



# Self-Media E-Commerce: Marketing and Operation Strategies under the New Economic Model—Based on SWOT Analysis Perspective

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## Abstract

With the rapid development and popularization of digital technologies such as “Internet Plus,” 5G mobile communications, and big data, self-media e-commerce has emerged as a new economic model deeply integrating content creation with commercial transactions. This model is profoundly reconstructing traditional business logic and consumption scenarios. Based on multi-source academic literature, this paper utilizes theoretical analysis and the SWOT framework to systematically dissect the internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as the external opportunities and threats facing self-media e-commerce in the new era. The study suggests that self-media e-commerce, relying on its strong fan economy effects, low-cost broad reach, and highly interactive shopping experiences, has seized the historical opportunities of technological empowerment and consumption upgrading. However, it also faces severe challenges such as a lack of professional capabilities, uneven product quality, imperfect regulatory systems, and intense homogeneous competition. On this basis, the paper proposes adaptive marketing and operational strategies, aiming to provide theoretical references and practical guidelines for practitioners and researchers, assisting the healthy, sustainable, and high-quality development of this model in the digital economy era.

## Subject Areas

Marketing, Marketing Theory and Applications

## Keywords

Self-Media E-Commerce, New Economy, SWOT Analysis, Marketing Strategy, Operational Strategy

## 1. Introduction

Self-media e-commerce refers to a business model where content creators (self-media personnel) establish personal or brand influence through social media platforms (such as TikTok/Douyin, Kuaishou, Xiaohongshu, WeChat Official Accounts, Bilibili, etc.). By combining content creation and fan interaction with merchandise sales, they ultimately achieve traffic monetization. This model breaks the limitations of traditional “shelf-based” e-commerce sales, embedding consumption behavior into content consumption and social scenarios, thereby achieving the marketing goal of “integrating branding with effectiveness” (Synergizing Branding and Sales). Under the new economic model, it is of great practical significance to deeply understand the overall situation of self-media e-commerce and formulate precise marketing and operational strategies.

Over the past twenty years, China’s e-commerce industry has experienced a leap from enlightenment and development to maturity. Its form has evolved from initial information transmission to a new path for national online shopping and entrepreneurship. In this process, an emerging e-commerce model characterized by “Self-media Plus” has risen abruptly, becoming an important force driving the digital transformation of business [1]. Self-media, referring to personalized media forms where the general public creates and disseminates information via internet platforms, has injected new vitality into e-commerce with its characteristics of “low threshold, strong interaction, and wide dissemination” [2].

The rapid development of e-commerce has completely changed traditional self-media marketing modes, bringing new development opportunities for enterprises. Especially driven by the “Internet Plus” strategy, the integration of self-media and e-commerce has become an irreversible trend of the times. This integration is reflected not only on the marketing side, such as live streaming sales and community operations, but also deeply into the full link encompassing supply chains, brand building, and user relationship management, forming a unique “self-media e-commerce” ecosystem [3]. As an emerging model, self-media e-commerce live streaming demonstrates broad prospects but also faces multifaceted challenges [4].

In this context, both the academic and business sectors need to systematically examine the new economic model of self-media e-commerce. However, existing research either focuses on marketing strategies or individual case analyses, lacking a systematic analysis from an overall strategic level combining internal and external environments. Therefore, this paper aims to apply the classic SWOT analysis method from strategic management to comprehensively outline the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of self-media e-commerce development. Furthermore, it integrates existing research results to construct a comprehensive development strategy system covering both marketing and operational dimensions, aiming to provide beneficial references for theoretical deepening and practical innovation in this field.

## 2. SWOT Analysis of Self-Media E-Commerce

SWOT analysis can clearly present the internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as external opportunities and threats of an organization or business model, making it an effective tool for strategy formulation. To analyze the self-media e-commerce model systematically and three-dimensionally, this section employs the SWOT analysis method, exploring the four dimensions in depth. The overall analysis framework is illustrated in the matrix below (Figure 1).



Figure 1. SWOT analysis diagram.

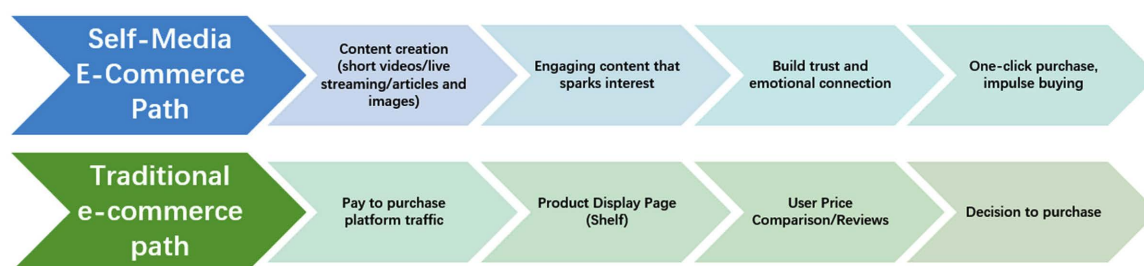
### 2.1. Internal Strengths (Strengths): Four Pillars Building Core Competitiveness

**1) High Conversion Rate Engine under the Trust Economy.** The essence of self-media e-commerce is “Trust Economy” and “Relationship E-commerce.” Creators establish a “parasocial relationship” extending beyond mere buying and selling with fans through long-term, continuous content output. This relationship, based on shared values, aesthetics, or knowledge needs, forms a strong emotional connection and trust endorsement. For example, knowledge-based bloggers accumulate significant trust through professional and sincere content, leading to high sell-through rates for recommended books, which is a typical embodiment of the trust economy [5].

**2) Natural Fusion of Precision Traffic and Scenario-based Marketing.** The fan base of self-media accounts is an interest community formed based on algorithmic recommendations and active following, resulting in extremely clear user personas. This enables “merchandise-seeking-people” precision marketing, greatly reducing ineffective exposure. Furthermore, through content forms like short vid-

eos and live streaming, products are no longer cold displays but are embedded into specific life scenarios, tutorials, or emotional stories [6]. For instance, when a food blogger uses a specific pot to cook a dish in a live stream, the “convenience” and “utility” of the pot are vividly demonstrated, strongly stimulating users’ scenario immersion and purchasing desire [7].

**3) Low-cost Private Domain Traffic Operation Advantage.** The Customer Acquisition Cost (CAC) of traditional e-commerce is rising annually, with some categories reaching hundreds of yuan. In contrast, self-media e-commerce acquires initial fans through content at a relatively low cost. More importantly, by establishing private domain positions such as WeChat communities and fan groups, creators can achieve repeated, free access after a single acquisition, greatly enhancing the Customer Lifetime Value (LTV). The traffic acquisition and conversion model has undergone fundamental changes compared to traditional e-commerce, as shown in **Figure 2**.



**Figure 2.** Comparison of traffic-conversion paths between traditional e-commerce and self-media e-commerce.

**4) Agile Market Response and Product Innovation.** Real-time feedback from live stream comments, video replies, and community discussions constitutes a valuable user database. Creators can quickly capture user questions, suggestions, and potential needs. Many top self-media creators utilize this advantage to cooperate directly with factories, implementing the C2M (Consumer-to-Manufacturer) model based on fan needs. For example, fashion bloggers determine styles, colors, and size ratios based on fan voting, significantly reducing inventory risk and increasing sell-through rates [8]. Through real-time community interaction and precise user profiling, social media e-commerce provides a unique practical pathway for the C2M (Customer-to-Manufacturer) model. Creators can utilize live streaming, comments, and fan voting to instantly and cost-effectively gather consumer preferences regarding product design, functionality, and pricing, forming a clear “demand snapshot.” This enables them to place precise small-batch custom orders directly with manufacturers, significantly shortening the market feedback loop and reducing inventory risk and trial-and-error costs on the production side. In this process, consumers transform from passive buyers into active co-creators of products, not only strengthening fan trust based on a sense of participation but also allowing the supply chain to respond to real market demand with unprecedented agility.

## 2.2. Internal Weaknesses (Weaknesses): Internal Concerns Constraining Sustainable Development

1) **Excessive Reliance on Personal IP and Sustainability Challenges.** First is the systemic risk: the fate of the enterprise is deeply bound to the reputation, health, and creative state of the individual. Once a core creator faces negative news (e.g., character collapse, improper remarks) or a decline in state, the entire commercial system may collapse rapidly. Second is the scale bottleneck: due to limited personal energy, once the business scale expands to a certain level, the influence, creativity, and management radius of the personal IP face huge tests, making it difficult to support further expansion.

2) **Universal Shortcomings in Supply Chain Management and Quality Control.** First is the lack of core capabilities. Most self-media teams start with content creation and excel at “front-end” marketing but seriously lack “back-end” capabilities in supply chain management, quality inspection, warehousing, logistics, and after-sales service. Second is significant risk exposure. This directly leads to a high incidence of consumer complaints. Complaints in self-media e-commerce are mainly concentrated in specific areas (as shown in **Figure 3**). Any negligence in these links will directly consume accumulated trust capital and lead to fan loss.



**Figure 3.** Distribution overview of consumer complaints in self-media e-commerce.

3) **Intensified Content Homogenization and Continuous Traffic Anxiety.** First, this stems primarily from a lack of innovation. When a content format or topic goes viral, a swarm of imitators quickly follows, leading to severe homogenization and user aesthetic fatigue. To maintain traffic, creators often have to invest higher costs or even resort to short-sighted behaviors like “clickbait,” falling into a vicious cycle. Second, the “preference for the new” in platform recommendation algorithms forces creators to constantly chase hot topics and maintain high-intensity updates, causing immense physical and mental pressure and making it difficult to sustain content quality [9].

**4) Single Business Model and Weak Anti-risk Ability.** This business model results in a revenue structure overly dependent on live streaming sales or merchandise sales. Once the main sales category is subject to policy regulation, market environment changes, or platform traffic restrictions, overall revenue faces the risk of a precipitous drop.

### 2.3. External Opportunities (Opportunities): Macro and Micro Drivers of Industry Growth

**1) Dual Empowerment of Policy Dividends and Technological Innovation.** The National “14th Five-Year Plan” clearly proposes vigorously developing the digital economy and promoting the deep integration of online and offline consumption. Local governments have also introduced policies to encourage the new individual economy and flexible employment, providing legitimacy and development space for self-media e-commerce. Meanwhile, 5G technology enhances the seamless experience of live streaming and video browsing; AIGC (Artificial Intelligence Generated Content) assists creators in script conception, video editing, and copywriting, improving production efficiency; Big Data and AI algorithms help precisely scrutinize user preferences.

**2) Iteration of Consumption Concepts and the Rise of Circle Economy.** The circular economy is an economic and industrial model aimed at systematically reducing resource consumption, waste generation, and environmental pollution. Its core concept is to change the traditional “extract-manufacture-dispose” linear economic model by optimizing design, technological innovation, and business model innovation, thereby creating a closed-loop system of “resources-products-recycled resources,” allowing materials and energy to be maximally reused within the economic and social system. The new generation of consumers no longer focuses solely on the functional attributes of products but values the cultural value, emotional belonging, and lifestyle expression behind them. Niche circles such as ACG (Animation, Comic, and Games), Art Toys, Camping, and Hanfu are growing continuously. Self-media e-commerce can precisely target these circles, providing professional content and exclusive products to meet personalized needs.

**3) Continuous Empowerment of Platform Ecosystems and Infrastructure Improvement.** Content platforms like TikTok/Douyin, Kuaishou, and Xiaohongshu are sparing no effort to build closed-loop e-commerce systems. By lowering entry barriers, providing traffic subsidies, and building service markets, they pave the way for creator monetization. Simultaneously, market services are becoming increasingly professional. A large number of professional SaaS providers, operation agencies, supply chain platforms, and MCN institutions have emerged, providing full-link solutions and lowering industry thresholds.

**4) Market Penetration (Lower-tier Markets) and Cross-border Expansion.** Consumption potential in lower-tier cities and rural areas is being activated through short videos and live streaming, becoming a new growth point [10]. The

global layout of relevant platforms offers huge imagination space for the overseas expansion of China's "Content + Merchandise" self-media e-commerce model [11].

## 2.4. External Threats (Threats): Systemic Risks and Challenges

**1) Stricter Regulatory Oversight and Rising Compliance Costs.** The legal framework is gradually tightening. The state has issued relevant regulations with clear requirements for the identity of live streamers (defined as "advertising publishers" or "advertising operators"), product quality, truthfulness of publicity, after-sales service, and taxation issues. Tax evasion incidents involving top streamers have triggered comprehensive supervision by tax authorities. Compliant tax payment has become a mandatory subject for all high-income creators, directly increasing operational costs.

**2) Red Ocean Competition and Diminishing Traffic Dividends.** Participants are fiercely competitive. From celebrities and entrepreneurs to ordinary individuals, everyone is flooding the live streaming track, resulting in white-hot competition.

**3) User Trust Crisis and Image Reshaping Challenges.** Behaviors such as false advertising, selling fake goods, and data fabrication by some streamers, once exposed by the media, not only damage their own reputation but also trigger a public trust crisis for the entire industry. Rebuilding trust has become the primary prerequisite for industry development.

**4) Algorithm Black Box and Policy Uncertainty.** Self-media e-commerce relies heavily on platform recommendation algorithms and traffic distribution mechanisms. Platforms may adjust algorithms at any time due to commercial strategies, policy compliance, or user experience considerations, rendering original operational methods ineffective and causing a loss of traffic sources overnight. This uncontrollability is one of the greatest external risks [12].

## 3. Development Strategies Based on SWOT Analysis

1) SO (Growth-Oriented) Strategy: Leveraging Internal Strengths to Seize External Opportunities

Utilize the advantages of the "trust economy" and "precise traffic" to cultivate a "circle economy," and engage in deep co-branding/customization (C2M) with circle brands, achieving dual growth in both brand and sales.

2) WO (Turnaround) Strategy: Using External Opportunities to Offset Internal Weaknesses

Take advantage of opportunities such as "platform empowerment" and "service specialization" by collaborating with professional MCN agencies or supply chain service providers to compensate for deficiencies in content creation, supply chain management, and other areas, achieving rapid enhancement.

3) ST (Diversification) Strategy: Utilizing Internal Strengths to Avoid External Threats

Leverage the advantages of “private domain traffic” and “user stickiness” through membership systems, community operations, and other means to reduce dependence on platform traffic, mitigate threats from policy changes or rising traffic costs, and achieve diversified operations.

4) WT (Defensive) Strategy: Reducing Internal Weaknesses and Avoiding External Threats

Optimize organizational structure and improve operational efficiency to minimize internal management shortcomings; simultaneously, adopt a conservative approach by scaling back non-core businesses and focusing on areas of strength, to minimize the impact of external environmental changes and ensure steady development.

## 4. Conclusions and Outlook

As an important representative of the new economic model, self-media e-commerce has broad prospects but coexists with challenges. The SWOT analysis clearly shows that its success is rooted in the internal advantage of “trust” construction and benefits from external opportunities in technology, policy, and consumption changes; however, it is also deeply troubled by internal weaknesses like supply chain shortcomings and IP dependence, as well as external threats like stricter regulation and intensified competition.

In the future, competition in self-media e-commerce will upgrade from simple “traffic battles” to a contest of “comprehensive capabilities.” Successful practitioners must be “multi-faceted hands”: excellent content creators, shrewd business operators, and honest supply chain managers. Only by adhering to long-termism, prioritizing user value, leveraging strengths while actively addressing weaknesses and challenges, can they achieve steady and long-term progress in the rapidly changing wave of the new economy.

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## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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