurs (single-channel marketing). In purchasing directly from entrepreneurs or physical stores, customers can experience products and services in person to feel their benefits and worthiness (Hur, Picot-Coupey & Ackermann, 2017). This is consistent with a study by Melero, Sese & Verhoef (2016), which found that 61 percent of customers prefer to inquire about products and ask staff for advice before making a purchase. The offline or in-store sales model provides full service, so it creates a personalized purchase experience for customers. Importantly, in selecting a Chinese-dishes caterer, customers want to discuss with the entrepreneurs about the catering style, such as the food set, service style, and the number of tables, and they want to sample the food. Social interactions are emotional and highly responsive to customer needs, increasing the opportunity to close a deal more easily (Rigby, 2011). Additionally, buying products or receiving services at the physical store contributes to a good experience because of the enjoyment from meeting and talking with other customers (Melero, Sese & Verhoef, 2016). The direct or in-store channel is one component of the purchase (Verhoef, Kannan & Inman, 2015). Another component includes placing an order through online channels such as websites, social networks, etc. The new generation of customers tends to use the website to search for information and make purchases because it can save time and provide easy access to information about products and services (Prashar, Vijay & Parsad, 2017). It also reduces the inconvenience of visiting the store, finding a parking space, queuing to check out, and comparing prices. A website is a cost-effective sales channel as it can display a wide range of products (Cheema, Rizwan, Jalal, Durrani & Sohail, 2013) and can store customer purchase history. As for purchasing through social networks, the tendency is growing as customers perceive the benefits and enjoyment of it and the ability to compare the amount of money, time, and effort expended (Hur, Picot-Coupey & Ackermann, 2017). Social network channels are two-way communication through after-sales service by quickly responding to customer complaints and solving problems, which builds brand awareness and good customer relationships (Kraemer, 2015; Jermsitiparsert, Sutduean & Sriyakul, 2018). Additionally, customers can ask their friends for recommendations on Facebook or Twitter and read product reviews from experts or real users before making a decision. Social networks facilitate information search, price comparison, product information sharing, and buying and selling products and services. Most young customers spend 4–5 hours daily on social networks and like to use this channel to communicate, comment, and share messages (Meechunek, 2017). When technology increasingly plays a role in our lives, opting for a single sales channel is not enough to meet the needs of today's consumers.

Therefore, the Chinese-dishes catering business has developed sales channels into multi-channel marketing to reach consumer groups and increase opportunities to sell products and services. Multi-channel marketing is the presentation of products and services through various channels such as websites, social networks, email, and physical stores to communicate with consumers. However, multi-channel marketing still has separate sales channels, each of which provides different information and services, resulting in discrepancies in communication with consumers. As a result, this research has developed an integrated marketing channel called Omni-channel marketing for the Chinese-dishes catering business, which combines technology and marketing strategies. It can bring together all available consumer access channels, both offline and online, to deliver a good experience to consumers naturally and seamlessly (Yrjölä, Spence & Saarijärvi, 2018). Omni-channel marketing is a viable and effective strategy for today's businesses. It enables entrepreneurs to adapt their business model to conform to the new normal by integrating the synergies of offline and online marketing. To achieve positive results in promotion, businesses can apply the research results to create a competitive advantage and attract consumers. Social network channels are one of the Omni-channel marketing in the Chinese-dishes catering business. In Omni-channel marketing, customers buy products through various offline and online channels that entrepreneurs have connected for communication, information sharing with target customers, product distribution, and giving customers more options when making purchasing decisions anytime, anywhere (Kositpipat & Prasongsukarn, 2017; Hur, Picot-Coupey & Ackermann, 2017). Customers need diversity in marketing channels to buy products, especially the benefits from online channels that allow them to access unlimited product information, compare prices, and read reviews and recommendations from friends or experts. At the same time, customers also want to benefit from the physical store channel, such as touching or testing products, receiving personalized service from the salesperson, getting information from the salesperson, and engaging in in-store purchasing. These will give customers a sense of value compared to the integrated distribution channel's purchasing experience (Rigby, 2011). Purchasing value from integrated distribution channels is a combination of both offline and online sales channels (Rigby, 2011; Hur, Picot-Coupey & Ackermann, 2017). Components of the value of purchasing from integrated distribution channels in the Chinese-dishes catering business include direct contact with Chinese catering entrepreneurs, physical stores, websites, mobile applications, and social networks (Hüseynoglu, Galipoglu & Kotzab, 2017). Therefore, the current Chinese catering operations related to the proliferation of digital technology and changing customer behavior blur the boundaries between physical (offline) and online commerce. In order to be successful in the long run, organizations need to integrate both channels. To acquire diverse and interoperable marketing channels, businesses can integrate offline and online channels by developing multi-channel, cross-channel, and Omni-channel marketing. As a result, businesses gain drivers of competitive advantage, helping entrepreneurs assess the benefits of integrating both offline and online marketing channels to suit their business to create opportunities to expand the market to take full advantage. However, according to the potential of these marketing channels, entrepreneurs should systematically and cautiously apply a good strategy to support and drive further dynamics.

RECOMMENDATION

Chinese catering entrepreneurs can use the research results as a business development roadmap. The Office of Provincial Commercial Affairs and the Chinese-dishes Catering Association can adopt them as a guide for knowledge provision by organizing training for Chinese catering entrepreneurs and other food business entrepreneurs to develop personnel and workers serving the Chinese-dishes catering business to meet the needs of service recipients as much as possible. In applying integrated marketing tools for the healthy Chinese-dishes catering business, entrepreneurs must start by clearly defining the target customers, as it will enable the business to select the most appropriate tools. It also helps to quantitatively measure the success of marketing tools in terms of increasing customer numbers, sales, and profits. The result of successful market integration is the value of customer loyalty.

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