UNIVERSITY OF GÄVLE

How to obtain Marketing Advantage for Corporation?

A case study of SuperMap Europe

Wang Li

Xiong Xin

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Abstract

This master's thesis was carried out at SuperMap.

SuparMap is a Chinese company supplying the Geographic Information System (GIS) software and service. It is leading the way in GIS research. The product of SuperMap is called SuperMap GIS applied by lots of government agencies, schools, and organizations. SuperMap actively gets involved in the market of Japan, Korea, Singapore, Vietnam, India, Kazakhstan, and South Africa. However, in 2008, it has entered the Sweden market and tries to involve in the whole European market.

In European market, the GIS technology is relatively mature and the most market shares have been taken by ESRI the top GIS software company. SuperMap has to improve the strategy to make the customers turn to it from the ESRI. According to the 4Ps, 4Cs and Brand management theory, SuperMap adopt a series of measures on marketing.

In this article we will analyze those measures referring to the 4Ps, 4Cs and brand management theory. At the end of our thesis, we summarized our suggestions based on our thesis analyzing.

Keywords: SuperMap Europe, Marketing, Brand Management

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1. Introduction

With the rapid development of China's economy, since the policy of reforming and opening-up was executed couple years ago, China has become more involved in the global economy system. More and more Chinese companies started to enter the international markets. Especially after China joined in the WTO, the Chinese enterprises could enjoy more fair and reasonable treatment when they invest abroad in other members, and the situation of discrimination and restrictions is getting greatly reduced. At the same time, joining WTO makes the competitive in domestic market much fiercer than before, and it pushes more and more Chinese enterprises to provide huge investment abroad. A lot of Chinese enterprises failed because of many problems as the lack of core competitiveness, lack of cooperation, international talent shortage. However on the other hand, still some excellent enterprises such as the Haier, Lenovo, Huawei, and SuperMap have been one step ahead in international business, and got succeeded. And then we will focus on the case of SuperMap.

1.1 About SuperMap

SuperMap is a leading Geographic Information System (GIS) software company which was founded in 1997. GIS is a large and fast-growing industry. Millions of different practitioners work at different aspects, such as GIS data providing, application developing, or GIS solution consulting, etc. The SuperMap has developed a series of cutting edge GIS products. The family of the products is called SuperMap GIS whose main clients are government agencies, schools, and organizations. SuperMap GIS, a large GIS package, is well known as a stable and efficient product with high performance, ease-of-use, easy-to-integrate, complete product line, cost-effective and customer supports, and it covers a wide range of products, including Desktop GIS, Component GIS, Service GIS, Mobile GIS, Spatial Database extension, Navigation Application Development Platform as well as related spatial data generating, processing and managing tool.

1.2 SuperMap International

In 2000, SuperMap 2000 Japanese version was being released; meanwhile SuperMap Japan co, Ltd. has opened Japanese GIS market successfully. And then they have established good partnership with thousands of Japanese governments, institutes, enterprises etc., such as NTT, Japan Railway, Tokyo Electric Power, Mitsubishi, Hitachi, NEC, Toshiba, Panasonic, Sumitomo Corporation, University of Tsukuba, University of Tokyo, and Japanese National Institute for Environmental Studies.Apart from Japanese GIS market, SuperMap GIS actively gets involved in the market of Korea, Singapore, Vietnam, India, Italy, Kazakhstan, Sweden, South Africa, etc

In 2006, SuperMap International Limited was founded in Hong Kong and acted as a pivot of SuperMap global expanding strategy. SuperMap is committed to its pursuit to provide the best GIS services and products in the world.[1]

In 2009, SuperMap will establish a new subsidiary in Europe. The reasons why they choose the entering the European markets as an important step of their internationalization strategy are: Firstly, In European market there is opened up a uniform international market with huge demands because the limits of national economy in European Union members have been disappeared. The commodity, personnel, and capital can be flowed free in this market. As long as the products accord with the technical standards of the euro market, or even accord with only one of euro members' technical standards, according to principle of mutual recognition technology standards in European market, the products can be enter the port of this country at first, and then distributed to the other member. This also means that, the product of SuperMap has only entered one European Union members' market successfully and it will expand into a new European market without doubt. Secondly, Considered form the aspect of ESRI that is the strongest competitor of Super Map's. ESRI (Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc) is a software development and services company providing Geographic Information System (GIS) software and geodatabase management applications. The headquarters of ESRI is in Redlands, California's was founded as Environmental Systems Research Institute in 1969 as a land-use consulting firm. ESRI products (particularly ArcGIS Desktop) have a one-third of the global market share, and are used by nearly 80 percent of GIS users worldwide from all professions. ESRI has 10 regional offices in the U.S. and a network of 80 international distributors with about a million users in 200 countries. ESRI has 2,500 employees in the U.S., and is still privately-held by the founders. In 2006, year revenues were about $660 million. In 2008, ESRI ranked 70th on the list of largest software companies in the world. ESRI hosts an annual International User's Conference, which was first held on the Redlands campus in 1981 with 16 attendees. More recently, the User's Conference has been held in San Diego for the past 10 years. An estimated 14,500 worldwide users attended in 2007.[2]

Therefore, even American market is a much more open market than European market, but the market share has been grasped firmly by the ESRI the top brand of GIS field. Choose the European market is to avoid direct competition with ESRI in American market.

1.3 Limitations

The SuperMap European still in preparation stage, so there isn't more current situation about the SuperMap European. Because this reason, we don't have more detail information about how the firm should operate in European, so our study is

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[1] SuperMap Website, "www.supermap.com", 2009
[2] ESRI Website www.esri.com/company/about/history.html

only based on the information from interviews and materials from the SuperMap. Another Limitation of the research is that we are lack of more detailed on commercial data. The material what we collected is from the interviews with Jim the manager of SuperMap European. However, due to keeping trade secret reason, some detaile commercial data such as profit sheet would never be leaked to us. According to the 4Cs theory, doing the marketing should take the customers' feeling into consideration. But the reference customers' data can't be collected for the same reason. If we could do so, it could help us to analysis this case in more validly.

2. Purpose

This paper will take SuperMap entering the European market as a case, and it is to summarize the success experience, analysis the case problems, offer solutions. The regularity explored from the case can improve the Chinese enterprises' competitiveness with smallest price and fastest speed.

3. Methodology

This chapter describes the method and tools that we use in this thesis. At the end of this chapter we present a structure of the study process.

3.1 Methodology Approach

According to YIN (2003)[3] there are many methods for doing the researches and each method has their own advantages. So the research approach's chosen should follow the study to check which method is fit for this research.

According to Walliman (2005)[4] the two methods can be used is: deductive and inductive method. The deductive approach, the researcher develops a theory and hypothesis and then designs a research strategy to test the hypothesis. Thus, this model does not explain or develop knowledge, but rather establish a rule. The inductive approach; the researcher collects data and develops theory as a result of the data analysis. The weakness with this method is that it rarely uses all the possible observations.

This study started by reviewing existing theories follows the purpose of this research. Then an empirical study was conducted, after which the empirical results were analyzed based on the existing theories. Also, based on the existing theories and empirical study, we interviewed the employees inside the company to help us understand the information which relate to our study. From the "Doing research in business and management"[5], the interview method is commonly used in non-positivist research. Interviews constitute an effective means of collecting large amounts of evidence in one or across several research sites. Here, we found out our research is based on many information from the company and the theories from the lectures. So in this study, we will base all of the information which we collected to analysis and provide some advices and suggestions for the SuperMap enter European GIS market. Hence, this study is using an approach that is closer to inductive, using relevant theories to interpret the studies.

3.2 Methodology Strategy

The research strategy will be a plan on how to answer the research questions that are set and it will contain clear objectives, derived from the research questions.
Based on the purpose, we've discuss several times and asked some suggestions from the people who is working in SuperMap. Then we structured this study as below:

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[3] Yin, R., Case study research: Design and methods (2nd edition.), 1995
[4] Nicholas Walliman, Your Research Project: A Step-by-Step Guide for the First-Time Researcher (2005)
[5] Dan Remenyi, Brian Williams, Arthur Money, Ethen Swartz Doing research in business and management 1998

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┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│  The existing marketing system with  │
│      the new situations (identify    │
│             the problem)             │
│       The detail is in chapter 5     │
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┌──────────────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────────────┐
│ Use the existing theories │   │ Why they want get into the │
│   to analysis this study │   │ European market? What change │
│ The detail is in chapter 6│   │ will bring into SuperMap after │
└──────────────────────────┘   │   this plan?   │
                                        │ The detail is in chapter 5/6 │
                                        └──────────────────────────┘

┌──────────────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────────────┐
│ Provide advice and   │   │ Get the solutions and put │
│ suggestion which is fit   │   │ improvement into the SuperMap │
│ SuperMap by using the   │   │   marketing system   │
│   existing theories   │   │ The detail is in chapter 6 │
│ The detail is in chapter 6 │   └──────────────────────────┘
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*Figure3.1: The framework of thesis*

## 3.3 Data Collection

The data which is get is mainly from SuperMap's interviews. In this way, it can guarantee our data's reliability. Based on the information from the company, we use the library system to search the useful book for the theory parts. Then we use the internet to find out all kinds of in formation about our study. All the above is our data collection structure.

### 3.3.1 Qualitative and quantitative method

The data can be divided into two types-- quantitative and qualitative, relate to the purpose of this study and the data that we've got. Most of the materials and data are qualitative. From "Doing research in business and management"[6], the collection of qualitative evidence usually involves interviews, which may be structured to a greater or lesser degree, in order to collect complex information about particular aspect of subject, for example about how firms formulate and implement a strategy. From this point, it suits our study very well. So we will present qualitative method as our main source to do this thesis.

### 3.3.2 Plan and design

When we start to decide our subject, we planed how this thesis should be done. As we mentioned above, the basic plan for our data collection started from gathering

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[6]  Dan Remenyi, Brian Williams, Arthur Money, Ethen Swartz Doing research in business and management 1998

information. When our preparation work was done, then we systemized our information. We divide the information into two parts-- direct and indirect information. In this way, we can accesses our information in an ordered way.

## 3.4 The Structure of the Working Process

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│  Literature review  │                    │     Interviews      │
└─────────────────────┘                    └─────────────────────┘
                                                              ┌──────────────────┐
                                                              │   The existing   │
                                                              │ Marketing system │
                  ┌─────────────────────────────────┐        └──────────────────┘
                  │  The material from SuperMap      │
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                                                              │ The information  │
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                                                              │    Product       │
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                  │ The Marketing process of SuperMap│ ─────▶ │ Identify the     │
                  └─────────────────────────────────┘        │ problems         │
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                  │ The structure of marketing system│        │ Find the         │
                  │          in SuperMap             │        │ improvement      │
                  └─────────────────────────────────┘        │ and solving      │
                                                              │ problems         │
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                  │     The results and findings     │        ┌──────────────────┐
                  │                                  │        │ Use the reliable │
                  └─────────────────────────────────┘        │ and scientific   │
                                                              │ method and tools │
                                                              │ to do study      │
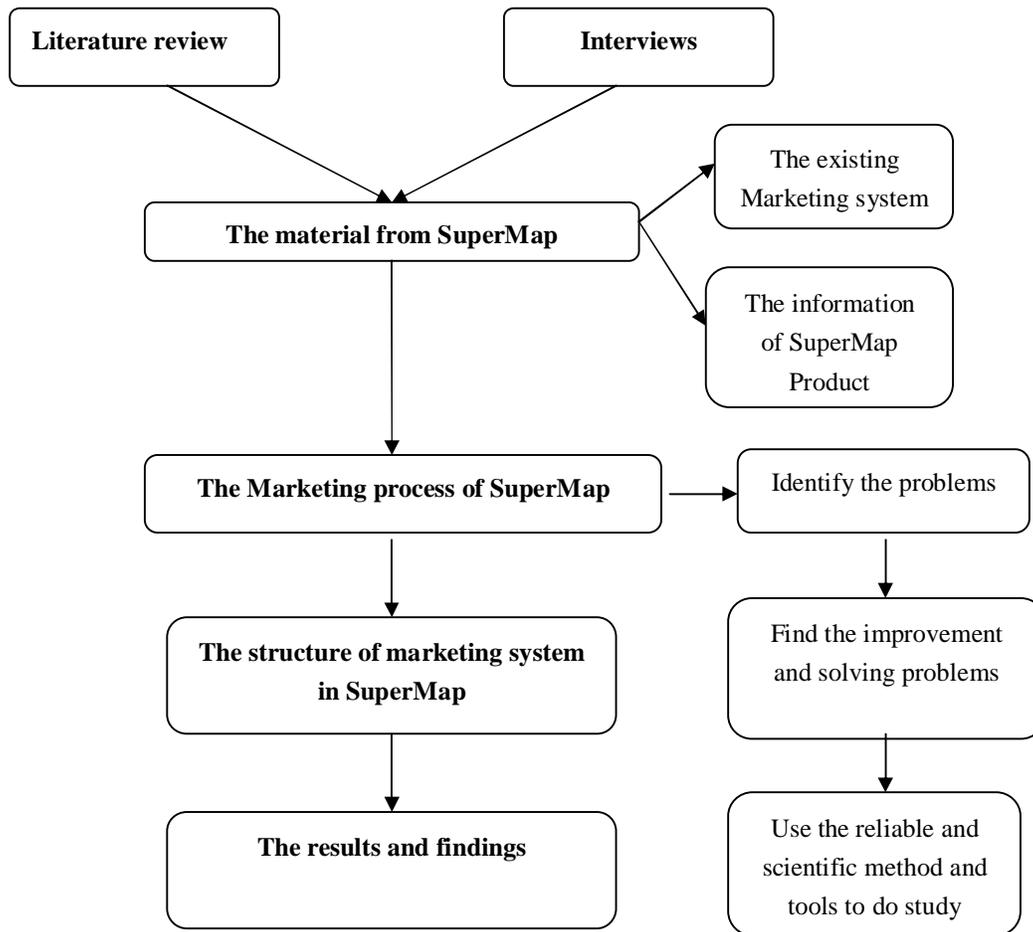                                                              └──────────────────┘
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Figure 3.2: The Structure of Study Process

3.4.1 Literature Review and Interview

We do many paper works and search works to study how to get a successful result. Therefore, we chose lots of books which relate to our study; also we search on the internet to get a lot of useful information. Then the interviews are very important for us to know how to go deeper of our study. We made several appointments with SuperMap. After interviews, we got a lot of useful information from Jim Frolander and Lili Zhang. Based on the purpose and the process of our study, Jim presented many good ideas to guide us in the right direction of study.

3.4.2 The Material from SuperMap

The materials from company are very important to understand the detail of company for us. It's reliable and current. It can present us a very clear structure of the company's marketing strategy and help us get big picture of our study. There information helps us to understand many aspects of the company, also help us a lot on this study.

4. Theoretical Frameworks

This chapter summarizes the most relevant theories that have been used when conducting this study.

4.1 The concept of Marketing

Marketing is defined by the American Marketing Association as the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large.[7] The term developed from the original meaning which referred literally to going to market, as in shopping, or going to a market to sell goods or services.

Marketing practice always treat as a creative industry, which includes advertising, distribution and selling. It is also concerned with anticipating the customers' future needs and wants, which are often discovered through market research. Seen from a systems point of view, sales process engineering views marketing as a set of processes that are interconnected and interdependent with other function[8], whose methods can be improved using a variety of relatively new approaches.

Basically, you might look at marketing as the wide range of activities involved in making sure that you're continuing to meet the needs of your customers and are getting value in return. Marketing analysis includes finding out what groups of potential customers (or markets) exist, what groups of customers you prefer to serve (target markets), what their needs are, what products or services you might develop to meet their needs, how the customers might prefer to use the products and services, what your competitors are doing, what pricing you should use and how you should distribute products and services to your target markets. Various methods of market research are used to find out information about markets, target markets and their needs, competitors, etc. Marketing also includes ongoing promotions, which can include advertising, public relations, sales and customer service.[9]

4.2 Marketing Mix-- 4Ps

The Marketing Mix model (also known as the 4 P's) can be used by marketers as a tool to assist in implementing the M. strategy. M. managers use this method to attempt to generate the optimal response in the target market by blending 4 (or 5, or 7) variables in an optimal way. It is important to understand that the MM principles are controllable variables. The Marketing Mix can be adjusted on a frequent basis to meet the changing needs of the target group and the other dynamics of the M. environment.

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[7] Marketing definition approved in October 2007 by the American Marketing Association

[8] Paul H. Selden (1997). *Sales Process Engineering: A Personal Workshop.* p.23.

[9] Carter McNamara, MBA, PhD *Field Guide to Nonprofit Program Design, Marketing and Evaluation* May 2006

The set of controllable tactical marketing tools, product, price, place and promotion - that the firm blends to produce the response it wants in the target market:

Product - A tangible object or an intangible service that is mass produced or manufactured on a large scale with a specific volume of units.

Price – The price is the amount a customer pays for the product. It is determined by a number of factors including market share, competition, material costs, product identity and the customer's perceived value of the product.

Place – Place represents the location where a product can be purchased. It is often referred to as the distribution channel. It can include any physical store as well as virtual stores on the Internet.

Promotion – Promotion represents all of the communications that a marketer may use in the marketplace. Promotion has four distinct elements - advertising, public relations, word of mouth and point of sale.[10]

Figure 4.1 The four main fields of the Marketing mix[11]

Here we use the 4Ps concept to focus on the products aspect in Supermap Europe. From the four aspect of 4P, we can find out its all about the product. With 4P, we will use the marketing mix concept to analyze the products of Supermap, and then to find out the advantage and disadvantage of the product. From this way, we will present our suggestion based on the marketing direction to find out what we can do by using 4P.

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[10] Valuebasedmanagement Website   www.valuebasedmanagement.net/methods_marketing_mix.html
[11] Wikipedia Website   en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Marketing-Mix_(en).png

4.2.1 The Concept of 4Cs

As the market competition becomes fierce increasingly, customers have become more sophisticated and price-sensitive. Products are not much different from one another, pricing is quickly matched by competitors, advertising is expensive and less effective and sales force costs are rising. Consumers are constantly being interrupted by thousands of marketing messages, making it easy for one message to get lost in the overwhelming clutter of communications.[12] In 1990, Dr.Robert Lauterborn an American professor put forward a new 4Cs marketing theory to complement the traditional marketing 4Ps. Both the 4P's and 4Cs are about the marketing mix. The 4P's are the marketing mix components seen from the marketer's perspective, the marketer's decision tools for generating sales. On the other hand, the 4C's are the marketing mix component now seen from the consumer's perspective, the consumer's decision considerations for making purchases.

Customer need and want —Instead of products first, you need to find what the customer wants and then create the product, service, or solution. This makes too much sense. It is all about the customer, not the solution.

Cost to user — Instead of price, think like the customer does. Customers ask the question, "What will it cost me to be satisfied and get what I need". The customer will pay a fair price for a fair deal.

Convenience — Instead of place, the more pertinent question is how and where does the customer want to purchase? This question is getting tougher to answer with increasingly segmented consumer markets, the worldwide web, and the global economy.

Communication — Instead of promotion, which stinks of manipulation or greed, you need to ask the customer questions and listen. Customers have access to nearly as much information as providers, much to the consternation of the providers.

The 4C's concepts of marketing are basically the same with the 4P's of marketing, according to Filipino marketers Dr. Ned Roberto and Ardy Roberto. Both the 4P's and 4Cs are about the marketing mix. The 4P's are the marketing mix components seen from the marketer's perspective, the marketer's decision tools for generating sales. On the other hand, the 4C's are the marketing mix component now seen from the consumer's perspective, the consumer's decision considerations for making purchases.

4.3 Brand Management
Brand management is the application of marketing techniques to a specific product, product line, or brand. It seeks to increase the product's perceived value to the

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[12] Susan Friedmann, *Marketing Your Shows the 4 C's Way*

customer and thereby increase brand franchise and brand equity.

Marketers see a brand as an implied promise that the level of quality people have come to expect from a brand will continue with future purchases of the same product. This may increase sales by making a comparison with competing products more favorable. It may also enable the manufacturer to charge more for the product. Brand management performed to its full extent means starting and ending the management of the whole company through the brand. It is simply far too important to leave to the marketing department. [13]

Brand management is a philosophy and a total approach to managing companies, and as such includes much about changing minds. Articles about brand here are:

- *Brand management is*: not as easy as it looks.
- *Brand is*: a perception, and more.
- *The Tao of Branding*: metaphysics and brands
- *The Pathway to Reputation*: is long and twisting.
- *Types of brand*: From Product to Geography.

Figure 4.3 Brand management is a continuous process[14]

In this case study, we will connect 4C and 4P to analysis the SuperMap marketing process, further more we also will present brand management concept to analysis this case, most of main factors will be used in analysis part. As you see as below, we will connect 4C-4P and brand management concept as our main theory to study this case:

Figure 4.2 4P/4C theory connect with Brand management

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[13] Wikipedia Website   en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brand_management
[14] Valicon Website   www.valicon.net/en/valicon/solutions/branding_equity/

5. Empirical study

In this chapter, we will follow the marketing system process to analyze this case. We will present our understanding by using marketing concepts.

During the interviews, after we have a general idea about Supermap, we decide to focus on the marketing system inside Supermap. With all the information and materials which we got, we decide to divide marketing process of Supermap into two big parts—marketing analysis and sales/promotion process:

5.1 SuperMap Market analysis

In order to step into a new market, the first step is analyzing the market to find out the advantage and disadvantage of products in the market compare with the similar products. From the interviews we also find it's the same preparation in SuperMap:

Step 1: Analyze the European GIS Market
From the interviews, Jim mentioned they analysis the European market as preparation movement. They focus on the GIS market in Europe find out the weak spot which other GIS software company didn't find. Through the analysis they also predict the future market and potential market in Europe. As we all know, European market is mature and healthy market, and it make new brand get involved this market more harder, but still European market is a open market, so it also means every company has the same opportunity to join this market. For SuperMap Europe company, the first step is analysis their products' advantage and disadvantage in European market. When they find out the weak spot of European GIS market, they will focus on next step to make changes on their products for European GIS market;

Step 2: Make Improvement of Supermap's products
After analysis the market find out the weak spot of this market, and then SuperMap start to make improvements on their products to get into this market. These changes must fit for the European customers; also the quality of products must be keep. During the interviews, Jim said many times that SuperMap is modern and faster GIS software, here we can see Supermap's products are advanced; Jim also mentioned SuperMap unlike other GIS software, they are not only face to big corporations, they also prepare to design their products for individual. From our view, SuperMap tries to bring GIS software from the professional market into individual market. After design the suitable products from European market, the next movement of Supermap is analysis the customers and attract customers' attention;

Step 3: Customer Analysis
One of most important core value is customer's needs in SuperMap. From the interviews we find out that SuperMap pay a lot of attentions on customers. With the analysis results, SuperMap divides their customers into three big groups—the GIS market customer (someone already know very well about GIS software), potential

customer (Someone know something about GIS software and have interest on it) and Non-customers (this kind of people they don't know about the functions GIS software or never heard about it). SuperMap has their strategy specific for each kind of them, and then they will express themselves to each kind of customers in different ways. After classified customers, they also consider customer's needs as big part of get into new market. They consider all kinds of needs from the customers, and then during the consumers buy and after sales, they make customers feels been cared well as their very important job. Jim also mentioned SuperMap isn't only focus on the sales; they also want to keep a good relationship with customers. When all these analysis over, the next part for Supermap is their sales part.

5.2 SuperMap Sales/Promotion process:

From the interviews' result, we summarize the SuperMap's Sales/promotion process as blow:

Figure 5.1 The sales process of SuperMap

As a new brand in European GIS software market, the most important step is to let the client know what is SuperMap and then make them turn to SuperMap from ESRI.

1. As known that the GIS software is a kind of professional tools which are usually used for the enterprises and government, the client base is relatively fixed and minority, thus, it is possible to visit those clients who may be potential one by one. Jim did it all by himself.

2. Visiting clients is not only for selling the SuperMap's product, but also for knowing and analyzing the customers' need to design or develop the product.In the interview, Jim has mentioned that inn this case the SuperMap has developed their product for the European customers. Even SuperMap products did very good performance in Asian market, but it still quite different in Europe. Because the GIS is relatively fully-fledged and the requirements are much higher in Europe. Meanwhile in the Europe, GIS software always followed the OGC standard which is different from the SuperMap's standard.

3. In the European market, most shares have been hold by ESRI. Many customers of them have been loyalty and it is impossible for them to pay for a totally strange brand such as SuperMap. Impossible is nothing, as Jim said, he has sent free experience vision to the reference customers, and the free time is 3 months. Some of the references customers have accept SuperMap after free experience, and the others refused. But Jim still got the feedback from them why they finally refused continue using SuperMap.

4. In this case we found that Jim didn't hire too many salesmen to do door-to-door selling. His way is building a reference customers list and keeping in touch with them. As he said, "As long as you keep talking with the client again and again, talking about the business, the family, the weather, whatever, finally you will get some information you really want or need, at the same time you could sell your product accidentally in the long time conversation."

5. Different client has different requirement. The product is to service customer so that systemizing the target customer and making a suitable plan for different customers is very important step.

6. As Jim always emphasizes during interview, the GIS software is a kind of professional technology, the client base is relatively small. Thus SuperMap uses their clients to help selling the product. To be short, assume that A is a customer of SuperMap, and B is an enterprise which needs using GIS software as well. Then A introduces B using the SuperMap's product. For sure that A would get some discount when they are buying the SuperMap product.

6. Analysis and Results

Marketing is an ongoing process of planning and executing the marketing mix (Product, Price, Place, and Promotion) for products, services or ideas to create exchange between individuals and organizations. Marketing tends to be seen as a creative industry, which includes advertising, distribution and selling. It is also concerned with anticipating the customers' future needs and wants, which are often discovered through market research. Directing an organization to be successful in selling a product or service that people not only desire, but are willing to buy. Therefore good marketing must be able to create a "proposition" or set of benefits for the end customer that delivers value through products or services. A market-focused, or customer-focused, organization first determines what its potential customer's desire, and then builds the product or service. Marketing theory and practice is justified in the belief that customers use a product or service because they have a need, or because it provides a perceived benefit.

Two major factors of marketing are the recruitment of new customers (acquisition) and the retention and expansion of relationships with existing customers (base management). Once a marketer has converted the prospective buyer, base management marketing takes over. The process for base management shifts the marketer to building a relationship, nurturing the links, enhancing the benefits that sold the buyer in the first place, and improving the product/service continuously to protect the business from competitive encroachments.

For a marketing plan to be successful, the mix of the four "Ps" must reflect the want and desires of the consumers or Shoppers in the target market. Trying to convince a market segment to buy something they don't want is extremely expensive and seldom successful. Marketers depend on insights from marketing research, both formal and informal, to determine what consumers want and what they are willing to pay for. Marketers hope that this process will give them a sustainable competitive advantage. Marketing management is the practical application of this process. The offer is also an important addition to the 4P's theory.

We will now analysis the case from both the producer's and customers' aspect: Product, Price, Promotion and customer need. However, place part will not be discussed in this article because the material haven't been supplied and found.

6.1 SuperMap's Product Analysis
According to the 4Ps theory, marketing is an instructive business domain that serves to inform and educate target markets about the value and competitive advantage of a company and its products. "Value" is worth derived by the customer from owning and using the product. "Competitive Advantage" is a depiction that the company or its products are each doing something better than their competition in a way that could

benefit the customer.

Firstly, for developping the competitive advantage, we have to know the information of ESRI and compare the the product of ESRI's with SuperMap. As the strongest competitor of SuperMap, ESRI committed to develop a kind of core development tool which could run to create the environment of the geographic information system on the computer, and it is the GIS technology as known to everyone. In the December of 1999, ESRI issued ArcInfo 8 and ArcIMS; it was the first GIS software could connect local data with the Internet data by using a sample the browser interface. Then in the April of 2001, ESRI issued ArcGIS 8.1 which is based on the industrial standard and it can provide a powerful and easy-using integrated GIS solutions. ArcGIS is an expansible GIS system with the capability of creating, managing, synthesizing and analyzing the geography data, and ArcGIS also provide the issuing capability of geography data to the stand-alone and the customers based on global distributed network.

April 2004, ESRI introduced a new generation of 9 version ArcGIS software, it provides a complete setting of software products to build perfect GIS system, 9 version contains two major new product: ArcGIS engine embedding with GIS on the desktop and outdoor application, and ArcGIS Server which is a central management framework for the companies' GIS application service. Today, the GIS product of ESRI increases in high-speed and still remains balance.

According to the innovation of Computer technology, complex GIS operation could be work on the personal digital assistant (PDA), desktop and even the entire enterprise level. With the coming out of more quickly and cheaper computer, the development of network operation technology, the publishing of electronic data and the appearance of the easier learning and using tools, the GIS technology has been introduced into the personal individual business work as a decision making tool. As an interactive maps operation appearing on the Internet, any computer users can profit from the geographic information system technology.

On the face of it, ESRI has established complete product lines of geographical spatial data processing, management, and distribution, and the ESRI just like the other U.S excellent software which have the strong support from the software architecture. In this regard, it is hard to be equal to SuperMap.

Secondly, as we introduced in earlier sections，SuperMap is to provide the best GIS platforms for the worldwide customers. The family product which called SuperMap GIS, a large GIS package, cover a wide range of products, including Desktop GIS, Component GIS, Service GIS, Mobile GIS, Spatial Database extension, Navigation Application Development Platform as well as related spatial data generating, processing and managing tools. With the continuous technological innovation and

GIS marketing promotion, SuperMap GIS has been applied in many different fields widely.

Figure 6.1 SuperMap GIS 2008 Product Family[15]

Desktop GIS: it is with three editions, SuperMap Viewer (loyalty free), SuperMap Express, and SuperMap Deskpro.

Component GIS Development Platform: it provides SuperMap Objects for COM, SuperMap Objects for .NET 2.0, and SuperMap Objects for Java 2.0.

Service GIS Development Platform: it is developed with Service Oriented Architecture (SOA) technology, it includes SuperMap IS .NET, SuperMap iServer .NET 2.0 and SuperMap iServer Java 2.0.

Spatial Database extension: The enterprise Spatial Database Technology called SuperMap SDX+ which is not a product, but a technology and it is internally supported in other products. It supports most of the commercial RDBMS, and provides efficient and reliable access to spatial data.

Mobile GIS Development Platform: it is named as eSuperMap which could be customized for Mobile GIS applications that are run on variant mobile devices.

Navigation Application Development Platform: it is the SuperNavigation Engine and is open to customize professional navigation applications for different mobile devices.

Data Processing Tools: it includes D-Producer for data production, D-Builder for database building, D-Checker for data quality control, D-Manager for spatial database

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[15] Ibid

management, FieldMapper for field work data acquisition and SuperMap Floor for estate survey.[16]

Finally, Let us compare the core technology: ArcSDE and SDX, which used in the ESRI's product and the SumperMap's product. As the most important technology which SuperMap owned, the SDX technology is same as the ArcSDE product's function objective. However, SDX has never been sold as a single product since the first vision of 2000; SuperMap always sold it as a technology integrated in the desktop, composite and WebGIS. Compared to ArcSDE, SDX is much easier to use because it has removed installing anything on the RDBMS and everything can be completed by client. And from the efficiency, by continuously improving the space index technology, efficiency on SDX is much higher than ArcSDE. The best advantage of SuperMap's GIS product is Compatibility and flexibility.

6.1.1 The Price Analysis

As the 4P's Mix model said, the Price is the amount a customer pays for the product. It is determined by a number of factors including market share, competition, material costs, product identity and the customers' perceived value of the product. The business may increase or decrease the price of product if other stores have the same product.

Figure 6.2 The price of SuperMap and ESRI's GIS software(RMB)

SM-2-4 SuperMap IS JAVA Professional vision WebGIS develop platform
ArcInfo V9.2 Concurrent: Use License.12 months Software Mmaintenance Service.

SM-2-2 SuperMap IS.NET 5.2 : WebGIS develop platform base on .net
ArcInfo V9.2 Concurrent Use License: 12 months Software Maintenance Service.

SM-2-1 SuperMap IS 5.2 WebGIS platform
ArcView V9.2 Single Use License: 12 Months of Software Maintenance Service.

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[16] Supermap Website www.supermap.com/products/ , 2009

SM-1 SuperMap Objects 5.2 GIS platform

ArcView V9.2 Concurrent Use License: 12 Months of Software Maintenance Service.[17]

As the figure 6.2 shown, it is easy to see, for the same function, the SuperMap's products offered much lower price than ESRI. The ESRI's product only offers a basic function, if the customer needs more he has to pay more for the update data model, however, if the customer buys the SuperMap's product he could never pay more lately because the SuperMap's product is much complete.

6.1.2 The SuperMap's Promotion Analysis

In the 4P's theory, the Promotion strategy mainly includes advertisement, public relation, sale promo, and direct sale by person.

6.1.2.1 Advertisement

SuperMap doesn't have any budget for advertisement, while the ESRI always spends lots of money to sell their product on advertisement. Sometimes, the advertisement of the new ESRI product will be come earlier than the new one.

6.1.2.2 Public relation

In the public relation part, SuperMap offers the education services such as the college, university and research institute to use their product for free. The aim is to make the researchers or the students fell into the habit of using SuperMap products. After the students graduate and enter the companies, they would keep choosing the SuperMap and introduce the SuperMap into their companies. Meanwhile, the researchers would also introduce the SuperMap to others and they are much persuasive. Although it seems that the SuperMap has lost a lot of money, actually it is to help them get more and more potential customers.

6.1.2.3 Sale promotion

According to research, 30% of customers have planned to commit purchase whereas the other 70% are not determined to buy anything before they actually see the products as well as how many they're intended to purchase. Among the 30% of those who has plan for buying products, 40% of them may change their initials plans in all of a sudden due to some unknown reasons. So that SuperMap offers the potential customers to download the free experience vision, and the free time is 3 months. This method could attract many users.

6.1.2.4 Direct sale

Because of the limited budget, the SuperMap doesn't have any salesmen to do the direct sale. The way they sell their product is using the reference customers. After the customers of SuperMap's used their product and they could introduce it to the other companies which also need the GIS software. For sure the introducer will get same

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[17] BaiDu Website   hi.baidu.com/hfutgiser/blog/item/5c0f25d953e04fef38012fdf.html

discount from SuperMap. It is a very good method. Because the customers sometimes won't believe in the advertisement but do trust in those personal experiences.The introductions from a user is full of persuasive.

6.2 Customer Needs Analysis

In the 4P's theory, the development of product is the most important part. Produce the product and then sell it with advertisement or promotion to the customers. However, according to the 4C's theory, the consumer wants and needs is the most important part. The company should collect the information, analyze the consumers feeling, and then sell the product which is the consumers needed. In the SuperMap case, even the GIS product of SuperMap has best advantages such as Compatibility and flexibility when it is compared with the ESRI, the most of European market shares are still taken by ESRI. As an Asian brand, the SuperMap has to develop the product to satisfy the European customers. In Europe, the GIS technology has developed very advanced, and they all follow the OGC (Open Geospatial Consortium) standards. Thus the SuperMap improved their product following the OGC. Meanwhile, after analyzing the customers' needs, the SuperMap will develop the mobile service to help the customers getting a faster and convenient experience.

6.3 Brand Management in SuperMap

From the interviews with Jim Frolander, we find out they have a long-term plan on brand management. Brand is very important for the company's products; Jim also mentioned this point many times. They thought a good brand management strategy is very important for a company's development. From the product analysis we can find out Supermap's product is not a typical product, it connect many new concepts on their products, so in this point, how to manage Supermap brand can't follow a tradition way. From the interviews, Jim said Supermap's products are still in an initial step stage. They have a good strategy on the brand identify, Jim also mentioned they have a good plan which suit for the Brand of Supermap Europe. Based on the interviews and gathering-information, we will analyze the brand management of Supermap in the following steps by using brand management analysis tools:

6.3.1 Branding:
The priority of branding is brand positioning, and then brand identity design、the demands of the brand communication、Brand image and Brand extension and etc. All these are all based on the brand positioning. In nowadays world, how to gain more customers and make them think their own product is special, it will take a long time period to win a positive image in the customers' mind. In this point, Supermap have a clear mind on their products position, but when it goes into market, they need a more detail on how to run this brand in a perfect way. Jack Trout and Al Ries explain that while positioning begins with a product, the concept really is about positioning that

product in the mind of the customer.[18] So from the Jack Trout and Al Ries, we can find out the Brand positioning must build the brand on the potential customers' needs, how to convince your consumers that your products is special and why they should buy your products. The positioning is from outside to inside process, based on the consumers' need to win the potential customers' eyeballs. It's the start to make the customers have a positive image of the products. As follow we will use the SWOT analysis to continue this study about brand management of SuperMap:

6.3.2 SWOT analysis

SWOT is one of common analysis tools in the strategy management theory. It considering company's external environment and internal condition, and then it connect all kinds of factors of company to evaluate systemized. It's a very good method for the marketing strategy. Here we use the SWOT to analyze the Supermap's brand strategy from the big picture to find out the advantages and disadvantages.

From the basic concepts of marketing and brand, we find out SuperMap have their advantages in this market. From the brand strategy perspective, SuperMap try to create a brand new area in GIS market, here we will present the SuperMap's brand strategy as blow:

Figure6.3 SuperMap Brand Strategy Compare with ESRI

[18] Al Ries and Jack Trout   Al Ries and Jack Trout, *Positioning: The Battle for Your Mind*

With the economic, society, science, technology and many other aspects development so rapid, especially the globalization of world economy process' acceleration, global information networks and the diversification of consumer demands, business environment is more open and volatile. The same situation in the GIS market, although GIS isn't a general concept market, but diversification of product also force this market fulfill of competition. So here we use SWOT analysis to study SuperMap can present a clearer and objective view of their future development:

6.3.2.1 Strength and Weakness:

- GIS market is a growing and professional market, also a very profitable and competition filed. SuperMap Europe prepares to use their new concept to gain more market. They intend to give GIS customers a modern image inside the software, connect the basic functions and customization as their basic services, and then they use the internet functions to present a quick, modern, convenience services to make the customers get enough cares.
- The price is also a very big advantage of SuperMap Brand. They use much cheaper price to compete with their strong competitor ESRI. During the interviews, Jim gives us very clear point that the price is their very big advantage in the competition. The price is almost ten times cheaper than their competitors, but the functions of the software are almost the same.
- SuperMap is a new company in European market, it means they have more development space; they have more chances to present themselves as new generation of GIS to their customers.

Although, SuperMap has themselves advantages the European market, but we should treat these advantages in dialectical way. The dialectics tell us the strength and weakness is always related, in certain conditions, the strength is likely transform into weakness. Although SuperMap present them as new generation of GIS software, but new products always need time to prove themselves to people and make it be accepted is also need long time period. So far, the SuperMap's weakness shows as blow:

- As new software in the GIS market, SuperMap needs a lot of changes to compete with other GIS brand. The most difficult thing in this process is let the customers to accept this new brand, SuperMap Europe still need a lot of works to be done.
- Compare the big firm like ESRI, SuperMap try to create a blue ocean[19] in the GIS market. But other firms already have a solid result in European GIS market, as a new company to compete with other companies; Super still needs step-by-step to gain a field in GIS market.

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[19] W. Chan Kim, Renée Mauborgne: Blue ocean strategy: how to create uncontested market space and make the competition irrelevant 2005

6.3.2.2 Opportunities and Threats

As we mentioned before, with China join WTO, Chinese companies have more opportunities to get involved into international market, also they must face greater challenges than before:

■ With China economy growth continually rapid, it forms a huge potential market demands, it provide GIS market more development space. It means SuperMap has a strong backup to support it. With this background, SuperMap can easily use their special concept of GIS software to gain more attentions.

■ Compare the GIS market tycoon—ESRI, SuperMap step into GIS market isn't so long, but the big corporation must has more operation cost than SuperMap. So when SuperMap brings themselves as a new generation and modern image, it can present them as brand new and full of energy in this field. SuperMap presents themselves as modern, faster, smarter and convenience GIS software. SuperMap may give customers a very fresh image. Also they don't have so many extra costs compare with other companies already in GIS market in a very long time. This kind of new face maybe a big opportunity for SuperMap.

■ As we mentioned before, European market is a mature market, Super's products has advanced technology and high quality, with their open model and professional service, in this way they can easily gain a field in European market. Also SuperMap have open concept with partner/clients "innovation, pursuing be outstanding, open co-operation and co-development". With this open mind to the market, we think SuperMap has a good opportunity in European GIS market.

Of course, the opportunities are always company with the threats. Everything has both sides, when SuperMap has the great opportunities, also faced many threats, the threats performance as blow:

■ When a brand enters new market, there are many threats. For SuperMap, the US corporation ESRI is biggest threats. ESRI have biggest market share in the world GIS software market, especial in US and European market. In order to compete with ESRI, SuperMap tries to be different from it. But new things always take time to convince market, for SuperMap there still needs it step-by-step to gain more market share.

■ SuperMap is a Chinese company, although it operates very well in China. Different market has different rules; the GIS software standard is having different between two markets. For SuperMap Europe, there are many aspects need to modified before they enter European market.

6.3.3 Brand Positioning Maps analysis

6.3.3.1 The product's benefit positioning strategy

The main reason consumers want to buy the product mostly for the value in use; all of them want the products' functions and effective as their expectation. In SuperMap, they also notice this point; the priority consideration of the product is high quality and useful functions.

From the products benefit position, they want the consumers always can trust SuperMap; they try to give a good image on their customers. As we mentioned before, they always give customers free experience vision before they buy it, in this way, after the customer know the basic functions of the SuperMap software, they will have preliminary image on SuperMap's product. As we all know, Volvo positioning their product on "security", Pepsi target the younger customer; the image SuperMap Europe want their image is "The new generation of GIS software". Unlike ESRI present them as the GIS software leader, the SuperMap are more force on customer's needs, they don't put themselves in a high position, they use their advantage to create their own "blue ocean" in the GIS market. Undeniable ESRI already taken the most of GIS market, so how to break this "red ocean" to create their own market is very important for SuperMap. Compare the ESRI already exist many years, the SuperMap are very new to the GIS customers, so at the very beginning, SuperMap are more force on their products' quality and useful functions, in this way they can get more credit in the customers' mind.

6.3.3.2 The Emotional benefits positioning strategy

The Emotional benefits positioning strategy means put human emotion inside the brand, giving all kind of feelings to make customers can get Emotional resonance. From consumers' the bottom of heart makes them have positive feeling and loyalty of the brand. When the consumers are using the products, it's also the process that they are accepting and understand of product. A success brand emotional benefits positioning strategy can give kind of positive feelings to the customers, like the Haagen-Dazs's emotional positioning in China—to create the flavor of love, the slogan "love me, Please bring me Haagen-Dazs!" This slogan suddenly becomes the most popular brand between lovers. It's a very success case in emotional benefits positioning.

Back to SuperMap, during the interviews, Jim also present a concept from the emotional benefits, he said most of sell in GIS market they didn't pay enough attention on their aftermarket, so after consumers buy the product they hard to get enough cares, most of the customer service centers are located in India or Philippines, the service responses are very slow and can't solve the problems in time. Depend that the GIS software is professional software, so in SuperMap Europe, they build a very humanization system in the aftermarket service. In order to provide solutions to

customers in time and currently, they connect the sales and services together, aftermarket services in SuperMap that they provide a professional technical staff as their exclusive customer service, in this way; they can build a long relationship between the brand and customers. Also they build the individual files for each customer. By using this quick response system, they can build an emotion relationship between the company and customers. From this system, SuperMap uses their care to connect with customers emotionally. When the customers can be taken care, at the same time, SuperMap also can update the latest information from their customers. So here I think SuperMap using emotional strategy make the customer feel been cared, also build a quite important relationship between them. We think that SuperMap build a good system to connect with the customers, a long relationship always means loyalty. In this way, SuperMap use their services system to connect with customers, special staff for each customer, they make the customer feel been cared. This kind of relationship is solid, they can keep customer in a long time.

6.3.3.3 The self-expression benefits positioning strategy

The self-expression benefits positioning strategy express brand's unique image and connotation through their behavior. In order to create a positive image in consumers mind, brand must convince customers that they have unique quality which consumers can get their needs from this brand. This self-expression also need a long time to insist, it needs continue hard work keep stay in one specific image in consumers' mind, also during this time period that they must know how to improve brand's influence. Deep inside, customer need to know why they should choose this brand.

From the interviews, Jim mentions SuperMap's core value is focus on the customer's needs, the SuperMap's products are more modern and faster compare the similar products. They try present SuperMap as a new generation products of GIS to differ from other products. SuperMap tries to express simple, modern, fast and easy to operate GIS software to their customer. In another hand, SuperMap use their professional service to make customers feel been cared. In our opinion, SuperMap tries to break the GIS software's old image which is difficult and professional; they present themselves as easy to operate for everyone. We can find out SuperMap's software isn't stand such a high place, they express themselves more like a friend, whenever you need help that they can provide you a professional team to solve your problems. In this way, SuperMap uses their self-expression strategy to connect them to everyone who may need their help. They give customers more tender care to make them feel GIS software is not such difficulty things.

7. Conclusion

As the market competition becomes fierce increasingly, customers have become more sophisticated and price-sensitive. They expect products and services to be delivered faster and more conveniently. And they have no qualms about switching to competitors. At the same time, traditional marketing tools are less effective than in the past. Products are not much different from one another, pricing is quickly matched by competitors, advertising is expensive and less effective and sales force costs are rising. Consumers are constantly being interrupted by thousands of marketing messages, making it easy for one message to get lost in the overwhelming clutter of communications. Plus, consumers no longer have a well-defined set of products and vendors that they will consistently seek out to fulfill a need. The single 4Ps marketing theory is facing more and more challenges. We have to take the customers' feeling into consideration when we are doing the marketing.

The European market is not only a market of customers with mature consumption idea, but also a market with highly competitive. If Chinese enterprises are to establish themselves in the market, they have to make their products out of standing from others. So that the Chinese enterprises should take a road with product quality of specialization, differentiation and brand image of personalized The quality is the key for get into a mature market. The average income always keeps in a high level for customers who were in European market, so, when they choose one kind of product, the specialization quality will be considered more. For the term, the specialization quality accentuates the current technique and specific function, one need for enterprises to produce the unique product. Therefore, the Chinese enterprises should develop new product which base on advanced technique and knowledge to adapt to the demand of customers in European market. At the same time, Chinese enterprises should understand there are so many enterprises fight with each others in the strong competition European market. However, the contrast of technique become more and closer with the same quality and almost alike core technique between different enterprises due to the information of technique opens to the outside world. If Chinese enterprises want to cut big part of the cake, one should be looked for to get a new sight what must be consisted of the differentiation of professional function and the characteristic of product which have the more idea compare with the lack in other same sort of enterprises.

The product did not have life; however, it will be change when people give them a individuation brand. The European market is the original location of famous brand, so customers pay more attention to the famous brand. But right now, a big part of products that Chinese enterprises sale in European are low price and non brand. European customer's impression always stay in low quality and low price for Chinese products, that is a disadvantage for marketing of Chinese enterprises in European market. Modern marketing theory represented the only way for occupation of market

base on what the preponderant brand have in a market. Therefore, when Chinese enterprises want to sale their products in European market, have to endow the product with vitality- that must be brand. As we said, Chinese enterprises should not only sale the products, but also should be brand. Someone said, the marketing is the war of brand. Thus, if we can create a preponderant of famous brand and obtain the advantage of market occupation, that means we can achieve the first successful step. Of cause, in European market where so many brand existing, to create an effect of brand isn't an easy way which requires strong individuality of brand. In normal style, individualistic brand can be focused on customer's attention; it is an efficient way to get a strong ability of competition with opponent. In the theory level, the attraction and the ability of competition will be pushed up once the communication catch individualistic level between brand and customers, accordingly, which will construct a fix foundation to occupy market for a long time. In addition, before Chinese products get in to European market, one should understand to fit the European standard on design and making

Before time, according to different kinds of currency, Chinese enterprises can constitute different price for the same product, and the contrast of price cannot be easy to become aware. But now, all of products in European market use Euro as marked price, so the strategy of price contrast has not been a suitable way, thus, Chinese enterprises have to adopt the uniform price for sale.

The American marketing expert Walker Chip firstly presents "Brand core value" concept in 1997. He believed brand's core value the soul of the brand, it's also one important part of Brand equity; It can make consumers have a clear identify and remember the brand's interest point and personality; It's also main forces to make consumers fall in love it. A brand compare with similar ones, they must have unique core value, just like the DNA of the brand. It's a channel to deliver to customers what kind of benefits which the brand can bring to them. Like SuperMap, the core value of SuperMap is focus on customers. The SuperMap wants their customers have an image that once your mention SuperMap you can feel been cared. SuperMap want customers know that they are the most important. Once they buy SuperMap, they can feel a professional team is always being there for them.

The brand's ultimate pursue is the core value, it's the center of brand marketing communication activities, so it means every value activities of company must center on brand's core value. Brand strategy management is long term plan; it needs innovation and insists to build a brand. SuperMap is a young brand; they need lots of works to do. Here we think SuperMap need to think more about how to create Blue Ocean[20] which belongs to them own. Compare with ESRI, SuperMap still need a lot road to go. From the analysis, we can find out create blue ocean is just what SuperMap want to do. Here we think, SuperMap just needs to insist and continue

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[20] W. Chan Kim, Renée Mauborgne: Blue ocean strategy: how to create uncontested market space and make the competition irrelevant 2005

improve their products and brand image. Only long period and extraordinary insist can achieve this point, every marketing activity, every sales, every service etc. can make consumers keep some memory about the brand, it's a long time accumulation, when the brand core value get into consumers mind, that's just corporation brand positioning strategy and positioning strategy pursuing.

Although, changes always mean chance, problems can help us to find out more ways to the future. The methods always much more than problems, find out the proper solution for the problem and replace the old way. Entering a new market always means changes, keeping on continues change and improvement way to get more profit is the right way. Here we hope SuperMap can use the opportunity to find its own way to open new market successfully!

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