Theoretical Logic, Dilemma Restriction and Practical Enlightenment of the Construction of WeChat Marketing Group of Characteristic Agricultural Products ——Based on the case study of Pujiang County, Sichuan Province

Min Liu*

School of Economics, Sichuan Agricultural University, Sichuan, China

*Corresponding author e-mail: min_liu@sicau.edu.cn

Abstract. WeChat marketing has low cost, low threshold, high transparency, strong interaction and wide penetration rate. It provides an important technical means for small farmers to innovate sales models and change their weak position. It has gradually become one of the main channels for farmers to sell characteristic agricultural products. This paper takes the WeChat group of Cao Chunzhi, a farmer in Jianta Village, Pujiang County, as an example to analyze the theoretical logic of the construction of WeChat marketing group and explore the practical obstacles. At last, this article will present the practical enlightenment of the construction of WeChat marketing group based on the case.

Keywords: WeChat marketing, WeChat group, characteristic agricultural products, food trust

1. Introduction

In the context of the “Internet Plus” era, the number of mobile terminals owners, such as mobile phone users, has soared, creating possibilities for online marketing of agricultural products. As the social platform with the largest proportion of middle-aged groups, WeChat has a wide range of business opportunities. Compared with third-party online sales platforms, WeChat Group has lower technical requirements, simpler operation, less difficulty in product promotion, and more convenient community maintenance. Production and operation entities in different fields begin to try to sell products by WeChat group, and the WeChat marketing model of agricultural products was also widely promoted nationwide.

The WeChat marketing model has created new growth points for agricultural products sales. However, at present, the sales channel by Wechat Group plays an uncertain role, and the sales results vary widely, which is largely due to the uneven quality of information. In addition, agricultural products are mostly experience products and trust products. There is a certain gap between sensory quality, nutritional quality and safety quality. It is difficult for consumers to distinguish the quality[1]. Asymmetric information and uncontrollable quality have greatly reduced consumers' purchasing confidence, frequent quality and safety incidents have gradually eroded consumers' food trust[2]. As
Rupert Murdoch, a media tycoon said: In the 21st century, people are eager to obtain information more than ever, but once they fall into the "muddy" of information, they will return to the tradition and become only want to obtain trustworthy information. Therefore, whether to effectively establish consumer food trust becomes one of the key factors for the success or failure of agricultural product sales model[3].

Cao Chunzhi, a farmer from Jianta Village, Pujiang County, effectively establishes consumer food trust and creates a benign marketing environment by setting up a WeChat group and introducing a "notary system" in it. On the one hand, the WeChat group has many irreplaceable advantages over the third-party online sales platform: the operation is simpler, and it’s more convenient for both producers and consumers to directly sell and purchase activities; The marketing environment is more transparent, which provides a healthier and more open marketing atmosphere for producers and consumer. In addition, WeChat marketing group creates a channel for real-time communication and provides more diversified approaches to strengthen contacts and enhance trust, such as information disclosure, humanistic care and fun games, etc. At the same time, as a relationship embedded medium, WeChat group creates a long-term social relationship between the production and marketing parties. Effective means and stable relationship between producers and consumers not only help to avoid speculative behavior of producers, reduce moral hazard, but also greatly reduces the conversion cost of consumers, improving the effectiveness of transactions. On the other hand, the introduction of the “notary system” has made it possible to change the weak position of consumers' information, and to extend relationship trust to institutional trust. The notary party acts as a third-party referee to ensure the information is transparent and supervised, which establishes institutions and rules. Now, the WeChat marketing model has formed a virtuous cycle of mutual checks and balances and value creation.

2. The Evolution Process of WeChat Group Selling Characteristic Agricultural Products

Under the call of the "Internet +" of the State Council, China's e-commerce has developed rapidly, and the comprehensive deployment of network marketing channels has provided new opportunities for small farmers to sell characteristic agricultural products. According to statistics, in 2018, the total turnover of China's agricultural product network reached 230 billion yuan, accounting for 18.4% of the total sales of social consumer goods. The online marketing of agricultural products has taken substantial steps. On the one hand, the network marketing of agricultural products can help to provide market signals, improve transaction information and reduce transaction costs in real time. On the other hand, it can alleviate the problem of regional supply imbalance of agricultural products to a certain extent and broaden the market scope. At present, there are three main types of agricultural product marketing models: one is the company's own website marketing model, second is the model of third-party platforms such as Taobao, Jingdong, Suning, and the third one is self-media marketing platform, such as Sina micro-blog, WeChat, Headlines and other self-media platform channels[4].

WeChat is the communication platform that Tencent has launched into the market in early 2011. It has a large number of users as the basis, and the spread of WeChat is relatively accurate, giving the merchant huge sales potential and opportunities. According to the "WeChat 2018 Annual Report", more than 1 billion people log on to WeChat every day, and 1.083 billion WeChat users remain active every month. These data fully show that WeChat is a popular social software with more users and more app activity. There is no doubt that huge user traffic create more business opportunities. With the popularity of mobile payment, the conditions for WeChat marketing have been further created. According to the data of the 2018 Mobile Payment User Survey Report, 80.1% of users use mobile payment every day, which fully demonstrates that the application scenarios of mobile payment are becoming more and more extensive, and the business environment is becoming more mature. WeChat marketing model is the innovation of agricultural network marketing channels in the era of mobile Internet. With the widespread popularity of mobile Internet technology, WeChat marketing has expanded from the initial skin care and health care to agricultural products sales [5]. At this stage, agricultural products have become one of the three main products of WeChat marketing. The marketing model of specialty agricultural products based on WeChat public platform, WeChat
moments and WeChat group has developed rapidly. All manuscripts must be in English, also the table and figure texts, otherwise we cannot publish your paper. Please keep a second copy of your manuscript in your office.

3. Case Profile
Located in the southwestern part of the Chengdu Plain, Pujiang County has a high forest coverage rate, a warm climate and fertile soil. It is especially suitable for the cultivation of special agricultural products. It is known as the “Eco-Pujiang, Green New City”. As a demonstration county for national ecological civilization construction, Pujiang County pays special attention to the cultivation and cultivation of ecological organic agricultural products, and has invested heavily in soil improvement, technical regulations, certification and supervision, brand building, etc., and has now formed an agricultural development system supported by three major industries: citrus, kiwi, tea.

In this background, Cao Chunzhi, a farmer from Jianta Village, changed the concept of production and the mode of planting and breeding. In June 2016, under the leadership of the village secretary Wu Maoyuan, Cao Chunzhi carried out soil improvement, switched to organic fertilizer, and began to use manual weeding and physical pest control. But based on conservative psychology, Cao Chunzhi reduced the scale of kiwifruit planting. In addition to growing kiwifruit, she also raised more than a dozen Chinese herbal eco-pigs. In June of the following year, the pigs are available for sale in full term, however, there is no suitable sales channel. At that time, many people in the village were actively looking for effective ways. Under the coincidence, Wang Xiaoping, who was engaged in notarization, learned about this situation. The notary Wang Xiaoping has been exploring the field of safe agricultural products for more than ten years. He has accumulated a group of people who have high requirements for the quality of agricultural products. He thought a WeChat group can build a platform for direct production and elimination, and strengthen communication and interaction between producers and consumers to promote the sale of agricultural products.

Based on the above incentives, in July 2017, the notary Wang Xiaoping helped Cao Chunzhi to establish a WeChat group and invited his classmates and relatives to enter the group. The number of members in the initial group was about 40. Then Cao Chunzhi introduced the feeding process of the Chinese herbal eco-pigs. Due to the high level of trust in the pursuit of high quality and good quality agricultural products, members of the group responded positively and recommended to their relatives and friends. In just over ten days, all pigs were sold out by way of reservation. Because of a previous good buying experience of the Chinese herbal medicine eco-pigs, Cao Chunzhi received favorable feedback from consumers in the group, who have offered to appeal to a wider range of quality agricultural products. The WeChat group has gradually evolved into a community that pursues safe and healthy quality agricultural products. Then, the kiwifruit planted by Cao Chunzhi was also sold in the group. The smooth sales channel greatly enhanced her confidence. She began to expand the planting scale and enrich the product category, providing fruits including kiwi, citrus, grapefruit and Chinese herbal medicine eco-pigs, chickens, ducks and other livestock products.

In the past two years, Cao Chunzhi has achieved steady growth in the number of people in the group through the offline agricultural product publicity activities and the recommendation of group friends. Up to now, there are 114 consumers in the group, which can consume more than 90% of the characteristic agricultural products of farmers.

To sum up, the WeChat marketing group has achieved good results in the development process. First, the farmer Cao Chunzhi opened up the sales of characteristic agricultural products, broadened the scale of planting and raising. Also, she achieved profitable income. The products are extended from single kiwifruit cultivation and pig breeding to nine kinds of characteristic agricultural products including kiwi, citrus, grapefruit, local chickens and ducks and so on, with an annual income of more than 200,000 yuan.

Second, Cao Chunzhi established a cooperative, which led seven members to change their production methods and sales methods. The average annual income of each member increased by about 40,000 yuan.
Third, it reversed the disadvantage of farmers in the market. In the past, farmers generally sold products in farmer's markets or sold them to buyers. For consumers have difficulties in grasping product information, farmers often encounter a crisis of trust, and the end result is low-price competition in the market. This WeChat group has established a long-term bond for farmers and consumers, effectively strengthening the trust of consumers and forming a harmonious and interconnected relationship.

Fourth, the supply of quality agricultural products has been strengthened. The stable consumption relationship has made farmers pay more attention to the improvement of agricultural products quality. Besides, the smooth market sales have also injected continuous motivation for farmers to improve their quality and service.

4. Theoretical Logic of the Construction of WeChat Group of Characteristic Agricultural Products

4.1. Feasibility of WeChat Group as a sales medium
China's agricultural production and management entities are still dominated by small farmers, small farmers' funds are relatively scarce, human capital and social capital are relatively insufficient, and their ability to cope with market risks is still weak. WeChat is different from traditional government websites, self-built websites, and third-party platform sales models such as Taobao and JD. It is especially suitable for the survival and development of small farmers.

First of all, WeChat is fully functional. Small farmers can publish sales information of featured agricultural products through text, voice, pictures and videos. WeChat group and WeChat moments provide effective channels for small farmers to gather consumers. At the same time, the opening of WeChat payment function further provides opportunities for WeChat marketing model of characteristic agricultural products. Second, the threshold of WeChat marketing technology is low. As a popular social software with high popularity, WeChat is easy to operate and there are few barriers for small farmers to use for marketing.

Moreover, WeChat marketing costs are low. Compared with traditional online marketing channels, WeChat Group has saved the huge cost of building and maintaining websites, and has greatly reduced the capital investment in marketing and promotion of platforms.

In addition, WeChat Group has created a relatively open and transparent marketing atmosphere. Under the acquaintance economic environment, both parties have a strong sense of trust, which helps to avoid moral hazard and improve marketing quality.

4.2. Feasibility of the notarization system as a mechanism innovation
The new institutional economics believes that the realization of market efficiency depends on the formulation of a set of mutually incentive and mutually constrained rules. Cao Chunzhi has established new rules in the model of selling characteristic agricultural products, embedding the notarization system into production and management activities, changing the traditional asymmetry market structure of production and consumption, and balancing the market power at both ends of production and consumption, at which the notarization system introduces a middleman role, forming a stable operational structure and a smooth operation mode. This mode has the following prominent features:

First, the “producer-notary-consumer” tripartite structure saves transaction costs. The intervention of the middleman did not change the nature of the direct sales of agricultural products, but merely set up the direct communication channel and the trading rules as the bridge and the coercion role, greatly reducing the transaction costs.

Second, the “producer-notary-consumer” tripartite structure balances the relationship between producer and consumer. On the one hand, through the constraints of rules and systems, the speculative costs of farmers have been raised. On the other hand, the passive status of consumers has also been changed through information disclosure and empowerment of consumers.
Third, under the tripartite structure of “producer-notary-consumer”, both the producer and the consumer are more stable based on the long-term trading relationship. The possibility of multiple transactions and the transparency of the marketing link make the market competition of characteristic agricultural products return to the position, from price competition and channel competition to quality competition.

5. Problems in the Further Development of WeChat Group

In the development and exploration of this WeChat marketing group in the past two years, it has achieved remarkable results, but the current development of WeChat group is still in its infancy, and further development is still subject to some factors. Internally, the quality of agricultural products is not stable enough, and farmers' marketing and promotion skills still need to be improved. Meanwhile, the operation and maintenance of WeChat group have not been systematic and systematic. On the external side, first, the current agricultural product logistics construction is still not mature, and the product quality of agricultural products transportation process cannot be guaranteed. Second, the WeChat marketing group lacks a matching digital processing system. At present, farmers need to collect and process orders by themselves manually, which cannot better meet the needs of large-scale production and sales.

6. Practical Enlightenment of the Construction of WeChat Group of Characteristic Agricultural Products

The model of successful sales of characteristic agricultural products by WeChat Group relies on the dual guarantees of technological innovation and mechanism innovation. Technology innovation provides small farmers with the possibility to choose WeChat group as a sales channel, while mechanism innovation is the key factor for small farmers to successfully use WeChat group for product sales. Therefore, while promoting the WeChat group marketing model, we must not neglect the role of technology and mechanism innovation. At the same time, the ability of small farmers to adapt to the new model is guaranteed from the following four aspects:

First, farmers should promote the standardized cultivation of agricultural products to ensure product quality. High-quality product supply is a prerequisite, especially for an open and transparent sales environment such as WeChat marketing group, which puts higher requirements on the product quality of characteristic agricultural products.

Second, we must strengthen the guidance and training of farmers' marketing skills. Good wine is also afraid of the deep alley, especially for agricultural products. First of all, we must focus on improving the ability of farmers to operate the consumer community, expand the capacity of WeChat group, and increase the group activity; secondly, strengthen the training of farmers' product promotion and promotion capabilities, and enhance the penetration of products; in addition, guide farmers to prenatal Preheating, production science, post-production services, and effectively improve the sales performance of WeChat marketing group.

Third, it is necessary to strengthen the construction of modern agricultural logistics and ensure the transportation capacity of agricultural products. If the Internet has inserted wings for cross-regional sales of agricultural products, then there is no doubt that the logistics system acts as an air. On the one hand, it is necessary to increase the rural logistics outlets and ensure the convenient and quick exit of the characteristic agricultural products; on the other hand, we must continue to improve the construction of cold chain logistics and reduce the loss of agricultural products in the transportation process.

Fourth, we must improve the functional design of WeChat marketing and improve its marketing efficiency. The WeChat marketing group provides an opportunity for both producer and consumer to communicate and interact, which is conducive to promoting the sales of characteristic agricultural products. In the further development process, we should rely on the product promotion and user interaction functions of WeChat Group to introduce corresponding digital processing system, intelligently manage and process customers and orders, and form a marketing model of “WeChat
which proves to be an efficient way for Chinese small farmers to sale characteristic agricultural products.

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