

Exploring Innovative Approaches for Traditional TV Advertising Communication in the Converged Media Era (Postprint)

Authors: Wang Hua

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Abstract

With the rapid development of network and digital technologies, new media technology has become integrated into people's daily lives. Younger audiences increasingly gravitate toward convenient terminals such as smartphones and computers, significantly impacting traditional television advertising communication. Confronted with the era of big information, traditional television advertising must analyze its current challenges, identify their underlying causes, and achieve ultimate advertising effectiveness through innovative communication methods. This paper examines the current state and challenges of traditional television advertising communication in the era of integrated media, aiming to propose several innovative strategies.

Full Text

Preamble

Title: Innovative Approaches to Traditional Television Advertising in the Converged Media Era

Author: Wang Hua (Henan Radio and Television Station, Zhengzhou, Henan 450000)

Abstract

With the rapid development of network and digital technologies, new media has become integrated into daily life. Younger audiences increasingly prefer convenient terminals such as smartphones and computers, posing significant challenges to traditional television advertising. In this era of information overload, traditional TV advertising must analyze its current problems, identify root causes, and innovate its communication methods to achieve effective results. This paper examines the current state and challenges of traditional television

advertising in the converged media era, proposing several innovative strategies for advertising communication.

Keywords: network technology; digital technology; converged media; television advertising communication; innovation

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The proliferation of digital technology, the internet, and new media has made information dissemination faster, more convenient, flexible, and diverse, severely impacting traditional television media advertising [1]. In the converged media era, television advertising must thoroughly understand the characteristics of the current advertising environment, correctly recognize its own status and problems, and leverage new media technologies and concepts to reform and innovate its communication methods for sustainable development.

1. Analysis of Television Advertising in the Converged Media Era

Converged media television advertising refers to communication forms that utilize digital technology and networks to provide audiences with video, voice, gaming, and other services through television, mobile phones, computers, and other client terminals [2]. Compared with traditional advertising, it offers richer content, larger scale, and higher interactive efficiency and targeting. Converged media television advertising is characterized by strong interactivity, precision, convenience, practicality, participation, and necessity. Strong interactivity means that unlike traditional media's one-way transmission, converged media pushes content based on big data analysis of audience needs, making it easier for viewers to actively receive and access information through various channels. Precision refers to the accuracy of content delivery enabled by this interactivity—by understanding user needs, the system automatically filters irrelevant advertisements and sends similar content that matches viewer interests. Convenience allows audiences to access information anytime and anywhere, breaking traditional temporal and spatial constraints. Practicality enables viewers to conduct targeted searches based on their desired information, filtering out high-value content. Participation facilitates statistical analysis of information usefulness through click-through rates, enabling two-way feedback. Necessity arises from the fact that in the evolving information technology landscape, audiences need guidance from converged media television advertising, while such advertising must continuously adapt and improve to meet audience demands.

2. Analysis of the Current State of Traditional TV Advertising in the Converged Media Era

The converged media era has overturned traditional television advertising communication methods, creating an entirely new ecosystem for public opinion and communication patterns. According to survey data from CNNIC and CSM Media Research, live television ratings have declined severely while internet users and their online time continue to rise. CNNIC's 2018 data shows that China had over 800 million internet users, each spending more than 27 hours per week online—approximately 139 minutes daily, an increase from 129 minutes per day in 2017 [4]. The internet has become the preferred medium, and the outlook for television broadcasting is increasingly concerning.

2.1 New Media Resources Impact Broadcasting Development Space

Low data costs, combined with the convenience and widespread adoption of smartphones and mobile devices, have led to continuously increasing time spent on mobile media. Moreover, most new media content better aligns with user needs, focusing on user interests while offering strong interactivity that significantly attracts audiences. According to 2018 data, people globally now spend more time on the internet than watching television. The rise of short-video platforms like Kuaishou and Douyin has prompted Sohu, Weibo, and WeChat to shift toward short videos. Their segmented and fragmented communication methods are more easily accepted by audiences, rendering traditional television advertising videos obsolete and reducing the number of hit television programs [5]. Some television programs have begun seeking breakthroughs through vertical segmentation.

2.2 The Changing Communication Environment Alters TV Advertising Market Development

New media development enables people to conveniently access desired information anytime, anywhere, through any software or hardware terminal. For instance, automotive display terminals have become mobile media platforms, and smart refrigerators have become kitchen media terminals. These developments have substantially transformed the traditional media communication environment. Under the rapid expansion of converged media, content production has shifted from organized institutional production to socialized production, with content dissemination dispersing from traditional media organizations to diverse organizations and massive user bases. Shortened television viewing time has reduced advertising revenue. In recent years, China's television broadcasting industry has experienced severe advertising revenue shrinkage due to converged media impact, with a 3.28% decline in 2016 and negative growth of 1.84% in 2017 [6]. Conversely, internet advertising has grown rapidly. Statistics from cultural enterprises of certain scale show that by 2017, "Internet Plus" cultural information transmission services were growing at double-digit rates with contin-

ued upward momentum, suggesting the gap between internet and broadcasting advertising revenues will continue widening [7].

2.3 Technological Innovation Compels Transformation of TV Media Business Models

Continuous technological development brings forth endless new products, shortening industrial upgrade cycles and transformation windows. In the converged media era, social media and mobile applications have become primary information gateways. WeChat public accounts and aggregation platforms have developed rapidly through fragmented content structures and advanced communication technologies, capturing more than half of the audio-visual market. Meanwhile, high-quality programs produced by television media have become content dependencies for these platforms, which use them without investing substantial human and material resources, leading to rampant piracy and unauthorized broadcasting that severely impacts traditional television media. The historical competition between video websites and television media, as seen in the development of web dramas and web variety shows, foreshadows future trends, making it imperative for traditional television to seek breakthroughs.

3. Challenges Facing Traditional Television Advertising

3.1 Low Ratings Reduce the Cost-Effectiveness of Traditional TV Advertising

The fragmented, multi-channel, cross-platform communication model of the internet has significantly reduced traditional television ratings. First, lower ratings force television advertising prices upward, resulting in poor cost-effectiveness and ultimately reduced advertising investment, particularly affecting regional television media in developing areas. Online television advertising separates advertisements from programs, emphasizing fragmented dissemination rather than solely focusing on rating effects. Second, low ratings compel distributors, producers, and broadcasting platforms to adopt diversified program value assessments, such as social media word-of-mouth transmission. Although users spend limited time watching programs, their discussions about related factors and themes have substantial impact. Internet celebrities and stars generate viewing traffic, making the integrated communication model of short videos and social media increasingly popular and becoming new social media battlegrounds. Low ratings also drive advertisers to social media platforms, where the social and mobile characteristics of short videos continuously dilute the number of high-rating programs, making long-form video creation increasingly difficult.

3.2 Low Interactivity and Feedback: A Fundamental Flaw of Traditional TV Advertising

Television media advertising should adapt to big data development by accurately identifying actual audience needs to produce targeted creative content. Advertising creativity is technology-driven through big data, with placement, effectiveness, and feedback all presented through data. This enables media to more precisely understand audience personalization needs, satisfy advertising placement requirements, and conduct statistical analysis through big data.

3.3 Online Advertising Intensifies Market Competition

Current online advertising primarily employs narrative-style, pre-roll, or creatively inserted mid-roll formats, which have gained high market recognition since 2013. In recent years, creative mid-roll advertisements and drama-integrated advertising have appeared frequently with good results, leading to continuously rising prices, with creative advertising for single dramas now clearly priced. The 2018 hit drama “Princess Agents” featured over 50 creative mid-roll advertisements, generating revenue of 90 million RMB [8]. Distribution platforms have adapted to this trend by conducting extensive advertising solicitation for individual drama series to broaden profit channels and achieve economic benefits. Among brand selections, younger and emerging brands are more easily recognized by the public. To address these new challenges, traditional television stations should emulate these platforms by actively developing drama marketing strategies to capture advertising market share and adapt to the escalating competition between television and emerging media.

4. Innovation Strategies for Traditional TV Advertising in the Converged Media Era

Traditional television advertising should actively innovate its content, apply new operational models, and implement integration between broadcasting and new media to promote mutual development. It must proactively achieve deep media integration, break away from traditional thinking and content production, and realize new operational benefits.

4.1 Align with New Media Development Trends

Against the backdrop of rapid new media development, television advertising should align with new media trends to improve placement rates and enhance communication effects. It can apply new media technologies to improve television advertising quality, effectiveness, and dissemination speed. Achieving integration between television and new media broadens advertising channels and enables diversified communication methods, thereby enhancing television advertising influence. Traditional television advertising should leverage new media’s advantages in content and quality to further promote television media

development. Television media can also strengthen cooperation with new media to optimize the advertising environment and expand channels, levels, and presentation methods. For example, applying internet television and digital TV, or cooperating television programs with mobile applications, can expand television audiences to online viewers and improve advertising effectiveness.

4.2 Innovate Content Production Mechanisms

Influenced by traditional thinking, most television media operate according to bureaucratic management mechanisms and compensation distribution systems, gradually distancing themselves from evolving markets and audiences and weakening their media attributes. Therefore, mechanisms should be rebuilt to develop teams and lay foundations for reform and development. Producer authority can be expanded through independent production mechanisms or studio systems, breaking traditional bureaucratic production mechanisms and enabling diversified competitive business models. For instance, Hunan TV established a studio system in the converged media era, with management led by program production centers, implementing work quality assessments and team incentive systems. Within one year, this system successfully produced most of Hunan TV' s self-operated programs, achieving ratings above 90% [9].

4.3 Build a Strong Brand Image

As society develops and major enterprises emerge, the marketing environment has transformed. Companies and merchants must break away from outdated marketing models, emphasize brand power, and build strong brand images to highlight advantages, improve competitiveness, capture market share, and attract more consumers. First, select influential media for event marketing. As the saying goes, different investments yield different returns; advertising on different media involves different cost inputs and ultimately generates different benefits. Only authoritative media can quickly launch and capture market advantages. Event marketing involves creating or leveraging momentum, such as combining advertising content with hot news topics or celebrities to rapidly establish brand image, improve product recognition, and achieve advertising objectives. Second, use consumer experience as the conceptual foundation to innovate brand planning and create resonant, representative visual images, such as Michelin' s white doll or KFC' s grandfather figure. Concept development must not only grasp brand essentials and understand consumer needs but also assess conceptual value and feasibility. Third, highlight brand differentiation. A brand encompasses not only its name and logo but also corporate culture that serves as market competition capital, creating clear differentiation. For example, PepsiCo' s unique “Blue Storm” celebrity campaign established its distinctive beverage identity.

4.4 Innovate TV Advertising Distribution Platforms

Transforming traditional television advertising communication models requires adapting to new media development trends. Emphasizing innovative consciousness refreshes advertising services and promotes healthy development. Traditional television advertising communication structures are relatively singular and ineffective for improving economic benefits, so diversification must be enhanced to attract more advertising investors. Leveraging new media characteristics to optimize television advertising content and methods maximizes communication effectiveness. Given intense internal competition in the television advertising market, advertisers primarily consider market development when placing ads. Therefore, television advertising communication must satisfy audience groups while providing high-quality advertising resources to achieve sustainable development.

4.5 Soften and Conceal Advertising

In today's information explosion, advertising is ubiquitous, and consumer resistance is increasingly apparent, especially among those who don't need the advertised information. Their aversion and rejection severely diminish advertising effectiveness. In this context, soft culture has become prevalent, characterized by its subtle, imperceptible influence. Enterprises should explore this feature to weaken direct advertising approaches, avoiding overt advertising forms while skillfully communicating advertising messages. For example, using various brand props at program sites or gala events as 隱性 advertising, or featuring specific brand mobile phones, computers, or unique ringtones in television dramas. This communication model appears as non-advertising content hidden within and integrated with the carrier, unconsciously transmitting product and brand information to audiences.

4.6 Carpet-Bombing Dissemination

Digital television has infinitely expanded channel resources, breaking temporal and spatial boundaries so audiences can receive advertisements anytime and anywhere. We call this carpet-bombing advertising. Television-plus-advertising requires television media to expand business beyond traditional TV advertising to emerging media, packaging both old and new media to sell to advertisers, enabling the same product advertisements to broadcast across multiple terminals and reach audiences through various media channels.

4.7 Humorous Embedded Advertising

Soft concealed placement and carpet-bombing methods adapt to media convergence, but long-term exposure has created audience aesthetic fatigue and resistance. Research shows that when one state persists during transitional periods, the opposite state becomes particularly noticeable [10]. For instance, when inspirational content becomes tiresome, anti-inspirational content gains favor.

The program “U Can U Bibi” runs counter to conventional wisdom, featuring a group of unconventional, “rebellious” young people debating current hot topics, contradictions, and controversies, using rational critique where emotional thinking is customary. Its sponsored product advertising is similarly distinctive—not using introduction or subtle concealment like other ads, but directly presenting products with humorous or shocking slogans that audiences immediately receive. This simple, direct advertising approach is particularly popular among young people.

4.8 Enhance Forced Viewing Effects

While production enterprises and advertising industries pay attention to advertisements due to marketing relationships, most other audience groups don’t specifically focus on ads and generally choose to avoid them. However, if advertisements cannot be avoided and capture audiences’ urgent attention, reasonably inserting them can improve forced viewing effects. For example, inserting ads during exciting drama plot points, before next-episode previews, or before suspense reveals in variety shows—when audiences are invested in subsequent content, they won’t casually change channels but will patiently watch the advertisements. It’s crucial to capture high-attention events, such as Hunan TV’s “Super Girl,” which had large viewership; inserting ads before suspense reveals ensured audiences would wait patiently for results [11]. Additionally, prime viewing time slots must be captured. For example, CCTV’s “News Broadcast” has large audiences across age groups, making the advertising time before the news a golden slot that enhances forced viewing effects.

4.9 Implement Regular Live Broadcasting

New media features rapid dissemination because it can quickly record and spread events as they happen. Live broadcasting of television news requires high technical equipment, operator comprehensive quality, and program production standards. New media can also use digital technology for online news livestreaming, achieving high-quality dissemination while optimizing television news development trends.

4.10 Emphasize Diversified Revenue

Considering the actual development of television advertising, enterprises should emphasize diversified development to capture market share, maximize risk avoidance, and better achieve transformation goals. Television stations can use broadcasting platforms to serve consumers, presenting diversification in program operations to achieve value-added business objectives. For example, Jiangsu TV’s “Litchi Cultural Creation” involves multiple industries in its industrial chain, driving consumption in Jiangsu, attracting cultural creative enterprises and talent, promoting regional economic development, and achieving diversified revenue goals.

In summary, the development of television broadcasting media faces significant impact under current new media and converged media development. To adapt to the evolving technological environment and achieve further improvement, television broadcasting media must undergo developmental transformation. It should actively apply new technologies to transform communication models, innovate television advertising content, establish new communication platforms, enhance television advertising effectiveness, explore integration pathways with new media, and continuously summarize experiences to promote the sustainable and healthy development of television advertising.

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Author Bio: Wang Hua (1981-), female, from Kaifeng, Henan, Assistant Editor at Henan Radio and Television Station. Research focus: television news.

(Responsible Editor: Yang Hu)

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

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