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Converged Media Matrix, Interactive Communities, and Cultural Output: Brand Marketing Communication Strategies for County-Level Converged Media—A Case Study of County-Level Converged Media Centers in the Yangtze River Delta (Postprint)

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Abstract

With the development of mobile interactive technology, the channels through which audiences receive information have diversified, making it increasingly difficult for county-level media convergence centers to achieve brand marketing solely through traditional communication means such as newspapers, radio, and television. [Objective] To assist county-level media convergence centers in identifying strategic approaches for brand marketing and enabling them to achieve brand premium in the future. [Methods] This study employs qualitative research, content analysis, experimental methods, comparative analysis, and other methodologies to conduct a layered analysis of the current state of brand marketing in county-level media convergence centers, enumerates brand marketing strategies of currently well-developed centers, and analyzes step-by-step how county-level media convergence centers in the Yangtze River Delta region construct multimedia matrices. Finally, brand marketing strategies of central media are incorporated into the research scope, with output data compared to identify pathways for county-level media convergence centers to achieve brand premium. [Results] The study finds that continuous and frequent implantation of product information points and brand memory points by media convergence centers, coupled with time-segmented, high-frequency output, can leave strong impressions on audiences. However, prolonged passive acceptance of brand concepts may breed resistance. Therefore, brand marketing for local media convergence centers in the future must broaden promotional channels and construct an integrated information portal platform combining social and cultural construction, convenient public services, and Party-government work development.

[Conclusion] Only by continuously strengthening connections with the public, excavating localized marketing models featuring regional characteristics and urban culture, flexibly utilizing cultural and entertainment interactions to build momentum for media convergence brands, conducting brand marketing and promotional activities across multiple platforms, engaging in cooperative exchanges with enterprises, and acquiring followers through diverse channels can user stickiness be enhanced, audiences retained, private domain traffic gradually formed, and brand premium for county-level media convergence achieved.

Full Text

Preamble

Integrated Media Matrix, Interactive Communities, and Cultural Export: Brand Marketing Communication Strategies for County-Level Media Convergence Centers—A Case Study of Yangtze River Delta County Media Convergence Centers

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Abstract

With the development of mobile interactive technologies, audiences now access information through increasingly diversified channels, making it increasingly difficult for county-level media convergence centers to achieve brand marketing through traditional channels such as newspapers, radio, and television alone. [Purpose] This study aims to help county-level media convergence centers identify effective brand marketing strategies to achieve brand premium in the future. [Methods] Through qualitative research, content analysis, experimental methods, and comparative analysis, this paper examines the current state of brand marketing in county-level media convergence centers layer by layer, enumerates the brand marketing strategies of rapidly developing centers, and analyzes how county-level media convergence centers in the Yangtze River Delta construct multimedia matrices. Finally, the brand marketing strategies of central media are incorporated into the study for comparison of output data, thereby identifying pathways for county-level media convergence centers to achieve brand premium. [Results] The study finds that continuously and frequently implanting product information points and brand memory elements through high-frequency, time-segmented output can leave a strong impression on audiences. However, prolonged passive acceptance of brand concepts may breed resistance. Therefore, local media convergence centers must broaden their promotional channels in the future and build integrated information portal platforms that combine social and cultural construction, convenient public services, and Party-government

work development. **[Conclusion]** Only by continuously strengthening connections with the public, excavating localized marketing models featuring regional characteristics and urban culture, flexibly utilizing cultural and entertainment interactions to build momentum for the media convergence brand, conducting brand marketing across multiple platforms, cooperating and communicating with enterprises, and acquiring followers through multiple channels can county-level media convergence centers enhance user stickiness, retain audiences, gradually develop private traffic, and ultimately achieve brand premium.

Keywords: Mobile interactive technology; Brand marketing; Media convergence matrix; County-level media convergence center

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1. The Concept of Media Convergence Brand Marketing

1.1 Current Status and Communication Characteristics of County-Level Media Convergence Brand Marketing

Current brand building and marketing efforts for county-level media convergence centers place greater emphasis on content format diversity and multi-channel distribution. Some rapidly developing centers have focused on enhancing content originality, organizing works into distinct topic series covering Party and government cultural construction, real-time local social news, micro-documentary programs incorporating local cultural elements, dialect popularization short videos, and interactive topic discussions. Through full-screen distribution via WeChat public accounts, self-built multimedia matrix platform Apps, and Douyin (TikTok), these centers highlight their regional characteristics while using self-built Apps to interact directly with local residents and using short videos to promote local cuisine, culture, and customs nationwide, transforming their platforms from mere news distributors into integrated parts of people's daily lives.

In July 2021, the popular summer drama *You Are My Glory* quickly amassed 1.8 billion views. Journalists from Yixing Media Convergence Center in Wuxi astutely noted that the author, Gu Man, was from Yixing and immediately conducted an exclusive interview, publishing a series of reports and profiles titled “Following *You Are My Glory* to See Yixing, the ‘Ceramic Capital’.” The WeChat public account “Yixing Release” simultaneously published an article titled “The Real-Life Yu Tu, the Glory of Yixing People!” focusing on

outstanding Yixing natives, thereby elevating the overall tone and stature of the Yixing Media Convergence Center brand.

1.2 Brand Value and Marketing Misconceptions of County-Level Media Convergence

The brand value of county-level media convergence centers lies in adapting measures to local conditions, establishing roots in local livelihoods, and building media convergence matrices with local characteristics that possess “user thinking.” When selecting news topics and promotional platforms, centers should maintain a user-centric approach, creating warm media convergence brands that emerge from the masses and subtly integrate core brand concepts with popular video content formats. In an era of content overload, scarce attention, and overwhelming short-message videos, centers must act as opinionated media that speak for the people, quickly capturing market share and cultivating loyal users.

Currently, many county-level media outlets still operate from a broadcaster’s perspective, primarily reposting provincial or CCTV news, with minimal coverage of local livelihood and cultural tourism issues. This disconnect from grassroots concerns reduces interaction with local users, lowers usage frequency among residents, and creates a perception that “the media matrix is built for outsiders and has no practical utility.” The accompanying media convergence platform templates are often monotonous, crude, and visually unappealing, causing most users to lose interest and resulting in low brand loyalty and poor user stickiness.

2. Brand Marketing and Communication of Yangtze River Delta County-Level Media Convergence

2.1 Presentation Forms and Characteristics of Brand Marketing in Yangtze River Delta County-Level Media Convergence

Unlike other regions that rely primarily on reposting and repurposing content, Yangtze River Delta county-level media convergence centers achieve “breakout” growth in brand marketing through convergence thinking. Their brand marketing demonstrates three key characteristics: dedication to original high-quality short videos that recognize the necessity of originality for brand promotion and value transmission; strong focus on hot topics with high social concern, demonstrating robust social engagement and interactivity; and maximized utilization of collected news to produce diversified content for different user groups, thereby broadening audiences and achieving full-screen distribution.

2.1.1 Media Convergence Matrix Yangtze River Delta county-level media convergence centers have established media convergence matrix platforms on websites and client terminals, integrating fragmented and monolithic column units to facilitate information flow and gradually forming industrial chains for their media convergence brands. The “Kan Yixing” mobile App integrates

32 column units, from programmatic documents issued by Party and government bodies to real-time updates on Yixing culture, technology, ecology, and livelihoods. This diversified and composite new model enables Yixing Media Convergence Center to advance toward a “strong media convergence matrix” and cross-boundary boost its premium brand marketing to capture exclusive traffic.

2.1.2 Interactive Communities Yixing Media Convergence Center has astutely captured user psychology by building communities for discussion and continuously optimizing interactive functions. A dedicated “Interaction” section within the App allows users to photograph and upload reports of misconduct for community discussion, recommend local restaurants and attractions, upload speech and recitation videos related to media education, and post requests for assistance. This crowdsourced participation in platform construction deepens public understanding of the Yixing media convergence brand’s value and leverages public power to enhance the brand’s reputation and recognition.

2.1.3 Cultural Export In recent years, Yixing Media Convergence Center has skillfully utilized short video platforms like Douyin to launch premium short video series covering Yixing culture, dialect, cuisine, development policies, and transportation infrastructure. Notably, the center has abandoned traditional news formats featuring text information or seated anchors, instead using Yixing dialect combined with Mandarin to discuss local culture, livelihood issues, and policy reforms, thereby bridging the distance with audiences. Leveraging Yixing’s renowned purple clay teapot culture and specialty cuisine, the center has launched topic-based programs such as *Yangxian Teahouse*, *Xiaojun Interviews*, *Watching Yixing*, *High Trumpet*, and *Ping’s Words*, while simultaneously operating accounts on international platforms like Twitter and YouTube. By translating related short videos and articles into English for multi-platform distribution, the center has enabled Yixing culture to go global and achieve cross-cultural export.

2.2 The Role and Value Return of Multimedia Platform Matrix Construction

Compared with traditional media’s strong political attributes and one-way social communication functions, the multimedia platform matrix constructed by Yangtze River Delta county-level media convergence adds a commercial dimension, forming a new “media + industry” business model.

Zhangjiagang County Media Convergence Center in the Yangtze River Delta region has integrated management of local government WeChat platforms and implemented community festival celebrations and performances to better support Party-government news and social livelihood reporting columns. Upholding the brand concept of “doing practical things for the people and seeking welfare for the people,” the center has built a multimedia matrix platform within its

“Today’ s Zhangjiagang” App to provide broad and precise services, creating a warm livelihood brand that enters people’ s lives in its most authentic form. This approach has won user favor and expanded business branches through word-of-mouth, using commercial service profits to feed back into media convergence center construction, introduce cutting-edge technologies, and recruit top media talents, creating a virtuous cycle that firmly roots the Zhangjiagang media convergence brand at the forefront of county-level media convergence centers and enhances the city’ s reputation.

3. Brand Marketing and Communication of China’ s Media Convergence

3.1 Development Strategies for County-Level Media Convergence Brand Marketing and Communication

To further enhance sustainable brand development capabilities, county-level media convergence centers must move beyond traditional media marketing forms and adapt new development strategies tailored to their brand characteristics and audience needs. By leveraging new media communication and marketing models, centers can broaden brand marketing channels and strengthen brand authority. The rapid development of network media convergence technology has become an excellent medium for county-level media convergence brand marketing. Centers can utilize new operational models such as e-commerce platforms and live streaming to achieve full-platform distribution and marketing, establish two-way cooperation with relevant enterprises, implement cross-regional marketing strategies, and support brand development.

3.1.1 Cross-Regional Marketing Strategies for County-Level Media Convergence Brands To stand out among media groups, county-level media convergence centers must develop their own marketing strategies that leverage inherent advantages in politics, economy, and geography to empower new media frontiers. Cross-regional cooperation represents a feasible and necessary brand marketing strategy. Centers can contribute their professional expertise to cross-regional development while broadening their audience base and riding on the brand recognition of other industries to extend their reach, achieve resource sharing, and create win-win situations through cross-boundary cooperation.

Located in the Yangtze River Delta economic belt, Zhangjiagang Media Convergence Center fully enjoys the resource advantages brought by integrated Yangtze River Delta development. In September 2021, Zhangjiagang Media Group partnered with Shanghai Railway Bureau to secure exclusive media agency rights for Zhangjiagang High-Speed Railway Station and management rights for VIP lounge brand promotion and marketing. In subsequent advertising business operations, the center precisely grasped the relationship between urban civilization, media convergence brand culture, and the high-speed railway station’ s service concept, integrating all available quality resources to create advertising

promotional films covering urban features and civilization for Shanghai Railway Bureau. These films played on loop in the high-traffic station and were simultaneously uploaded to the media convergence platform for secondary Internet dissemination, enabling Shanghai Railway Bureau, Zhangjiagang High-Speed Railway Station promotional videos, and the Zhangjiagang media convergence brand to gain exposure and followers at a multiplied rate.

3.1.2 Strong Association Between County-Level Media Convergence Brands and Chinese Enterprises With robust financial resources, abundant human capital, and government credibility guarantees, national and provincial-level media possess influence and authority that county-level media convergence centers cannot match. Meanwhile, numerous internet information technology companies have emerged in recent years, leading in algorithms, resources, service models, creativity, operations, and marketing. To break through and address current market pain points, county-level media convergence marketing must rely on “localized characteristics” to find compatible Chinese enterprises for strong partnerships that output premium content tailored to both parties. This creates inseparable strong associations, plants seeds for the media convergence brand through cooperation, and gradually builds a social network that connects the media convergence brand’s concepts with the social, political, and economic systems, creating its own brand marketing territory.

Currently, county-level media suffer from low digital technology dissemination that fails to attract attention from more people and enterprises. County-level media convergence centers have a responsibility to promote their platforms, using the media convergence matrix as a foundation to cooperate with local enterprises in establishing live-streaming bases that support rural revitalization and align with national policies. For example, Zhangjiagang Media Convergence Center partnered with Chinese enterprise JD.com in 2021 to connect its “Today’s Zhangjiagang” App media mall with JD.com’s live-streaming platform, launching China’s first “County-Level Media Convergence • JD.com Live Streaming Base.” During daily live streams, anchors introduced products while simultaneously explaining relevant backgrounds and cultures, enabling local characteristic cultures and agricultural products to gain wider recognition and even reach overseas markets, winning praise from many foreign friends. With over 7 million viewers and 12,179 merchant orders recorded post-broadcast, Zhangjiagang Media Convergence Center clearly gained brand exposure and positive reviews through cooperation with Chinese enterprises, boosting local economic and cultural tourism development while promoting digital economy growth and achieving brand premium.

3.2 Differentiated Analysis of Brand Marketing and Communication Strategies Between County and Central Media

As China's most authoritative national media, central media's influence and impact are immeasurable. Examining central media's brand marketing and communication strategies on Internet platforms reveals that while strengthening mainstream platforms, they have not confined themselves to traditional media channels but have rapidly built comprehensive, accountable media convergence matrix platforms that integrate domestic quality media resources like Douyin, Kuaishou, and WeChat. For example, sub-brands of *People's Daily*, Xinhua News Agency, and *Economic Daily* have all opened Douyin accounts with dual management and operational oversight, discussing topics of greatest public interest with sincerity to gain widespread social attention and likes, demonstrating professionalism and authority.

Consequently, an increasing number of county-level media convergence brands have followed central media's brand marketing model by building their own media convergence matrix platforms and creating short videos featuring local characteristics and cultural elements to promote both their brands and local cultural tourism. Before restructuring, Yixing Media Convergence Brand's "Yixing Release" and "Watching Yixing" WeChat platforms had approximately 157,000 followers. After strategic adjustments aligning with central media practices and transforming brand marketing strategies, the Yixing Media Convergence Center's dual-WeChat matrix platform reached over 450,000 followers by the end of November 2021—nearly triple the original number—with single post readership reaching approximately 10,000, making it one of Wuxi's top ten most influential government media platforms.

According to operational data from Yangtze River Delta county-level media convergence centers and over 2,500 other county-level centers nationwide, Yangtze River Delta centers have developed rapidly, becoming benchmarks for county-level media convergence brand marketing. However, when comparing account data from leading Yangtze River Delta county-level media convergence brands with central media brands (as shown in), the data reveals that while Yangtze River Delta centers lag far behind central media in total followers, total likes, and average likes, they slightly outperform central media in like rates. This advantage likely stems from the private traffic formed when disseminating local characteristics and culture.

3.3 Future Development Ideas for County-Level Media Convergence Marketing to Achieve Brand Premium

Based on the analyzed data, future development directions for county-level media convergence brand marketing and premium can be identified. County-level media convergence must improve and refine brand authority, uniqueness, and content creation, further excavating content that aligns with their brand identity while learning from central media's expansion of coverage to typical figures

and events across all social sectors. They should enhance interactivity to gradually increase brand-audience alignment and, when necessary, seek cooperation with central media and Chinese enterprises to continuously update strategies that meet market conditions and public needs, thereby achieving county-level media convergence brand premium.

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Note: Figure translations are in progress. See original paper for figures.

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