

# [Exploration on consumer tribes](https://assignbuster.com/exploration-on-consumer-tribes/)

Night club in China is an “ overseas import” from Europe. The first Chinese night club was established in Hong Kong in 20th century. It evolved from Europe night club. This old Chinese night club is a comprehensive place of entertainment, which involves social communication, dance, music, etc. They offer food and drink, and also set the dancing floor to allow people dancing in it. With the development of Chinese economy, the mainland civilians’ standard of living is increasing steadily. People have spare cash and time to enjoin the nightlife. Night club has entered China mainland market.

“ Mix” is a modern night club, which set up in Beijing in 2002. The all the acronyms stand for “ Music”, “ Include”, and “ Xanadu”(Music- the avant-garde hip pop music, Include- diversification, Xanadu- the gather place for trendsetter). Club “ Mix” relies on fashion decoration, layout, and pure hip-pop music to attract people, and also “ Mix” establish a brand community to support consumer tribes as their competitive advantage to compete with other nightclub.

Generally, marketers consider consumers as individual; Marketer segment consumers into different group, and there is no social connection in each group (Mitchell, 2011). However, in 2002, the southern school of marketing presented that the “ linking” value of product and services are more important than their use value (Cova, 2002). Researches named this Latin approach tribalism and tribal marketing (Cova, 2002). This new “ tribal” literature exposes the deficiencies in the Northern approach of marketing (Cooper and McLoughlin, 1998, in Cova 2002). The purpose of this essay is to understand “ Tribal” approach and its influences on the particular Chinese nightclub-Mix.

## Consumer Tribes

“ Tribe” is not a new word for human being, it appeared in ancient time. Archaic tribes consist of a group of people who has blood relationship or live nearby. In archaic tribes, people have same language and culture and it always can persist for a long time. On the other hands, postmodern tribes are different from archaic tribes. Hetherington (1998, in Parsons & Maclaran, 2010) noted that the members of postmodern tribes are elective and affective: postmodern tribes are “ micro-social” groups; the members in these groups share the experiences, emotion, and passion with others (affective). They are interesting in same subculture and have same vision of life (Cova, 1997, in Moutinho, 2006). Postmodern tribes are not stable; members can leave the tribe when they lose the passion for rituals (elective). Another difference between archaic tribes and postmodern tribes is people can belong to many tribes at the same time, but the ancients only belong to one tribe.

Consumer tribes are different from the concept of segmentation. Segmentation, marketers divide consumer or potential consumer into groups in order to target them effectively (Hackley, 2009). Those people may have same characteristics in the same group, but there is no connection between them (Cova, 2002). In addition, segmenting consumers is risky, because it is difficult for marketer to identify who is the real consumer for businesses. For instance, observed in nightclub–Mix, there are variety consumers. People are come from anywhere, such as location, foreigner. The ages of those consumers are between 18 and 60 years old. They are white-collar worker, blue-collar workers, student, etc. Therefore, it is difficult for marketer to segment consumers (by age, gender, occupation). Using tribal approach, club-Mix is as a place offer to party-animal tribes. Because of nightclub is a comprehensive place of entertainment, so under the party-animal tribe people can be divided into different tribes, such as dancing, music, beauty and fashion. Some people may belong to two or more tribes. It is easy to see a group of people talking about fashion trend, or discussing a new album in the Mix. By contrast with other night club, Mix is more like a base area for tribes and other night clubs are only a place of entertainment. For instance, people in mix like the member of family; they share the passion and emotion. However, in other night club people rarely talk to stranger; most people are playing along or playing with friends who have known a long time already.

## Brand Community

Brand community is a new style community, which it put the brand at the center and establish a community relation (Muniz & O’Guinn, 2001). Muniz & O’Guinn (2001, in Parsons & Maclaran, 2010) defined “ brand community as a non-geographically bound community based upon a structured set of social relationships among admirer of a brand who may be physically distant to one another.” McAlexander, Schoute, and Koenig (2002) suggested an extension of Muniz & O’Guinn’s model (Customer-Customer-Brand triad). They thought brand community is a network relationship that center on the focal customers. The model (customer-centric model of brand community) involves other relationships between focal customer (i. e. Marketer and Product). In order to build brand community, Mix set up their own web set in 2003. The web site allows customers communicate with Mix and other customers directly; moreover, people can download some music or videos from the web site to feel the circumstance in the club-Mix. This community often gives the club-Mix some suggestion, which is valuable for Mix. On the other hand, community is not always support to business. Hollenbeck (2006) denominated this phenomenon “ anti-brand community”. For instance, Mix reduced the measure of dance floor in order to contain more customers. When people knew this news, they hold an “ anti-brand community” movement to resist the club-Mix action. Hollenbeck (2006) did a research on the people who resist McDonald’s and War-mart. He found the reasons why people anti-brand communities are:

In order to form a common brand moral in a social community.

to support the brand community members, and help them to achieve the same goals

to solve the difficulties of consumption

to offer resources center for taking action.

## Building relationship and loyalty with Tribes

Cova(1997a), Muniz and O’Guinn (2001) pointed out two shortcomings on relationship marketing and one-to-one marketing. The first is in relationship marketing and one-to-one marketing, they do not share emotion with customers. They only rely on the customer services to build relationship with customers. The second shortcoming is relationship marketing create a relation between brand and customers. There is no link between customers. Tribal marketing differ from relationship marketing and one-to-one marketing. Tribal approach is emphasis on the relationship between customers. The businesses use the resources to support link between customers and encourage them to develop affection in the tribes.

At first, Mix likes a common nightclub. There are no tribes in it. They operated with common relationship marketing approach. To supply good services with the best price, and also sale the membership card in order to get the customer loyalty. When the Club-Mix absorbed suggestion from the community, they start to hold social event and party, such as “ Top girl”, “ Christmas party”, etc. People can book online, and also buy the ticket in Mix. Those sorts of events and parties attract many people who have the same interest and same vision of life to join in. During the events and parties, Mix manager ask employees to help and encourage participants to communicate with each other. These phenomena seem to indicate Cova (1997a), Muniz and O’ Guinn’s (2001) viewpoint that business use the resources (employee, place, services, etc) to support the link between customers. The Club-Mix as a middleman offered place and event for tribes of party-animal, dance, fashion, Hip pop music, etc. Bagozzi’s (2000) concept of “ international social action” declared for a point of view that the most influential element on personal consumption decision is social association. In addition, Maffesoil’s (1996) study that “ consumer social identities and consumption choices shift according to situational and lifestyle factors.” From above-mentioned consumer tribe as a social platform, people share their consumption, belief with others. Therefore, people would share the experience in the Mix to other tribes’ member, so the members of Mix are becoming more and more, like the “ Snow Ball Effect”.

## Tribes as entrepreneurs: “ MixTure”

In the book “ Consumer tribes”, Kozinets, Cova, and Shankar (2007) made an assertion that consumer tribes are “ activators”, “ double agents”, “ plunderers”, and “ entrepreneurs”. Those are four movements of consumer tribes. From the Goulding and Saren’s(in the Kozinets, Cova, and Shankar, 2007)case of “ Gothic” entrepreneurs:

In the case authors describe “ Gothic” subculture develop from Punk Rock in early 1980s. With the development of tribe, the main tribes break down into many small groups, like “ mellow Goth”, “ metal Goth”, “ new Goth”, etc. Each tribe has their unique dressing style and music. Finally, those tribes accepted by the mainstream, it served by “ burgeoning retail and leisure industry”.

There are similar point between “ Gothic” and MixTure. In the club-Mix, there is a group of people like going to the club-Mix, no matter whether there is a special event or party. These people record the music from the Mix, and then they remix the music. They would put the “ new” music on the Internet. People can free download it. Furthermore, they also hold some events or parties in the Mix, but they do not charge the events fee or charge the event fee lower than Mix. “ Tribes are poised to become collective actors in the marketplace, much in the same that way that companies already are” (Cova, Kozinest, and Shankar, 2007). Postmodern tribes are “ non-totalizing” group (Cova, 2002), so it can become infinity. The power that tribes influence on business will increase, if the tribes get more and more members. O’Guinn and Muniz (2005, in Kozinets, Cova, and Shankar, 2007) pointed out business might surrender some control on a brand, to let a Consumer Tribe “ re-appropriate” it. Mix manager was aware of this condition. He found this group of people, and decided to cooperate with them. Mix manager gave this group a name “ MixTure”. MixTure is a tribe of club-Mix. It helps Club to organize small parties on ordinary day. In order to keep the passion in this tribe, club-Mix often holds some particular events for MixTure members, like “ Red carpet event” that all the member of MixTure walked though the red carpet and signs their name on the white board. This sort of event made the awareness of MixTure increase dramatically. The members of MixTure begin to design clothes by themselves. Each clothes must include the Logo of Mix and their symbol of their tribe. Nowadays, MixTure is becoming a subculture – it represents a generation that who like DIY (do it yourself) with the symbol of MixTure. People can buy their clothes and disc on the internet, or go to their physical store.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the essay analyzes the tribal marketing application and critique the relationship marketing approach with the case of Chinese night club – Mix. The tribal approach is focus on the micro-social level; it is the level reflects the connection between people (Cova, 2002). In tribal marketing, marketers and companies are as a supporter. They are using all the resources to support the link between customers (Cova, 2002). This alternative tribal approach make up for the shortage of individualistic approach. At last of essay, According to read Cova, Kozinest, and Shankar’s book, to identify the Mix tribe is a entrepreneur.