

# JellyCat: Marketing Strategies Based on Customer Emotions and Sentiment

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## Abstract:

The exploration of consumer psychology within marketing has long been recognized as a fundamental aspect, with a particular emphasis on consumer emotions and sentiment. This study delves into the case of JellyCat to thoroughly investigate its marketing strategies, which are intricately intertwined with consumer emotions and sentiments. It offers practical insights and recommendations to address current deficiencies. Drawing from the 7P model, this paper integrates theories such as the Emotional Contagion Theory and the Expectancy-Disconfirmation Model to critically analyze JellyCat's utilization of sentiment-based marketing across various dimensions: product, price, place, promotion, people, physical evidence, and process. Through a comprehensive examination of JellyCat's approach, this study aims to provide valuable insights and guidance for similar companies, presenting actionable methods and recommendations to rectify any shortcomings in organizational operations. Furthermore, it seeks to identify key successes and valuable lessons learned, aiming to inform and inspire other companies seeking to enhance their marketing strategies in alignment with consumer emotions and sentiments. By leveraging these findings, companies can effectively cultivate stronger connections with their target audience and bolster their marketing efforts in a manner that resonates deeply with consumer emotions and sentiments.

**Keywords:** JellyCat, Customer Emotions; Customer Sentiments; 7P model

## 1. Introduction

The UK toy brand JellyCat has captivated consumers with its exquisite, charming, and soothing toys since its inception. Each JellyCat doll is imbued with its own name and story, elevating the emotional value of the toys and resonating with individual enjoyment on a profound level. JellyCat's emotion-driven marketing approach has proven to be a resounding success, captivating the hearts of consumers worldwide. While there have been numerous studies on consumer emotions and sentiments in the past, few have delved into specific cases with the depth and specificity that this essay aims to achieve. By integrating various theories and models, this essay seeks to conduct a comprehensive and insightful analysis of JellyCat's marketing strategy, specifically focusing on how it harnesses consumer emotions and sentiments to build a strong connection with its audience. The intention is for this analysis to serve as a valuable resource for similar brands in understanding and implementing effective emotion-driven marketing strategies.

Through the application of established theories and models, such as the Emotional Contagion Theory and the

Expectancy-Disconfirmation Model, this study aims to dissect JellyCat's marketing approach from multiple dimensions. By examining how JellyCat integrates consumer emotions and sentiments across product design, pricing strategies, distribution channels, promotional activities, customer interactions, physical evidence, and operational processes, this analysis aims to provide actionable insights and practical recommendations for brands seeking to enhance their emotional resonance with their target audience. The ultimate goal is to offer a deeper understanding of how emotion-driven marketing can be effectively utilized to create long-lasting emotional connections with consumers and drive brand loyalty.

## 2. Case Description and Theoretical Basis

### 2.1 Background Information of JellyCat

JellyCat is a popular brand known for its unique and whimsical range of soft and cuddly toys. The brand was established in London in 1999 and has since gained a global reputation for its high-quality plush animals, distinctive designs, and emphasis on safety and softness. Jel-

lyCat's products are characterized by their innovative designs, vibrant colors, and irresistibly soft textures, making them appealing to both children and adults. The brand's wide range of toys includes animals, mythical creatures, and characters, each crafted with attention to detail and a focus on quality materials.

Now, JellyCat continues to be a beloved brand in the toy industry, with a strong presence in online and retail stores worldwide. It has expanded its product line to include books, accessories, and other complementary items, further establishing itself as a leading provider of unique and charming gifts for all ages.

JellyCat's full-year revenue for 2022 amounted to £146 million, representing a 72% increase compared to the previous year. Among them, the gross profit margin stood at 61%, the net profit margin was 30%, and the net profit reached 43 million pounds, with an 83% growth. From 2018 to 2022, JellyCat's ROE has remained at approximately 100% [1].

## 2.2 Customer Emotions and Sentiment

Customer emotions and customer sentiment encompass a broad range of studies from various fields, such as marketing, psychology, and consumer behavior. It plays a crucial role in influencing consumer behavior, purchase decisions, and overall satisfaction with products and services. Understanding these emotional and sentiment factors is essential for businesses in developing effective marketing strategies and improving customer experiences.

Customer emotions and sentiment refer to the overall attitude and opinion expressed by customers towards a product, service, brand, or company. It is the collective feelings and perceptions of customers, often captured through feedback, reviews, social media posts, and other forms of communication.

Customer emotions and sentiments can be positive, negative, or neutral, and they reflect the general mood and outlook of customers regarding their experiences with a particular business or offering. Companies often use analysis techniques to analyze and interpret customer sentiment from unstructured data sources such as social media conversations, customer reviews, and customer service interactions. Positive customer emotions can indicate high levels of satisfaction, loyalty, and advocacy, while negative emotions may signal dissatisfaction, frustration, or concerns [2].

Furthermore, valuable feedback could be provided for identifying potential issues, improving customer service, and addressing specific pain points that may negatively impact the customer experience. Ultimately, businesses can work towards fostering positive relationships, enhancing brand reputation, and increasing customer loyalty and

retention.

Several theories and the 7P model would be applied to analyze further how JellyCat markets on customer emotions and sentiment:

### 2.2.1 Emotional contagion theory

This theory suggests that individuals can "catch" emotions from others through social interaction, leading to a transfer of emotions and affective states. In a customer service or retail setting, emotional contagion can impact customer sentiments and satisfaction, as well as influence other customers in the same environment [3].

### 2.2.2 Expectancy-disconfirmation model

This model proposes that the disconfirmation of expectations influences customer satisfaction. When customers' expectations are exceeded, they experience positive emotions and sentiments, leading to higher levels of satisfaction and loyalty [4].

## 3. Case Analysis

### 3.1 7P Model

The 7P Model expands on the traditional 4P marketing mix (product, price, place, and promotion) to include three additional elements: people, process, and physical evidence [5]. 7P's marketing mix variables are positively and significantly correlated with customer loyalty, and this framework helps businesses analyze and improve their marketing strategies [6]. The significance of the 7P model lies in its comprehensive approach to marketing, allowing businesses to consider a wider range of factors that can impact their success. By addressing all 7Ps, companies can better understand and meet the needs of their customers while also improving their overall marketing effectiveness.

### 3.2 Product

JellyCat offers a wide range of toys, soft comforters, and accessories designed for infants, toddlers, and children. The products are characterized by their high-quality materials, detailed designs, and focus on comfort and safety. The brand's products evoke emotions of joy, comfort, and nostalgia, creating a strong emotional connection with consumers. JellyCat continuously introduces new characters and designs to appeal to its target audience. It capitalizes on the sentimentality associated with childhood. The feelings of warmth, innocence, and playfulness tap into customers' emotional connection to their own childhood memories. By showcasing whimsical and endearing characters, JellyCat fosters a sense of nostalgia that resonates with both children and adults.

JellyCat is designed to provide comfort and security for

children. The brand understands the emotional needs of parents who seek to provide a safe and nurturing environment for their little ones. JellyCat’s materials for toys often emphasize their softness and reassuring presence, along with the typical dot eyes and smile, conveying a message of protection and care that appeals to parents’ emotions. According to previous research, certain textures

are associated with specific emotions. Table 1 shows the medians and interquartile ranges of emotional ratings of textures, which demonstrates that fur and velvet are especially associated with happiness and surprise [7]. This result is supported by another study, which further confirms that there is a robust relationship between pleasure and materials that are considered smooth, slippery, and soft [8].

**Table 1. Medians and interquartile ranges of emotional ratings of textures**

	Happiness	Fear	Disgust	Anger	Surprise	Sadness
Plasticine		2(3)	4(2)	1(2.75)	3(2)	
Fur	4(2)				3(2)	
Velvet	4(2)				2(2)	

### 3.3 Price

While JellyCat positions itself as a premium brand, it carefully considers the cost to the customer by delivering products that are priced in line with the perceived value and emotional connection they offer. The brand’s focus on quality, safety, and durability justifies the premium pricing, aligning with the emotional value that customers place on the products, appealing to consumers who are willing to pay a premium for well-crafted, emotionally resonant toys.

### 3.4 Place

JellyCat ensures convenience for its customers through multiple distribution channels, including its own online store, specialty toy stores, department stores, and various retail partners. The brand’s omnichannel approach provides convenience and accessibility, allowing customers to purchase its products from a variety of physical and digital touchpoints. By offering a seamless and convenient shopping experience, JellyCat caters to the diverse preferences and lifestyles of its customers, increasing customer satisfaction.

### 3.5 Promotion

JellyCat positions itself as a premium brand offering high-quality and designed soft toys and plush animals. They differentiate themselves through their whimsical and charming designs, using soft and luxurious materials that appeal to children and adults.

JellyCat’s marketing campaigns and product imagery are inclusive and heartwarming, embracing diversity and celebrating the uniqueness of each individual. By featuring a diverse range of characters and designs, JellyCat communicates a message of acceptance and belonging. This approach resonates with customers on an emotional level, fostering a positive sentiment and creating a sense

of community around the brand. Moreover, its marketing strategies often revolve around storytelling and imagination. JellyCat creates narrative-rich content that sparks the imagination of children and adults alike. By infusing its products with personality and charm, JellyCat invites customers to engage with the brand on an emotional level, fostering a sense of wonder and creativity. Additionally, JellyCat’s marketing strategies reflect a customer-centric approach, prioritizing emotional well-being and satisfaction. It continuously seeks to understand and address the emotional needs of its customers, ensuring that the products and messaging resonate on an emotional level.

JellyCat’s promotion strategies focus on evoking emotions and creating a strong brand identity. The brand utilizes storytelling, engaging visuals, and social media to convey its message.

JellyCat excels at understanding and addressing the emotional and developmental needs of its target customers, primarily children, and their parents. The brand’s products are designed to fulfill the desire for comfort, security, and joyful play experiences. By offering a wide range of whimsical and soft plush toys, JellyCat meets the emotional and imaginative needs of children while appealing to parents who seek high-quality, safe, and adorable products for their little ones.

It is notable that, through social media engagement, influencer partnerships, and collaborative campaigns, JellyCat effectively communicates its brand values, product stories, and emotional appeal to its audience. Many customers capture their purchases on video and share them on social media or take charming pictures of their toys, stimulating more people to discuss heatedly in the comments section and aspire to own a JellyCat toy. This “emotional contagion” occurs when customers’ affection and related behaviors spread rapidly through a group that shares similar interests.

### 3.6 People

JellyCat emphasizes the importance of its team and customer relationships. The brand’s customer service team plays a crucial role in delivering a positive brand experience, addressing inquiries, and maintaining strong relationships with retailers and consumers.

By having a deep understanding of JellyCat products, salespeople can provide valuable information, answer questions, and make recommendations tailored to the customer’s needs. Secondly, building a strong relationship often involves understanding the customer’s preferences and offering personalized recommendations based on their interests. Moreover, following up after a sale, addressing any concerns, and providing excellent after-sales service can help reinforce the customer’s trust and loyalty. Lastly,

by being honest, transparent, and reliable, salespeople can build trust with customers, which is fundamental to maintaining a strong relationship.

### 3.7 Physical Evidence

For JellyCat, physical evidence relates to the tangible aspects of its products and brand presence. This includes product packaging, retail displays, and the overall visual identity of the brand. JellyCat’s attention to detail in product presentation and brand visuals reinforces its premium positioning.

Accommodating the store environment contributes to enhancing customer satisfaction. Table 2 illustrates that store facilities and atmosphere mainly contribute to customer pleasure, excitement, and pride [9].

**Table 2. Factors affecting positive emotions**

	Pleased	Excited	Contented	Pride	Attractive	Satisfied
Product assortment	*	*	*			*
Salespeople’s service	*	*		*	*	
After-sale service	*		*			
Facilities	*	*				
Atmosphere		*		*		

Many of the shops were adorned to resemble restaurants, with staff standing in aprons at the checkout. If you purchase a burger toy at the store, the clerk will envelop it in kitchen baking paper and place it in a burger box. Many of these details are unanticipated by customers, so numerous people are astonished. This also corroborates the Expectancy-Disconfirmation Model. Customers’ positive response is generated by the discrepancy of perceived performance over their initial expectations.

### 3.8 Process

Through effective communication and genuine interactions, salespeople can help customers feel understood, valued, and appreciated, ultimately influencing their emotional experience. The more that customers perceive salespeople to exhibit friendliness and enthusiasm the greater the degree of customer emotion [10]. In JellyCat offline stores, when you purchase food toys, the salespeople would handle them as if they were real food during packaging. For instance, if you acquire an eggplant toy, the salesperson will place it in the baking pan and inquire if you need some peppers. Many customers consider this approach highly interesting and novel as if it endows the toy with life.

## 4. Problem Identified and Suggestion

### 4.1 Potential Drawbacks and Threats

#### 4.1.1 Premium pricing

Although huge amounts of customers pay for JellyCat unhesitatingly, some still consider it unworthy. The brand’s positioning as a premium product may limit its accessibility to price-sensitive consumers and certain market segments.

#### 4.1.2 Challenges in the competitive market

JellyCat faces competition from other established and emerging toy brands, requiring ongoing differentiation and innovation to maintain its market position.

#### 4.1.3 Supply chain disruptions

Any disruptions in the supply chain, such as raw material shortages or transportation challenges, could impact JellyCat’s production and distribution.

### 4.2 Suggestions

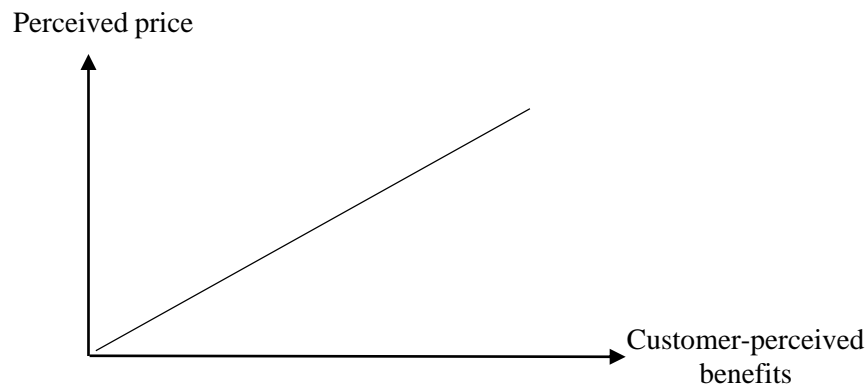
#### 4.2.1 Value creation

Price consists of cost and value. Rather than cost reduction, it is advised and more likely for JellyCat to focus on value creation due to its premium positioning. Customers



do not decide solely on low price but on customer value, which equals the disparity between customer-perceived benefits and customer-perceived price. Therefore, the

higher the customer value is, the greater the likelihood that they will pay for JellyCat toys (Figure 1) [10].



**Fig. 1 Customer value map (Photo credit: Origin)**

#### 4.2.2 Product recommendation

Use customer purchase history and preferences to provide personalized product recommendations. This can enhance the shopping experience and increase the likelihood of customers finding products they love.

#### 4.2.3 Effective communication

Keep customers informed about new product releases, promotions, and events through a regular newsletter or email updates. Engaging and informative communication can help maintain customer interest and engagement.

#### 4.2.4 Feedback collection

Actively seek customer feedback through surveys, reviews, and social media interactions. Use this feedback to improve products and services and show customers that their opinions are valued.

#### 4.2.5 Community Building

Create a sense of community among JellyCat customers through social media groups, forums, or events. Encouraging customers to share their experiences and connect with each other can foster brand loyalty and advocacy.

## 5. Conclusion

This study serves as a fascinating exploration of how customer emotions and sentiment play a pivotal role in shaping successful marketing strategies. JellyCat has carved a niche for itself by creating exquisite, charming, and soothing toys, each with its own unique name and story. This deliberate approach enhances the emotional value of the toys and resonates deeply with individual enjoyment, fostering strong emotional connections with consumers. The success of JellyCat's emotion-driven marketing strategy serves as a compelling example of the power of

connecting with customers on an emotional level. While previous studies have touched upon consumer emotions and sentiments, the JellyCat case study offers a specific, in-depth analysis that provides valuable insights for similar brands seeking to leverage emotional marketing effectively.

The analysis of JellyCat's marketing strategy integrates various theoretical frameworks, including the Emotional Contagion Theory and the Expectancy-Disconfirmation Model, to comprehensively examine how the brand harnesses customer emotions and sentiments across different dimensions of its marketing mix. From product design to pricing strategies, distribution channels, promotional activities, customer interactions, physical evidence, and operational processes, JellyCat's approach is dissected to uncover the depth of its emotional resonance with its target audience.

This in-depth analysis not only serves to highlight the success of JellyCat's marketing strategy but also aims to offer practical recommendations and actionable insights for similar brands. By understanding and implementing effective emotion-driven marketing strategies, brands can aspire to create enduring emotional connections with their customers and cultivate strong brand loyalty.

In conclusion, the JellyCat case study underscores the significance of incorporating customer emotions and sentiments into marketing strategies. It demonstrates how a brand's deliberate focus on emotional resonance can result in strong consumer engagement, brand loyalty, and, ultimately, commercial success. This case study stands as an invaluable resource for marketers and businesses aiming to elevate their marketing efforts by tapping into the power of customer emotions and sentiment.

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