

4. RESULTS

4.1 OPPO's STP Strategy

4.1.1 Market Segmentation

By geographical factors, the markets of OPPO mobile phones can be divided into European and American market, Asian market and African market. European and American market covers America, Europe, Russian and other regions. Asian market covers Southeast Asia, China and other developing countries.

By prices, the markets of OPPO mobile phones can be divided into low-end market, mid-range market and high-end market. The mid-range market and the low-end market include students, people who just start working, ordinary workers and so on. The target customer group values price and functionality. The high-end market includes private business owners, company leaders and so on. High-end products symbolize status.

By demographic factors, OPPO mobile phones can be divided into phones for women, phones for men, phones for the students, phones for the young, phones for the old, etc.

By functionality, OPPO's mobile phones can be divided into general models, music phones, camera phones, business phones, entertainment phones, etc.

4.1.2 Market Targeting

The main target consumer group of OPPO mobile phones includes young people from 18 to 30 years old, most of whom are either students or have just started to work from second-tier, third-tier and fourth-tier cities. They are after novelty and fashion. They follow the trend and advocate individuality. With active minds, they are interested in new things and pay attention to the quality of life. They also enjoy taking photographs, entertaining and socializing.

4.1.3 Market Positioning

OPPO has positioned itself as a stylish and individualized mid-range and high-end mobile phone brand in the market. In the early days, OPPO mobile phones are positioned as music phones with perfect sound quality.

4.2 OPPO's Marketing Strategy

OPPO's marketing strategy includes product, price, place and promotion.

4.2.1 Product

Factors consumers consider when purchasing mobile phones include price, appearance, brand, previous experience, design style, how easy to use, size and weight, camera, battery life, memory, operation system, large screen and WiFi. The *Research Report on the Demand of Chinese Mobile Consumers (First Half of 2016)* issued by China Statistical Information Service Center divides consumers' dimensions of attention while choosing mobile phones into brand, configuration, features, quality, appearance and price. Among them, consumers are the most concerned about the appearance, which accounts for 75%, followed by brand, features and quality. Configuration and price come last.

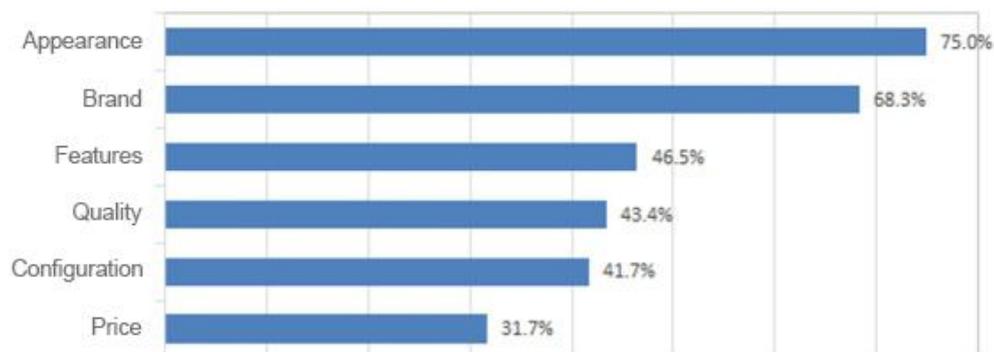


Figure 1: Factors Chinese Consumers Consider when Choosing Mobile Phones

Source: www.cqn.com.cn

According to the *Research Report on the Demand of Chinese Mobile Consumers*, in terms of mobile features, photography has become a feature about which Chinese mobile consumers are the most concerned, accounting for as much as 65%, which is nearly 28% higher than the second on the list – fingerprint. In terms of photography itself, consumers

are the most concerned about definition, followed by selfie effects and night shooting effects. Apple, OPPO and Samsung are the three most highly recognized brands among consumers for their photography features, accounting for 72.4%, 71% and 69.8% respectively. In terms of configuration, consumers center their concerns on the batteries, accounting for as much as 81.4%.

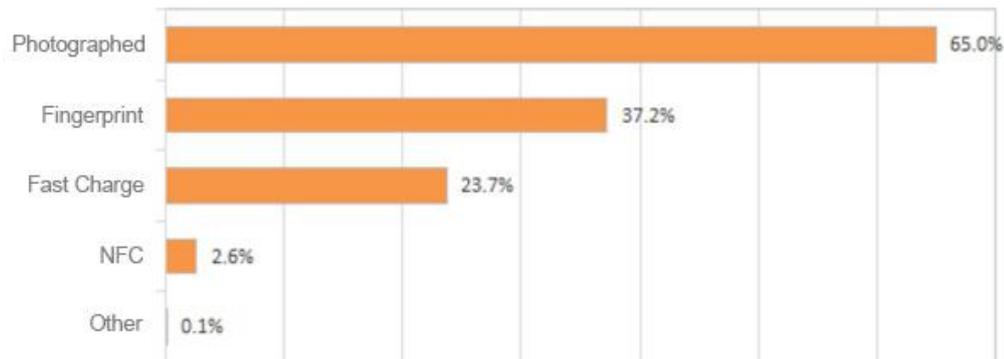


Figure 2: Mobile Features Chinese Consumers are Concerned About

Source: www.cqn.com.cn

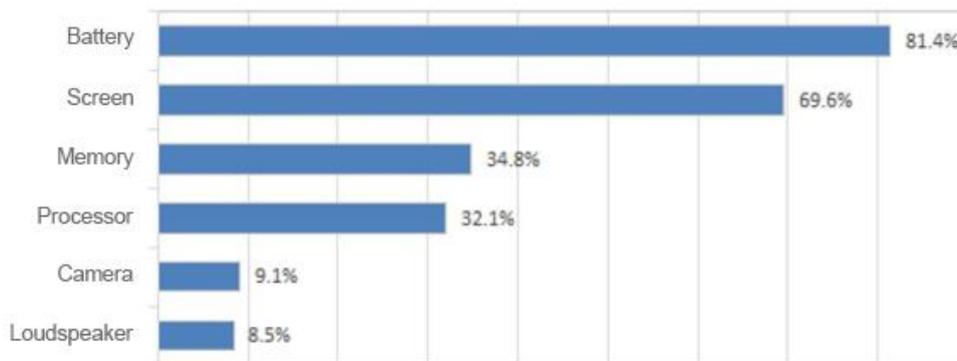


Figure 3: Mobile Configuration Chinese Consumers are Concerned About

Source: www.cqn.com.cn

In terms of mobile phones, users have short battery life, slow charging, unclear pictures, unsightly appearance, and other pain points. Aiming at solving these pain points, OPPO has improved its own technologies to meet the users' needs for charging, photographing and appearance.

OPPO applied its VOOC fast-charging technology to R9, R11 and R11s mobile phones. R9's advertising slogan is "5 minutes charge, 2 hours call", which is the direct embodiment of its selling point. VOOC fast-charging technology has solved users' pain

points of short battery life and slow charging.

OPPO has never ceased to upgrade its technologies and products to satisfy the users' photography needs. In 2012, OPPO developed U701, the first mobile phone with built-in selfie beautifying feature. In 2013, OPPO launched N1, a large-screen camera phone with a rotating camera, and R1, which featured night shots. In June 2017, OPPO launched R11, a mobile phone equipped with dual cameras with an advertising slogan of "dual 20MP cameras, greater clarity and brilliance". In November the same year, OPPO launched R11s. R11s used 20MP+16MP intelligently-selecting dual rear cameras with dual f/1.7 large apertures. The main lens can be switched intelligently based on the lighting conditions for more natural portrait shots in the daytime and clearer portrait shots at night. In terms of selfies, R11s adopted brand new intelligent AI beautifying technology. Based on its collection of 254 facial feature points, OPPO R11s can intelligently analyze the gender, age, complexions, skin types and other information of the users. It can also provide users with the most suitable beautifying algorithms by combining all such information.

"Absolute beauty" is the essence of the brand of OPPO. OPPO's products always look stylish and exquisite. OPPO targets young people as its market. They are after fashion. A57, R9 and other OPPO mobile phones resemble iPhone in appearance, because iPhone represents and leads the current trend and fashion of mobile phones. OPPO released three versions of R11s – black, champagne and red. Red R11s has full-screen and starry-sky-screen design features. The subtly visible red halo makes the phone look more beautiful when the light of the screen is off, achieving the smoothest transition from the frame to the screen.

OPPO never ceases to upgrade the technologies and features of its mobile phones. Whenever another mobile brand launches a new feature, OPPO will improve the functionality of its own mobile phones as soon as possible. When the "Raise to Wake" feature was launched in Apple's iOS 10 system and the facial recognition feature was launched in iPhone X, OPPO followed suit and upgraded its own technologies. OPPO R11s has adopted brand new face recognition technology. By intelligently collecting a user's 128 face recognition points, the recognition process can be done in only 0.08 seconds. The moment the screen is lightened, the phone will be unlocked. R11s also has the "Raise to Wake Up" feature.

OPPO also launched a custom FC Barcelona edition mobile phone. OPPO and FCB Global Partnership Press Conference was held on September 8, 2015 in Beijing. At the conference, OPPO became an official partner of FC Barcelona, and launched the custom FC Barcelona edition of R7 Plus. In June 2016, OPPO launched a custom FC Barcelona edition of R9. In August 2017, OPPO launched a custom FC Barcelona limited edition of R11. This FC Barcelona limited edition of OPPO R11 features six major highlights: the FC Barcelona's red and blue design, a 18K gold-plated emblem, two times more sophisticated technology, custom UI mobile theme, exclusive blue packaging and a case signed by FC Barcelona's star players. OPPO R11 FC Barcelona custom edition adopted FC Barcelona's signature colors – red and blue. By using the 3D surface “masking oxidation process”, R11 realized, for the first time, large areas of contrast colors of red and blue on its all-metal body and a gold ratio division by a 0.4mm line. Where red met blue, a 18K gold-plated emblem representing FC Barcelona's spirit of glory was inlaid in a 3D manner. Gilt effects were added to the edges of the body and its rear camera, looking like crowns. In order for the red and blue dual-colored metal to blend perfectly with the antenna, OPPO R11 FC Barcelona limited edition tried the new “glue filling process”. The custom UI mobile theme featured red and blue. The lock screen wallpaper, home screen wallpaper, app icons and interface all featured FC Barcelona's red and blue.

4.2.2 Price

The price of OPPO mobile phones ranges from RMB1,000 to RMB3,500, standing in the mid-range and high-end prices. Among the same products of the mobile industry, the price of OPPO mobile phones is comparatively higher. Different series are priced differently. Series A mobile phones are priced between RMB1,000 to RMB2,100, while Series R mobile phones are priced between RMB2,500 to RMB3,500. In terms of the overall price strategy, the prices of OPPO mobile phones are unified across the country and are strictly regulated. This kind of strategy will not lead to different pricing by different channels or cause chaotic pricing. It helps the company manage the prices and also puts the consumer's mind at ease. However, to some extent, it limits the sales of online channels. If a product is sold at the same price online and offline, consumers would prefer to try it in a physical store before purchasing.

Table 3: OPPO Mobile Phone Price (The Monetary Unit of Price: RMB Yuan)

Phone Model	R15 (Black)	R15 (White)	R11s	R11s Plus	A3	A79 (64G)	A73 (64G)	A1 (64G)	A83 (32G)
Price	3499	2999	2799	2999	2099	1799	1599	1499	1299

Data sources: <https://www.opposhop.cn/> (Price Statistics as of April 24, 2018)

Form source: This Study Organized

4.2.3 Place

OPPO uses a variety of mobile marketing channels. It cooperates with the operators, lets agents sell its phones, sets up OPPO stores, enters professional mobile chains and large-scale appliance chain enterprises, as well as establishes online marketing channels, satisfying the needs of different consumers (Wang, 2017).

OPPO has powerful offline sales channels. By adopting the strategy of “encircling the cities from rural areas”, OPPO has opened over 200,000 retail stores throughout third-tier and fourth-tier cities in China. The green-themed OPPO stores are everywhere, attracting people’s attention by colored flags, mascots, audio adverts and other means. In the stores, trained shop assistants will introduce products to the customers. OPPO also lets agents sell its mobile phones. OPPO has three types of agents: OPPO’s previous employees, OPPO’s previous suppliers or partners, and OPPO’s long-term and exclusive channels. OPPO offers its front-line shop assistants base salary plus commission to motivate them and push them to make every effort to sell. This also leaves OPPO’s channels with sufficient profit space. Some agents even hold a small amount of OPPO’s shares (Wang, 2016). OPPO also implements an “overall scoring” system, which comprehensively evaluates sales volume, payment collection and other indicators. In general, the company of OPPO does not involve much in the management of the sales by levels below the agents. Instead, it fully delegates its prime agents.

Operators have powerful distribution networks and strong service capabilities. Many mobile brands adopt the channel sales model in collaboration with the operators by means of free mobile recharging and free data when purchasing, launching customized mobile phones for the operators, and so on. Based on the development of science and technology

as well as the trend of the times, the operators often make more requests about the mobile phones. OPPO will then produce customized models in accordance with the operators' requests to meet the market demand. Since the launching of its first China Telecom edition OPPO R3, OPPO mobile phones have performed well in the China Telecom market and won acclaim from the users. Collaborating with the operators can increase the exposure of OPPO mobile phones. Customers who are at the operators' stores solving issues or queueing can get to know the OPPO mobile phones displayed in the stores, and promotional activities such as free recharging and free data by purchasing an OPPO mobile phone. Free recharging and free data are very appealing to the consumers.

OPPO mobile phones have entered professional mobile chains and large-scale appliance chain enterprises; for example, OPPO mobile phones have their own counter at Suning Appliance. By selling mobile phones through large-scale mobile or appliance chain channels, OPPO can save the sales cost to a certain extent. It costs less than opening an exclusive OPPO store. Meanwhile, OPPO can also take advantage of the brand influence of the well-known chain enterprises in first-tier and second-tier cities.

The online channels of OPPO mobile phones mainly include the official website of OPPO and other e-commerce platforms such as Suning.com, JD.com and Tmall. Online shopping has become very popular in recent years. Other than its convenience, online shopping also saves costs. Online channels save the sellers' rents, renovation costs, utility costs and other costs. They save the consumers' costs for travelling outside for shopping. For the same product, its online price is generally lower than its offline price. With Xiaomi as the epitome, lots of mobile phone brands are focusing their strategy on online sales. OPPO mobile phones are sold at the same prices online and offline. Therefore, without any discount for the mobile phones online, consumers may prefer to try the products in a physical store before purchasing. Consequently, in terms of online channels, OPPO mobile phones have no advantage.

4.2.4 Promotion

4.2.4.1 Advertising Slogans

The product advertising slogans of OPPO mobile phones reflect the distinct features of the products. They are easy to follow, easy to spread and easy for consumers to remember. OPPO U701 was OPPO's first selfie phone. Its advertising slogan was "Selfie

Expert”. OPPO R1 was a mobile phone featuring night shots launched by OPPO. Its advertising slogan was “great shots don’t stop at night”, reflecting R1’s feature of night shots. OPPO N1 was a mobile phone with a rotating camera. Its advertising slogan was “the charming rotation”. The advertising slogan of OPPO N1 Mini was “rotate as you like for unlimited fun shots”. OPPO Find 7 was OPPO’s first flagship product released in the 4G era. Its advertising slogan was “an all-round 4G flagship”. OPPO R9 adopted VOOC fast-charging technology. Its advertising slogan was “5 minutes charge, 2 hours call”, which enabled people to remember R9’s features of fast-charging and long battery life. The advertising slogan of OPPO R9s was “Now, It’s Clear”, and that of OPPO R11 “dual 20MP cameras, greater clarity and brilliance”, both demonstrating the feature of R9s and R11 which was taking clear photographs. The advertising slogan of OPPO R15 was “AI smart photography, capturing the genuine beauty”, which showed R15’s feature of AI smart shots.

The advertising slogan of each OPPO mobile phone reflects well the main features of the product. From selfie, night shots, rotating cameras, product transforming from 3G to 4G and flash-charging technology, to AI smart photography technology, the features and selling points of each OPPO mobile phone product is reflected by its smooth-reading advertising slogan directly and spread fast and wide (Spiderman191, 2016). “5 minutes charge, 2 hours call” is particularly well spread all over China.

4.2.4.2 Celebrity Endorsements

OPPO mobile phones target young people from 18 to 30 years old as their major consumer group. OPPO India hired actors Hrithik Roshan and Sonam Kapoor as their brand ambassadors. The cricketer Yuvraj Singh too has been featured in some of their advertisements. OPPO India has launched a campaign starring Bollywood couple Bipasha Basu and Karan Singh Grover for OPPO F1s Rose Gold edition. OPPO Indonesia hired Isyana Sarasvati, Raisa Andriana, Reza Rahadian and Chelsea Islan as their brand ambassadors. OPPO also hires celebrity endorsers in Vietnam, especially Son Tùng M-TP who endorses three smart phone units like Neo 5, Neo 7 and F1s. OPPO Malaysia also launched a new OPPO F5 smart phone with Fattah Amin and Ayda Jebat as their brand ambassadors. Korean boy band 2PM prepared a song known as "Follow Your Soul" in a promotional deal with OPPO for launching its brand in Thailand in 2010. In October 2017, OPPO Thailand launched a new ad of OPPO F5 smart phone with a new ad

presenter: famous Thai actor, Nadech Kugimiya (Wikipedia, 2018). OPPO Thailand invited actors James Jirayu and Thanapob Lee to endorse OPPO R9s. In addition, OPPO invited Yaya Urassaya to endorse OPPO F5 and F7. OPPO China has invited Yang Yang, Yang Mi, William Chan Wai-ting, Dilireba, and TFBOYS (Wang Junkai, Wang Yuan, and Jackson Yee) as endorsers. These celebrities have a large number of young fans which correspond to the target consumer group of OPPO mobile phones. The endorsers of OPPO mobile phones are all capable of inspiring people to follow them, influential and topic-inducing. They can also bring greater add-value to the brand.

4.2.4.3 Weibo Marketing

Disseminating information through Weibo marketing is simple, convenient, fast and open, low-cost with diversified content and forms. Everyone can participate Weibo activities at any time from anywhere. Corporate marketing activities are not constrained by time and location. Promoting products on Weibo has become simpler, faster and more efficient. The audience can instantly obtain and disseminate information, saving a considerable amount of cost for the enterprises. There are varied ways to market products through Weibo; for example, using various topics, celebrities, and various methods to interact with Weibo users.

In China, OPPO's endorsers have large numbers of followers on Weibo: Yang Mi has 80.07 million followers; Yang Yang has 33.15 million followers; William Chan Wai-ting (also Chen Weiting) has 25.58 million followers; and Dilireba has 40.26 million followers. Among TFBOYS, Wang Junkai has 40.87 million followers, Wang Yuan has 39.70 million, and Jackson Yee (also Yi Yangqianxi) has 39.36 million. After an endorser sends a Weibo post, "From OPPO xx (model name)" will be shown above the post. With each endorser having such many followers on Weibo, the impressions of OPPO mobile phones can reach extremely high. When a new OPPO mobile phone is launched, the endorsers will send Weibo posts promoting it. When OPPO R11s was first released, its brand endorsers posted their "cast photographs" with R11s on Weibo. In terms of Weibo forwarding, within the data statistical time frame, Jackson Yee's Weibo post was forwarded over 3.5 million times, ranking first. In terms of Weibo coverage, according to big data analysis, Jackson Yee's Weibo coverage exceeded 130 million people, raking first, followed by Wang Junkai's which exceeded 110 million people. Wang Junkai's Weibo post was forwarded over 2.4 million times. Within 9 days after the Weibo posts were first

published, the average daily forwarding of them all exceeded 100,000 times. Dilireba’s, Yang Yang’s and William Chan Wai-ting’s Weibo posts were all forwarded over 0.6 million times (Sohu.com, 2017). The forwarding layers of Yang Mi’s Weibo post reached 101, which contributed a lot to the depth of OPPO’s brand communication. Yang Yang’s and Wang Yuan’s followers also showed a relatively high degree of loyalty towards OPPO. Of the devices they used to forward, comment and send Weibo posts, more than 20% were OPPO mobile phones. R11s’ promotional Weibo posts sent by the celebrity endorsers were forwarded over 8.70 million times, covering 510 million people in total. Up to November 22, the Weibo topic “#OPPO Dual 20MP Cameras R11s#” had been read 980 million times. The brand promotion achieved a superb dissemination effect.

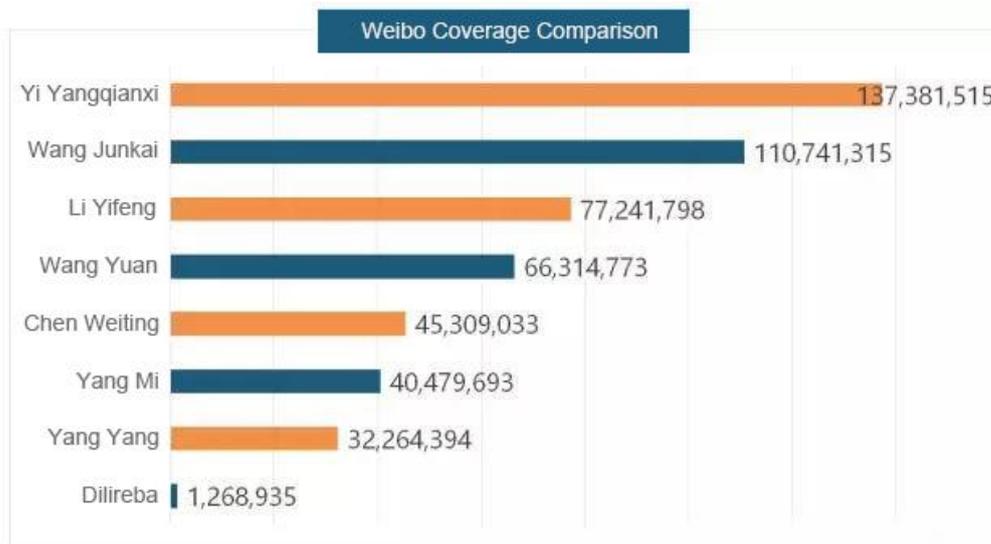


Figure 4: Weibo Coverage Comparison for Weibo Posts Promoting OPPO R11s by its Endorsers

Source: wyq.sina.com

Collection and Statistical Period: October 23, 2017 – November 10, 2017

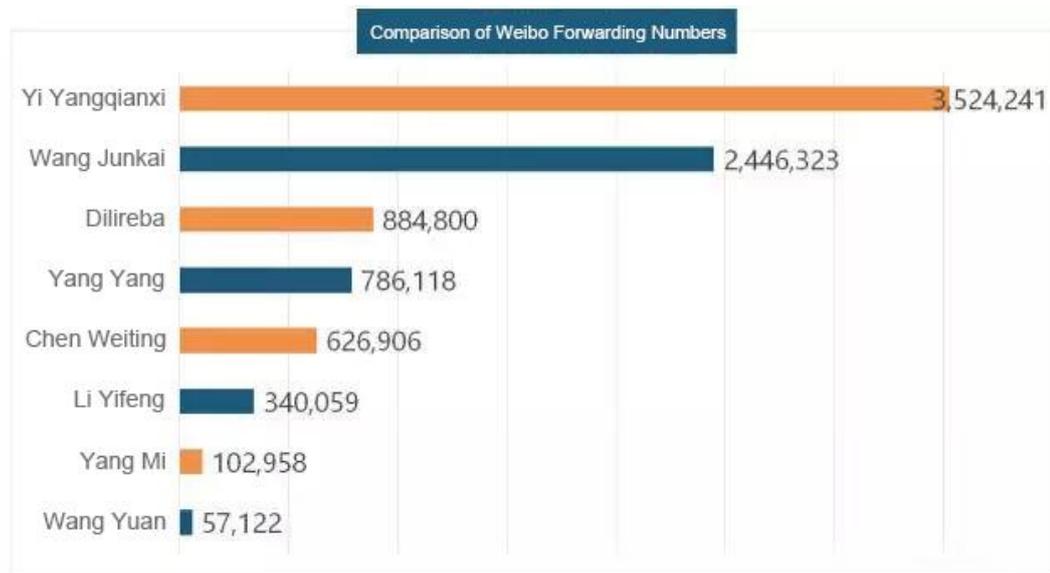


Figure 5: Comparison of Weibo Forwarding Numbers of Posts Promoting OPPO R11s by its Endorsers

Source: wyq.sina.com

Collection and Statistical Period: October 23, 2017 – November 10, 2017

Together with six popular celebrities, OPPO conducted a fun search marketing activity on Weibo’s platform. It was the first time for Weibo to open its own search engine product and collaborate with a brand owner. When fans searched the names of “Yang Yang, Yang Mi, Wang Junkai, Wang Yuan, Jackson Yee and Li Yifeng” on Weibo, they would see surprises prepared by OPPO beforehand – falling animated GIFs of the celebrities and the product photographs of OPPO’s latest camera phone R9s (Sohu.com, 2017). This novel, fun and unexpected interactive experience left lots of fans favorable impressions. Many of them shared the screenshots of their participation in this activity on their own Weibo account and WeChat Moments. According to Weibo’s official statistics, during the 4 hours following the launching of the activity, “#Wang Junkai has a R9s which takes clearer pictures#” and other sub-topics of the six celebrity endorsers had been read over 45.89 million times and reached a total discussion volume of 50,000.

OPPO was a title sponsor of Weibo Awards Ceremony. They engraved the names of invited guests on the newly-launched OPPO R9s mobile phones and made them into custom invitations for the event. Lots of celebrity guests all shared their OPPO mobile phones with their names engraved on Weibo (Wu & Jin, 2017).

OPPO mobile phones also took advantage of Weibo topics and interacted with fans to increase their engagement. Topics such as “OPPO R9s free gifts on Weibo”, “red R9s for the new year”, “OPPO super-vision full-screen R15”, “Purple R15, we should live for real”, “OPPO, live for real”, and “Wang Junkai OPPO New Journey” initiated forwards and participation in the interactions by a large number of fans.

OPPO mobile phones also launched another activity in which people who forwarded certain Weibo posts could participate in a lucky draw with chances of winning mobile phones. For example, OPPO let *Who's the Murderer*, an online variety show sponsored by OPPO, announce at its official Weibo account about the lucky draw activity. Anyone who forwarded this Weibo post with the topic “OPPO super-vision full-screen R15” included would have the chance to win an OPPO R15 mobile phone. A total number of 7,422 people forwarded the Weibo post *Who's the Murderer* released about OPPO R15's lucky draw activity. By taking advantage of low-cost prizes, as well as people's mentality of wanting something for nothing and trying their luck, OPPO mobile phones led a large number of users to follow and forward by way of helping promote OPPO's new R15, achieving the objective of making it known to more people.

The official Weibo account of OPPO mobile phones also engaged in interactions and discussions with the fans. For example, it would forward the photographs users have taken by OPPO mobile phones, share some photography knowledge, publish some topics for discussion so that fans would interact and discuss, and share some daily-life related content.

4.2.4.4 WeChat Marketing

OPPO collaborates with WeChat Official Accounts. These accounts write and push articles promoting OPPO mobile phones. OPPO usually selects accounts with mostly young followers. The articles such accounts push are mostly about fashion, as well as science and technology, which young people are interested in. Fans that follow such accounts are mostly in pursuit of novelty, fashion, uniqueness and the cutting edge. They do have certain taste. They coincide with the key target consumer group of OPPO mobile phones. When OPPO released its new phone R15, it collaborated with the WeChat Official Accounts of “Guokr.com” and “Becky's Fantasy”.

Guokr.com usually pushes articles that are related to the science and technology of various fields. Content is open, diversified and fun. The first half of the OPPO R15 advertising article pushed by Guokr.com didn't appear to be advertising OPPO mobile phones. Instead, it introduced the visual sensory system, how humans distinguished different colors, and the colors' impact on human's psychological activities, just like its usual popular science articles. Midway through the article, it went from the "demand theory of uniqueness" to consumers' demand of mobile phones that have different colors and appearances from other mobile phones, which in turn led to the four colors the American designer Karim Rashid had designed for OPPO R15 – snow white, thermal red, star purple and dreamy red. It also introduced the extension of 3-HDR OPPO R15 had adopted that could create a stronger sense of depth to the photographs taken. The article started with scientific knowledge related to the product features of OPPO R15 as a preparation for the content that followed. It was fun and appealing for readers to keep reading. They didn't feel an instant aversion of it like how they felt about other articles promoting articles the moment they started to read them.

"Becky's Fantasy" is a WeChat Official Account in which the owner of the account tells readers what they can buy, what they should buy, how to become a beautiful person with a beautiful soul, and how to live a practical life with one's own style from her own experiences like a friend. Its article promoting OPPO R15 mobile phones didn't appear to be an advert at the beginning either. The first half of the article talked about how to take photographs and some composition techniques. The article only started to mention OPPO R15 mobile phones midway by showing photograph examples of successful composition taken by OPPO R15. By using photographs and GIFs, it introduced the unique appearance, screen, AI smart photographing, photograph editing feature, video beautifying feature and translation feature of the star purple OPPO R15 in a very detailed way. The beginning of the article gave readers the impression that it was an article teaching people how to take photographs. As they read half way through, they suddenly realized that it was an advert. Such an advert does not cause so much of aversion. Instead, they are more easily accepted by people and boost their interest to read the whole articles patiently. Some readers even asked about the price of OPPO R15 in the comments, which showed that the promotion was effective to a certain extent.

4.2.4.5 Advertising Production

Most of OPPO mobile phones' adverts are fine made, with beautiful frames and delightful music. They emphasize the rendering of artistic conception. Good-looking male and female celebrities are invited to star in the adverts. Sometimes, the adverts contain certain story lines, weaving in OPPO mobile phones and their features. The frames in the adverts rival those in films, with both visual and auditory enjoyment and leaving an indelible impression on the audience.

In terms of ad placements in China's TV stations, OPPO has placed adverts mostly in Zhejiang TV, Hunan TV, CCTV, and other mainstream TV channels at prime time. During the 2016 Olympics, OPPO placed prime-time adverts in CCTV-5.

OPPO has launched several ad campaigns that highlight its innovative features and are shown via television, newspapers and billboards and in social media via Facebook, Twitter, Blogs, Instagram and YouTube (MARKETING91, 2018).

OPPO's Find series targets young men with adventurous spirit as customers. Therefore, they invited Leonardo DiCaprio to be the endorser of OPPO Find smart phones. In April 2011, the advert *Find Me* of OPPO Find was launched. The story of the advert was roughly about: Leonardo kept meeting a mysterious woman randomly. She left "Find me" on the window and wanted him to find her. The advert was permeated with mysterious and suspenseful atmosphere, comparable to film trailers. The audience wanted to watch more and wondered what would happen next. The advert drew people's attention and aroused their interest.

In April 2014, OPPO launched a micro-film advert *The Magician* advertising the newly released OPPO Find 7. This time, in collaboration with Tencent Video, OPPO introduced a "1-Yuan-Ticket" service. Users can only watch 30 seconds of the 5-minute micro film *The Magician* for free. The whole film was available for only RMB 1. OPPO said that all proceeds of this advert would go to underprivileged children's projects. For users who wanted to watch it but didn't want to pay, they just needed to shared this advert with five of their QQ friends, which realized the secondary dissemination of the micro-film advert.

Early in 2017, OPPO launched the advert *The Magic Journey of Lilliput* starring Yang Yang. In this advert, Yang Yang became a migrant worker in Lilliput. People there helped him realize his dream of reuniting with his love and having a photograph taken together on New Year's Day. The story happened in winter and was set in a small town in Europe. The frames were surreal like in a fairy tale. The idea of Lilliput was novel. The advert had the quality and fineness of a film. It was a perfect blend of oriental classicality and western atmosphere. One hour after the advert was released online, it had been forwarded over 10,000 times (Kang, 2017).

In 2017, OPPO joined hands with Jay Chou and shot its micro-film advert *The Longest Story of Jay Chou's 2000w Stories*. This micro film told that in the snowy winter of 2070, an old man brought his wife who was suffering from Alzheimer to see the magician Jay Chou, who could bring back memories by playing the piano. As Jay Chou played *The Longest Movie*, how the old man and his wife met, fell in love and became inseparable all through their life appeared before their eyes. The old man's wife finally recognized him, although only for a brief moment of the song. As the story developed in the micro film, both the leading actor and actress were using different models of OPPO mobile phones throughout different stages of their life. The story of them loving and accompanying each other till they were old was very heart-warming and touching for the audience. In addition, many of the young people in OPPO's main target market had grown up listening to Jay Chou's songs. The advert also aroused such a kind of emotional tie. In less than a day's time after this micro film was released, it was played over 10 million times on various major platforms and was spoken highly of.

In 2016, OPPO launched a micro film called *I Am Your Xiao Mi Phone* starring Yang Mi and Dong Zijian, and a micro TV drama called *I Am Your Yang Yang Phone*. In 2017, OPPO invited the three members of TFBOYS to star in the *Invisible TA* micro-film series. Wang Junkai starred in *Let's Be Friends* of the series, Wang Yuan starred in *Odd Minshuku* of the series, and Jackson Lee starred in *Handsome Delivery Boy* of the series. In 2018, OPPO invited Dilireba to star in the micro film *Live for Real*.

4.2.4.6 Sponsorship and Embedded Marketing

In recent years, variety shows have a booming market in China. A large number of variety shows are shown on TV and on the Internet. Variety shows have brought about an increasing number of business opportunities. With the development of the fan economy, variety shows are setting greater and greater store by the value of celebrities. Generally speaking, programs that have invited big-name celebrities have relatively high viewership. Brands need to take advantage of highly-rated programs to increase brand exposure. Lots of brands experience considerable increases in brand awareness and sales volumes after sponsoring programs. Therefore, many brands are willing to spend a substantial amount of money to win the sponsorship, or even title sponsorship of the programs.

OPPO is a title sponsor of many top variety shows. Chinese variety shows OPPO is sponsoring include *Happy Camp*, *Day Day Up*, *Up Idol*, *The Inn*, *Back to Field* and *Who's the Murderer* of Hunan TV, *Running Man China*, *The Voice of China* (Season 4), *Give Me Five*, *Challenger Union*, *Sing! China* (Season 2) and *The Birth of Actors* of Zhejiang TV, *Go Fighting!* and *Fashion Star* of Dragon TV, *Crossover Singer* of Beijing TV and *She is My Family* of Jiangsu TV (Liang, 2017). Internationally, OPPO spent a huge sum of money and became a global sponsor of FC Barcelona, the exclusive title sponsor of the Super Derby of the Americas, the official partner of America's Next Top Model and the official smart phone partner of Victoria's Secret Fashion Show 2017. OPPO also sponsored *The Mask Singer*, a program in Thailand. OPPO made a sponsorship to one of Vietnam's top-rated reality shows *The Face Vietnam*. OPPO also sponsored the BIGBANG concert in Bangkok.

In terms of sponsoring variety shows, OPPO has spent enormous amounts of money. It has spent around RMB 500 million in sponsoring the first four seasons of *Running Man China*, of which RMB 130 million was spent on the sponsorship of season 4. It spent a total of RMB 900 million on the exclusive title sponsorship of two seasons of *Up Idol*. At the price of RMB 70 million, OPPO established a special partnership with *Challenge Union*. It spent RMB 200 million on the sponsorship of the second season of *Go Fighting!*, RMB 500 million on the title sponsorship of the second season of *Sing! China*, and RMB 200 million on the exclusive title sponsorship of the second season of *Crossover Singer*.

The second and third seasons of *Who's the Murderer*, of which OPPO was the exclusive title sponsor, were very successful. They won some marketing awards including the Kirin Advertising & Marketing Awards for variety shows, the ADMEN Awards, the first prize at the 9th Golden Mesh Award for entertainment marketing. The second season of *Who's the Murderer* was played more than 2 billion times, while the third season was played more than 3.2 billion times. *Who's the Murderer* is China's first variety show in which the celebrities must exercise their reasoning. Celebrities participating in the show need to look for evidence in the "crime scene" carefully prepared by the program crew and find out who the murderer is through reasoning. This program is an integration of undulating story lines, intelligent reasoning and funny nature of variety shows. It is very popular among young audience, with as much as 70% of its audience under the age of 30. The main target consumers of OPPO mobile phones are young people, which coincides with the audience group of *Who's the Murderer*. The advertising slogans of OPPO in *Who's the Murderer* are "favored by the young and loved by the famous detectives" and "how embarrassing not to have a dual-20MP-camera phone when solving a case", which are related to case solving content of the program and rhyme in Chinese. They are catchy, easy to spread and impressive for the audience. OPPO is not simply a title sponsor of *Who's the Murderer*. Instead, it has tried something very different in terms of embedding its advertising in the program. OPPO mobile phones are linked with the story line of the program and the progress of the case, helping advance the development of the case. They play a major role in the investigation by those detectives. When the detectives are at the scene looking for evidence, OPPO mobile phones are the best tools to help with the investigation. They can help collect evidence by taking clear photographs to help solve the case; each suspect has evidence and clues secretly stored in the phones; when they gather together to share clues found, they use the photographs taken by OPPO mobile phones; sometimes, there are important videos and other evidence recorded in the phones. In *NZND: Time and Tide Wait for No Man*, Episode 5, Season 3 of *Who's the Murderer*, the case was set in the entertainment circle. The players formed the NZND band and sang a song called *OPPO R11s*. The lyric was about the features of OPPO R11s mobile phones. *Who's the Murderer* promotes OPPO mobiles phones by means of integrating them into the scenes, creatively weaving them into the story lines, creating surprises at the end (Scientific China, 2017), and promoting orally by the guests of the program at any time during the investigation. The promotion is well integrated with the story line of the program. Consequently, the embedded advertising is not unnatural and does not cause aversion. Instead, it leaves the audience an indelible impression.

In terms of embedded advertising in films and TV series, OPPO mobile phones have appeared in *Breakup Buddies*, *Overheard 3*, *The Witness*, *One and a Half Summer*, *The Lost Tomb*, *LOVE O2O*, and Thai TV series *The Cupids*.

4.2.4.7 Creating a Stylish and Upmarket Brand Image

In order not to let consumers associate OPPO with a mid-range and low-end brand image anymore, OPPO started its collaboration with fashion brands and people of the fashion circle. OPPO invited designers Wang Tianmo and Shangguan Zhe to design limited editions of trendy T-shirts and hoodies. It also invited Su Mang, the editor-in-chief of *Harper's Bazaar* China, to personally design a gift-box version of OPPO R9s and gave them to celebrities as new year gifts. OPPO collaborated with Guerlain, a high-end makeup brand from France, and introduced a limited edition of Guerlain thermal red gift boxes containing a Guerlain thermal red lipstick 325 and a red OPPO R11 phone in each box. It collaborated with Gogoboi and launched Proud Slogan phone cases. OPPO also collaborated with The Beast and launched new year flower boxes (VRRB.CN, 2018). OPPO was the official smart phone partner of Victoria's Secret Fashion Show 2017. OPPO had its presence in two magazine, *Cosmopolitan* and *Harper's Bazaar*.

OPPO also made an attempt to build a stylish and upmarket offline mobile store, hoping to enhance its brand image and upgrade its brand level through its super flagship store. At the end of 2017, OPPO's super flagship store in Shanghai started its business. Covering an area of about 500 m², the store is all white with simple yet adequate design. Inside the store, there are several randomly-placed "big stones", an eight-meter-long green whale sculpture, mirror-designed ceilings, wooden experience tables and wooden benches. OPPO's super flagship store in Shanghai has created a "free, intimate and fun" experience space for users to stay and experience as they wish.

4.2.4.8 Offline Promotion

OPPO has made great efforts in offline promotion. OPPO posters are everywhere, such as subway stations, bus stations, outdoor areas, and other places. Advertising posters are often comprised of a spokesperson and an OPPO mobile phone. OPPO offline stores always have big green billboards, green arches, green sun tents and green cartoon props,

which are very conspicuous. Offline store also use audio broadcast advertising slogans. OPPO's extensive offline advertising has enhanced OPPO's brand awareness and impressed its audience.

4.3 Problems Discovered

4.3.1 Product

The key innovative advantages of OPPO mobile phones such as the VOOC fast-charging technology, photography feature and pixels of photographs are gradually overtaken by its competitors. Mobile phones of other brands have adopted their own fast-charging technology. In terms of photography, in collaboration with Leica, Huawei mobile phones are now equipped with Leica's lenses and their image processing technology, granting the phones with more professional and higher-quality photographs. With the development of science and technology, the functionality of mobile phones tends to converge. The life cycle of mobile products is getting increasingly short.

4.3.2 Price

Many consumers have the impression that OPPO mobile phones are pricey, low in configuration, and not worth the prices. They think that OPPO mobile phones are a little overpriced, and that the price doesn't match up to the performance.

4.3.3 Place

In terms of channel sales, OPPO mobile phones are mainly sold through offline channels. By adopting the strategy of "encircling the cities from rural areas", OPPO's offline sales channels are mostly in second-tier, third-tier and fourth-tier cities. This has left people the impression that OPPO sells low-end phones, which is not favorable for OPPO mobile phones to establish a stylish, international and upmarket brand image. The success of the channel sales of OPPO mobile phones lies in the construction of offline channels. Their model of opening a large number of exclusive OPPO mobile stores in second-tier, third-tier and fourth-tier cities is easily copied and learnt from by its competitors, thus becoming less advantageous by degrees.

4.3.4 Promotion

OPPO has increased the brand awareness of OPPO mobile phones by celebrity endorsements, ad placements wherever possible, embedded advertising in TV series and films, as well as sponsorship of lots of variety shows. However, this has also left people with the impression that money is the only thing OPPO has. They think that, although OPPO has invited good-looking idols for endorsement and placed a large number of adverts, it produces low-end products of poor quality. Overly frequent appearances of adverts in programs and TV series, as well as unnatural embedded advertising, will lead to the audience's aversion. Huge amounts of program sponsorship will also greatly increase the cost of the enterprise.

4.4 Advice on the Marketing Strategy of OPPO Mobile Phones

4.4.1 Product

Although a large quantity of adverts can increase brand awareness and the sales of mobile phones within a short period of time, eventually, what consumers value is still the product itself. Without good quality, no matter how great the adverts are, consumers will never purchase. New models of smart phones come out fast. The product life cycle is short. OPPO needs to focus on the following aspects: forming its core technological advantages by strengthening its R&D and taking the initiative to innovate; differentiating its own mobile phones from those of other brands by fully understanding consumers' demand for mobile functionality, emphasizing user experience and user-friendly design, and developing unique features; optimizing details by constantly upgrading and improving its operating system, solving the lagging issues of its mobile phones, smoothing the use of the mobile phones, reducing the occurrences of problems such as crashes and sudden closing of applications, solving the problem of overheating (Zhou & Yao, 2017), and designing the structure of mobile phones in a more scientific way; upgrading photography technology by constantly conducting R&D and upgrading of mobile parts such as the screens and cameras; differentiating itself from other brands in appearance so that OPPO mobile phones have their own unique features of being stylish and exquisite. The 5G era is approaching. The large-scale commercial application of 5G is estimated to take place in 2020. Huawei plans to launch Kirin chips which support 5G technology in the second half of 2019 and a smart phone that supports 5G technology during the same period. OPPO needs to speed up its research and development of 5G smart phones. Only in this way, can it become sufficiently competitive to compete with

other mobile brands when the 5G era finally comes.

4.4.2 Price

In terms of price, OPPO can moderately lower the price of old models when launching new ones. OPPO needs to increase the quality of its mobile phones to the extent that it is in line with their price, thus changing consumers' impression of them being pricey with low configuration.

4.4.3 Place

In terms of offline channels, OPPO needs to make the following changes: controlling the expansion of exclusive OPPO mobile stores in second-tier, third-tier and fourth-tier cities, or even closing some; increasing the number of such stores in first-tier cities to expand the market in such cities so that the consumers may change their impression of OPPO being a low-end phone brand; changing the image of such stores because exclusive OPPO mobile stores must be upmarket and stylish with adequate design to shake off its low-end brand image; providing professional training to shop assistant so that their professional knowledge will be increased and they will serve customers with a good attitude; excelling in after-sales services as well by increasing the speed to repair, setting reasonable repair charges or even charging no fees for repair and serving with a good attitude; maintaining the online sales channels by ensuring online customer-service personnel's prompt response to questions from the customers without leaving any customer unattended, timely delivery, and meticulous product packaging for delivery so that the products inside are well protected and intact upon delivery to the customers; distributing free delicate gifts to customers when they purchase OPPO mobile phones. Such gifts can be mobile accessories such as earphones and cases, or something related to the brand endorsers (Hong, Wang, & Lin, 2012).

4.4.4 Promotion

When searching for corporate endorsers, OPPO needs to make sure that the image of the endorser is in line with the brand image of OPPO. Celebrity endorsement is risky in a sense. Therefore, OPPO must be cautious when choosing its endorsers. The image and reputation of an endorser will have an impact on the image of the brand. The same

endorsers of other brands should be avoided. Using the same endorser with another brand will lead to the confusion of consumers (Guo, 2011).

Micro-film adverts must combine stories and products in a perfect way: by integrating brand concept and value into the story lines, the micro-film adverts will offer the audience different emotional experience as well as resonances for them through feeling the character and willpower those characters in the films represent. A micro-film advert shall not have too much or unnatural presence of the products. Instead, they need to be permeated into the story lines naturally, and their features shown in a natural way. It is needed to make people have a good understanding of OPPO mobile phone's appearance design and internal functions while enjoying the vision (Yang, 2016). In the course of marketing, the best practice of micro-film advertising is to attract customers to participate in the adverts. This will increase the interactions between the adverts and the audience, letting them feel as if they are part of the scenes. Through progressively deepening their understanding of the products, the audience will get to know the corporate culture and brand spirit beyond the products (Zhao, 2014). Other than beautiful and fresh scenes, OPPO can add some intense story lines and an atmosphere of suspense to its micro-film adverts to leave some cliffhangers. In addition to placements on the Internet, micro-film adverts can be shown on elevators, at bus stops, at subway stations, on the outer surface of vehicles, on buses, on subways and at other places. When people are waiting for an elevator or a bus and while they are on the subway, they can watch the micro-film adverts. OPPO can also look to collaborate with cinemas, so that their micro-film adverts can be placed at the waiting areas and before the start of a film in the form of cinema advertising.

When OPPO mobile phones appear or are orally mentioned in TV series, films and variety shows, it needs to be as natural as possible. Such activities must be blended with the content in a creative way, instead of unnatural embedding which may result in opposite effect and aversion of the audience.

In the future, OPPO needs to continue its collaboration with fashion brands and magazines to enhance its brand image and create an upmarket and stylish image in the minds of the consumers.