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Research on Approaches to Strengthening Media Communication Capacity, Guidance Capacity, Influence, and Credibility: Postprint

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Abstract

This article, integrating the practical realities of local news development, first introduces the concepts of media communication capacity, guidance capacity, influence, and credibility and their interrelationships, and then discusses strategies for strengthening these capacities from three aspects: media convergence development, institutional mechanisms, and talent team construction.

Full Text

Abstract

This paper, grounded in the practical realities of local news development, first introduces the concepts of media communication power, guidance power, influence, and credibility, as well as their interrelationships. Second, it discusses how to strengthen the construction of these four forces in news media from three aspects: media convergence development, institutional mechanisms, and talent team building.

Keywords: news media; four forces; public opinion guidance; four confidences; media convergence

The report of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China clearly defines the development direction for public opinion and broadcast news media: uphold correct guidance of public opinion and enhance the communication power, guidance power, influence, and credibility of news and public opinion. The Fourth Plenary Session of the 19th CPC Central Committee further clarified the need to build a comprehensive development pattern that integrates online and offline efforts and coordinates domestic and international communication around this direction. In the context of continuous innovation and development

of modern all-media communication systems in the new era, the frequent occurrence of emergencies has significantly amplified the public opinion impact of major events. Therefore, in public opinion guidance work, we must consistently uphold correct orientation, firmly establish the “Four Consciousnesses” and adhere to the “Four Favorable Principles,” maintain the main melody as the keynote, and transmit positive energy. This is also crucial for consolidating and developing mainstream ideology under new circumstances, enhancing dominance and discourse power in the ideological domain, strengthening the “Four Confidences,” and boosting the cohesion and centripetal force of the Party, the state, and the nation. As mainstream media, we must fully leverage our role as a “fighting fortress,” effectively strengthen the functions of communication, guidance, influence, and credibility in news and public opinion, and firmly grasp the leadership in ideological work.[1]

1. The Concept of the “Four Forces” and Their Interrelationships

Communication power refers to the ability to disseminate and diffuse news and public opinion information, serving as the foundation for guidance power, influence, and credibility. The issue of orientation is fundamental: guidance power represents the responsibility of mainstream media to actively steer public opinion so that it does not deviate from the correct direction. Influence means that media should affect mainstream audiences, represent mainstream consciousness, and disseminate mainstream news to form powerful social impact. Credibility refers to the inherent trustworthiness that news media possess in the eyes of the public. The “four forces” are closely interconnected and mutually influential, exhibiting several key characteristics:

First, they possess independence. Their roles differ across various communication stages. Communication power functions like the outlet of a channel, primarily addressing how to transmit information outward; guidance power resembles the transmission process, focusing on how to precisely deliver information to audiences; influence concerns whether the delivered information interests the audience; and credibility addresses how long the information can endure in the audience’s mind. Moreover, strength in one area does not necessarily correlate positively with strength in another. For instance, some news may have strong communication power, yet audiences may not fully accept it—transmission and acceptance are not directly proportional, necessitating gradual guidance in subsequent steps.

Second, they exhibit interconnectedness. Within the same communication chain, communication must occur first, generating communication power; this is followed by guidance and influence, i.e., guidance power and influence; finally, credibility is established on the basis of the previous two forces. Communication power is the prerequisite for the other three forces; guidance power determines direction; influence determines scope and depth; and credibility ultimately facilitates the growth and sustainability of the other forces, being inseparably intertwined with them.

Third, they demonstrate integrity. The “four forces” constitute a unified whole and system that mutually influences and constrains one another. We cannot sacrifice content quality by publishing vulgar or negative material simply to enhance communication power and influence; we must simultaneously emphasize guidance and credibility in content.

2. Preliminary Exploration of Paths to Strengthen the “Four Forces” in News Media

With the development of the new era, contradictions in the field of news and public opinion have undergone new changes, primarily manifested in the imbalance and asymmetry between the growing public demand for high-quality news information and the production and supply of such information. This problem mainly stems from structural irrationality in news supply, homogenized production, and a lack of thoughtful, enthusiastic, high-quality work that resonates with audiences. Enhancing the “four forces” of news and public opinion represents the best solution to this new contradiction. Based on professional experience and personal understanding of the “four forces” in news media, we believe we can actively explore improvement pathways from the following key perspectives.

2.1 Promoting Media Convergence Development Regarding media convergence development, the 14th meeting of the Central Committee for Comprehensively Deepening Reform pointed out the direction for transformation and development of news media. Before the rise of internet media, various mainstream media monopolized their respective regions and fields without competitors. Since the 21st century, as the media industry has continuously expanded and boundaries have blurred, the entry of numerous new entities has intensified competition. Meanwhile, private internet media platforms and other commercial media platforms have emerged and rapidly risen, competing fiercely with mainstream media in advertising and user service markets. Traditional mainstream media’s competitive advantages in the communication market have increasingly weakened, facing dual pressures of internal transformation and external competition; convergence and transformation with emerging internet media has become an inevitable trend.

First, establish and improve new communication platforms. New communication platforms occupy a strategic position in the construction of new mainstream media. Establishing such platforms enables extensive and deep user integration, continuously strengthens technology empowerment, and expands platform functions, thereby enhancing communication power, influence, and market guidance capabilities. This forms a pattern oriented toward meeting users’ diversified and personalized needs, accelerating the upgrading of mainstream media from traditional models to platform-based operations. To advance this development, the local radio and television department has established a new media center responsible for operating official WeChat public accounts, Douyin accounts, Kuaishou

accounts, live cloud streaming, and mobile TV apps. Currently, it is exploring operations of new media platform live streaming and radio and television video accounts, having preliminarily constructed a new media communication platform.

Second, innovate and strengthen content production. Particularly for news and information products, including short videos, short audio, and social products, production should be tailored to various user needs and matched with different platforms and terminals to achieve all-media communication. This requires fully utilizing news gathering and editing rights, strengthening supply-side reform of products and services, and striving to become a mainstream content supply center in the all-media era.[3] For example, the local radio and television station, despite limited conditions, overcame numerous difficulties to establish within its new media center a WeChat public account editorial team, Douyin and Kuaishou operation team, Kuaishou live streaming team, and large-scale event live streaming team. These teams specialize in studying relevant knowledge, technology, and content production according to the characteristics of different new media platforms, operating independently yet interrelatedly and synergistically.

Third, aggregate internal and external public resources. Development requires breaking conventional thinking, implementing differentiated layouts, conforming to media development trends, and meeting user needs. This involves achieving vertical and horizontal integration, breaking boundaries between radio and television, mainstream media, and online media, opening connections among various platforms, and providing users with one-stop vertical content services. This enables the Party' s voice to spread wider and deeper, gradually realizing the goals of "upholding integrity, deep integration, cross-boundary collaboration, and symbiotic development." Currently, the local radio and television official WeChat public account has achieved shared use of high-quality broadcast and television program resources within the station, allowing mobile users to watch television news clips and selectively listen to or watch programs from various radio frequencies and television channels. Simultaneously, it leverages radio and television advantages to cooperate with departments such as culture and tourism bureaus and emergency management bureaus, gradually advancing resource aggregation.

2.2 Deepening Reform of News Media Systems and Mechanisms Currently, advancing deep media convergence is at a critical and challenging stage. We must implement the Party Central Committee' s decision-making and deployment on promoting deep media convergence, adhere to goal-oriented and problem-oriented approaches, boldly reform, accelerate resolution of obstacles and issues that have long constrained media integration development, and build truly influential and competitive new mainstream media.

In this regard, the Shenzhen Press Group has consistently been at the forefront. According to available data, the group has recently implemented two major mea-

asures in talent management to achieve healthy talent flow and integration. First, optimizing talent structure by diverting personnel through early retirement, self-employment, and other methods to successfully streamline operations, thereby creating conditions for introducing high-end talent. Second, introducing high-end talent through mechanism optimization, implementing cultivation programs for renowned editors and journalists to enhance influence.

How local radio and television departments can transform and develop to keep pace with new era demands is an urgent question requiring serious consideration. In recent years, impacted by new media and the economic environment, radio and television advertising revenues have sharply declined, operational funding gaps have widened, and existing operational models can no longer meet transformation and development needs under new circumstances. Guided by Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, we must base ourselves on current realities while focusing on the long term, take strengthening the main position as fundamental, enhancing development vitality as core, and institutional innovation as key focus, continuously deepen the “dual-wheel drive” effect of propaganda and operation, continuously improve news propaganda standards, comprehensively enhance radio and television survival and development capabilities, and strive to forge a new path for radio and television transformation and development under new circumstances.

First, unwaveringly adhere to three basic principles. Uphold the principle of Party control over media. We must consistently maintain the Party’s mouth-piece nature, always prioritize social benefits, center on the overall work, serve the broader picture, strictly observe Party propaganda discipline, strengthen internal control systems and process management, and ensure correct propaganda orientation. Adhere to the principle of efficiency first with fairness considered. Drawing on advanced experiences of enterprise-style management in public institutions from developed regions, we should actively explore and research enterprise-style management of operational and distribution models while maintaining public institution status, fully mobilizing the enthusiasm and initiative of all staff to promote career development. Adhere to the principle of active yet prudent progress with overall consideration. Correctly handle the relationship between reform, development, and stability, unify deepening reform with promoting development and maintaining stability, and coordinate intensified reform efforts with solid propaganda work, equipment upgrading, and safe broadcasting. Proceed from actual conditions in a step-by-step, active yet prudent manner, advancing reform in phases and steps.

Second, people-oriented exploration of management mechanism reform. The most effective measure for mainstream media to address development shortcomings remains innovation-driven development, most effectively achieved by introducing high-end talent and leveraging their strengths. We must revitalize personnel selection and employment mechanisms, strictly control recruitment, and hire all new staff through open social recruitment according to rigorous procedures and standards, embodying fairness, justice, and transparency. Im-

plement an employment contract system that breaks the “iron rice bowl” without dismantling the existing establishment system, exploring a two-way selection mechanism for cadres and staff in some production departments to ensure proper person-position matching. Implement the principle of Party control over cadres, adhering to standards of moral integrity and professional competence, performance emphasis, and merit-based selection in cadre promotion. Establish incentive mechanisms that value performance and contributions, respect outstanding talent and key position holders, and provide appropriate rewards to winners of various media awards and honors regardless of institutional affiliation, ensuring that comrades who make outstanding contributions receive substantial recognition and 重用.[3] Simultaneously, link personal income to position responsibilities and actual performance, implementing a system where more work yields more pay. Provide appropriate economic subsidies for exceeding task quotas or necessary overtime. Include all personnel in assessment systems with formulated evaluation methods that appropriately widen distribution gaps. Expand revenue channels by fully leveraging radio and television advantages through “TV+, Radio+, New Media+” models, cooperating with social 实体经济, co-producing or jointly operating programs with internet celebrities, online influencers, and powerful content creation teams, and implementing revenue sharing from influencer marketing and platform commercial live streaming to maximize radio and television benefits.

2.3 Strengthening All-Media Talent Cultivation In the new era, as media landscapes and communication methods undergo profound changes and all-media continues to develop, new challenges have emerged for media talent cultivation. All-media talent refers to individuals with internet thinking, possessing all-media production, communication, operation, and management capabilities, competent in all-media processes and platform development. All-media talent must satisfy at least two characteristics: first, all-media versatile talent who can meet the requirements of all-media business operations; second, expert talent who can play specialized roles in vertical all-media businesses—both are indispensable. So how should we cultivate such all-media talent? We should focus on the following aspects:

First, uphold the concept that talent is the primary resource. Talent is key to promoting media convergence development. We must follow the laws of the socialist market economy and talent development, adhere to the guiding principles of service development, talent priority, people-oriented utilization, mechanism innovation, high-end guidance, and comprehensive talent work development.

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

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