Steve Job’s Successful iPod Presentation and the Persuasion Tactics

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Abstract

Steve Jobs’s presentations are always fascinating to Apple fans. The Apple’s propaganda strategies were considered as the most successful propaganda over the world. This paper is to study why the Steve Job’s presentation and the commercials of iPod nano.

Introduction

In the presentation on new products releasing conferences, we usually get information from the speaker directly. Speakers’ manner on the stage can significantly affect audiences. The content of the speeches were usually taken
seriously as the first time representation of the product. As the companies keep the information of the new product secretly, people are able to know the product for the first time though presentation. After that, the commercials of products come out with a lot of details to attract people’s eyes. [15]

Apple usually holds a press conference every time when they have some new products to the market. IPod nano is a MP3 player to “replace” iPod mini in 2005 according to Steve Job’s presentation. From 2005 to 2010, Steve Jobs has presented 6 times for iPod nano. Every time he presented new nano, he followed some strategies that persuasion researchers would like to look into. Here is part of the Apple MP3 players’ release date.

Figure 1.1 Timeline of IPod Shuffle, Mini and Nano [1]
From the timeline we can see, nano 1st generation was released after the iPod mini. And it has three level of storage. The 2 GB and 4 GB versions were earlier to the market than 1 GB version. So Steve Jobs only talked about the 2 GB and 4 GB version in the presentation. Then in third season of 2006, the 2nd generation of iPod nano was released with 3 versions in 2 GB, 4 GB, and 8 GB. Their storages were twice as the first generation. The nano 3rd generation is also twice as the storage of the 2nd generation. The 4th, 5th, and 6th generation nano have the same versions in 8 GB and 16 GB. When the first presentation Steve Jobs gave for introducing iPod nano, he repeated “1000 songs in a pocket” for three times. Also iPod nano inherit the click wheel from the previous product like mini. But iPod nano is 62% smaller than mini.

There are many people expect Steve Jobs’s presentation every time. The press conferences were more than conferences that introducing the product, but also performance produced by the Apple market team. Audience would enjoy the

**Steve Job’s Presentation for iPod nano**
During 2005 to 2010, Steve Jobs gave 6 presentations on Apple’s press conference for iPod 6 generations in every September.

In the 1st presentation of iPod nano, Steve Jobs first looked back to iPod mini as the most popular MP3 player in the world. Then introduce the nano by take it out of his small pocket on the right. [4] Then he spent next 3 minutes to explain the size of 1st generation iPod nano. He compared the iPod nano with the other most popular MP3 players in the world. After that, Steve showed and demonstrated the other functions of nano 1st generation, also with the battery life and the price. The total presentation period lasted 8 minutes and 41 seconds.

On September 12, 2006, Steve Job’s presented the iPod nano 2nd generation. The 2nd generation had multiple colors and aluminum for the exterior. [5] The body of nano 2nd generation and the package were smaller than 1st generation, and this was also mentioned in Steve’s presentation.

The 3rd generation of nano was introduced on September 5, 2007. At this time, Steve Jobs presented a redesigned new nano. The 3rd generation was totally different than the previous one. Steve spent first 3 minutes to explain why they wanted to put video as a new and important feature. [6]
The presentation also introduced the high resolution screen and the new interface. This time, he spent 4 minutes to demonstrate the new interface and videos.

In September 2008, Steve Jobs gave his fourth presentation on the iPod 4\textsuperscript{th} generation. Right after he looked back at iPod nano history, he showed the nano 4\textsuperscript{th} generation to the press. Then he indicated the new features of the new nano, and gave 3 minutes demonstration of the new features. [7] In this presentation, he emphasized every color would be available in every version to fulfill the customer’s interests.

The presentation of the iPod nano 5\textsuperscript{th} generation was given in 2009. As the same with the 3\textsuperscript{rd} generation, the [8] [9]

**Commercials for iPod nano [10] [11]**

In the commercial for the nano 1\textsuperscript{st} generation, the nano was played by a hand. It turned around and around. Audience of the commercial will find the size of the nano is really small and convenient.

After the 2\textsuperscript{nd} generation was released, commercials for iPod nano adapt the key element of colors because from 2\textsuperscript{nd}
generation to 6th generation. Every generation has a slogan for the product. Here are the slogans for each generation:

1. "1000 songs, impossibly small."

2. "Completely re-mastered."

3. "A little video for everyone."

4. "nano-chromatic"

5. "nano shoots video"

6. "A new way to nano"

Each version of commercial also contained key elements including active human being, cheerful music, and the most important new feature of the new nano.

Why do we say the commercials and presentations are successful?

As a business company, the sales of their product are significant measurements of the productivity of the company. The companies, of course, make profit through sales. Here is the iPod sales chart from 2002 to 2011. iPod nano 1st generation was released in 2005, which is a big hit after 2005. The sales in 2005 were significant increased. And
from 2006, sales of the first season were twice as the sales of other seasons of the same year. There are no doubt those years when Apple has nano as their product; the sales of the whole iPod are much more than the previous years.

Figure 1.2 iPod Sales Chart [3]

However, the sales of the iPod nano could be promoted by many ways. People have found out that their products looked really nice and tiny. The iPods were always in fashion and
loved by many celebrities. And even Apple’s rival, the CEO of Microsoft, Bill Gates was spotted holding an iPod when he was swimming in his private pool.

**Apple’s commercial and presentation tactics**

### 2.1 Apple’s Marketing Strategies

Steve Job is a very good designer, but also a successful business runner. Many product of Apple revealed his strategies in controlling the market. For example, in 1998, Jobs introduced the iMac, the machine is no floppy drive, which seemed to be nothing serious nowadays, but at that time, this caused strong protests from the media and customers. Some authorities also analyzed that the lack of floppy drive is a fatal error, the error iMac doomed to fail. Then Steve Jobs issued a fiery criticism, he believed no one would like to back up 4 GB hard drive to 1 MB floppy drive and the floppy drive will gradually be eliminated. Abandon the floppy drive, he used USB interface for the iMac into the decision-making one step ahead of the highlights, which make the iMac ahead of the other kinds of personal computers.
In the promotion of the iPod nano, Jobs also showed his challenge to the traditional forms of advertising.

In his presentation, he leaded all the topics. Audiences were only able to follow his slides and demonstration. He never tried to explain “why you should have it”, but he just told you “it is the best one”. He left the question of whether purchase the product or not to the customer.

2.2 Secrets in Steve’s Presentations

2.2.1 Narrative speech and tricks in numbers and speaking pace

In many studies, psychologists tried to find out how narrative speech will influence the audience. [13] Actually, M.D. Slater gave his answer to the question.

“Use of narrative, in fact, may be one of the only strategies available for influencing the beliefs of those who are predisposed to disagree with the position espoused in the persuasive message”[2]

Jobs, of course, is one of the most successful practice of the theory

“A thousand songs in one pocket” [4]
Steve Jobs mentioned this sentence for three times in the presentation of iPod nano 1st generation. The 1st generation of nano was a “replacement” of mini in the Apple’s market strategy. Apple nano was invented for seeking a smaller solution for a MP3 Player. During the whole presentation, Steve was always focusing on how it has so many things in the small MP3 player. Steve Jobs likes to use “Why it is great?” to guide the audience to the greatest feature of the new nano.

For a small MP3 player, 4 GB storage to the users is not a very big number. In 2005, major MP3 players have 4 GB version on sale. However, Steve changed the storage to 1000 songs. 1000 is a big number. “A thousand songs in one pocket” sound far more attractive than “4 GB in one pocket”.

“A camera for free” [8]

The iPod nano 5th generation has a camera on the back of the body. When Steve Job introduces the video camera, he compared this “free” camera to the other cameras over 100 dollars. Of course, the “free” one seemed attractive, even though customers need to pay for the “free” camera.

Numbers comparisons
Steve Jobs liked to use numbers. When he compares the size of the iPod nano to the other MP3 players, he always uses numbers. The numbers are the most persuasive recourses to the audience. Even if the audiences do not know what the specific circumstances, but the numbers are clear to audiences.

2.2.2 Good slides

Pretty and interesting slide was another thing that Steve Jobs adapted. The slides of Steve’s presentation are always simple and with a lot of pictures. Steve Jobs used lists and tables far more frequently than sentences. The lists and table can make audiences directly understand what the point is. Of course, audiences like to receive more information with less effort, so the more simple and attractive the slide show, the presentation would be more favorable to audiences.

Here are some outstanding examples in his presentations of nano.
### Table 2.1 Presentation Slides

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steve Jobs’s words and actions</th>
<th>The slides</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I’ve got a pocket.” He finger at his pocket on right side of his jeans.</td>
<td>The slide operator had the ability to catch Steve’s pocket, which hide the iPod nano 1st generation in it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“On the top of the list, they wanna watch video on our iPod nano.”</td>
<td>The slide showed a previous generation nano and a list, and the first thing on the list is “Video”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“They come in some amazing color.”</td>
<td>The slide have all colors of nano fourth generation in a line.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The slides were able to go with Jobs’s presentation and show every part of the products in a simple way. The audience will inevitably be attracted by such a beautiful presentation.

#### 2.2.3 Fantastic demonstration [12]

Steve Jobs had good preparation for the demonstration. He and his presentation preparation group adapted a method of transferring the data directly from the sample.
The demonstrations were live and he played the real one in his hands. Everyone else in the conference had to look at his actions on the sample. This was really attractive. Trying new things by people themselves are far more interesting. The action of demonstration also promotes people’s curiosity of the new products.

2.3 Secrets in Nano Commercials

Key elements in the commercials are active people like dancing with the music. The colors were added as key elements since the iPod nano 2\textsuperscript{nd} generation was released. The cheerful music and the dances showed a good mood which can influence people. As the research has been done by E. Krahmer, J. Van Dorst, and N. Ummelen, when people have good mood, they are more easily to be persuaded. [14] Apple has used this influence in their commercials.

2.4 Presentation Structure

Nearly every Steve Jobs presentation is divided into three parts. This also happened in the presentation of nano presentations. The three parts is the key to lead audiences’ attention. The topics of each section connected as a chain. [12]
1. history

“IPod mini is the most popular MP3 player in the world.”
This is the sentence that used by Steve Jobs in the iPod nano 1st generation presentation. He also mentioned iPod nano 1st generation in the presentation of the 2nd generation. After that, he reviewed all previous iPod nanos every time before he introduced a new one.

2. Feature

The new features are always the most important part of the presentation. As I have mentioned in this study, Steve Jobs used simple slides to emphasize the key features of product. People only need to remember the keys in the presentation, which saved their time for make a decision of buy the product or not.

3. Price

Steve also did some tricks in this part. The numbers are most important part. He liked to compare the price of previous version to the new ones, which will make a illusion of “the new one has more feature and asked for a less price”. Customers feel this like an offer with benefits. Steve Jobs made this part like “sell the benefits, not the products” to customers.
2.5 Length of Commercials and Presentations

Steve Jobs always kept his presentation of one product in 10 minutes. [12] The presentation was very short. But he was able to put every attractive point into the 10 minutes. This is why the audiences always feel overwhelmed when speech causes.

Conclusion

Apple’s success in its sales of iPod MP3 player has many reasons. There is no doubt that the effort from the commercial and press conference people in Apple’s company were considered as one of the most important one. Their preparation for the persuasive commercials and presentations makes their customers love the product more than others. Of course, the strategies they used are mostly from persuasion tactics. However, they also have some special characteristics which other companies do not have. This is why they can make the iPod nano to be the most popular MP3 player in the world.

Reference


