

## Professional Competence and Qualities of Television Journalists in the Media Convergence Era: Postprint

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### Abstract

The advent of media convergence marks the arrival of a new era in mass communication. This entirely new epoch presents both opportunities and challenges: channels for receiving and gathering diverse information have been significantly broadened, while competitive pressures throughout the media industry continue to mount. Television journalists in this new era constitute the driving force for the innovative development of television media; only with enhanced professional competence and professional ethics can they undertake the historical mission of revitalizing television media. In this article, the author proceeds from surface to depth, first providing an overview of the current development status of China's television journalist workforce, then focusing on elaborating respectively on the professional competence and professional ethics of television journalists in the media convergence era, and finally offering relevant recommendations on optimizing the comprehensive qualities of television news journalists in this era, with a view to providing valuable insights for the industry.

### Full Text

## Professional Competence and Professionalism of TV Journalists in the Convergence Media Era

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**Abstract:** The emergence of convergence media marks the arrival of a new era in communications. This unprecedented era presents both opportunities and challenges, dramatically expanding channels for information reception and collection while intensifying competitive pressures throughout the media industry. TV journalists in this new era serve as the driving force behind innovation and development in television media. Only by achieving higher levels of professional

competence and professionalism can they shoulder the historical mission of revitalizing television media. This paper proceeds from surface to depth, beginning with a brief overview of the current development status of TV journalist talent pools in China, then focusing on two key dimensions: professional competence and professionalism requirements for TV journalists in the convergence media era. Finally, it offers recommendations for optimizing the comprehensive qualities of TV news journalists in this new context, aiming to provide valuable insights for the industry.

**Keywords:** convergence media era; TV journalist; professional competence; professionalism

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In the new media landscape, competition ultimately boils down to talent competition, with media advantages hinging fundamentally on human capital. In today' s prevailing convergence media environment, television media faces the arduous task of leveraging its long-established authoritative competitive edge to consolidate its position while optimizing its journalist corps to cultivate a robust team of versatile professionals. This team must possess high professional standards, strong operational capabilities, innovative flexibility, proficiency in new media communication and operations, and a distinctly internet-oriented mindset. This paper analyzes the current state of China' s TV journalist talent pool under these new circumstances, identifies existing problems, and summarizes the professional competence and professionalism required of TV journalists in the emerging communication landscape. How to better support future development deserves serious consideration across the industry.

## 1. Current Development Status of China' s TV Journalist Talent Pool

China' s television media industry currently faces diverse challenges in its journalist talent pool. First, the talent structure lacks rationality. Overall, the workforce skews older, with significant talent gaps evident at many local television stations. For instance, senior professionals with high-level titles have retired while new talent has yet to fill the vacancies. Among current staff, high-level composite talents are scarce, with few possessing strong planning and editing capabilities, team coordination skills, or new media technology expertise. Many journalists demonstrate low proficiency with emerging news editing and planning tools. Second, talent attrition is substantial. Numerous local stations

struggle to retain talent, with journalists facing dilemmas regarding compensation and professional fulfillment. These problems are deeply rooted in the historical development patterns of traditional television media. Many former television groups had state-owned attributes and now find themselves at a loss when confronting severe transformation challenges. Supporting systems cannot be established overnight, leaving many professionals unable to find a sense of belonging in their positions. Furthermore, internal talent cultivation and performance evaluation mechanisms require improvement. Many training programs still rely on outdated formats like expert lectures and knowledge seminars, lacking necessary practical exercises and hands-on components. Scientific performance evaluation systems have not been established prior to transformation, resulting in weak correlations between journalists' performance and workload.

## **2. Professional Competence Requirements for TV Journalists in the Convergence Media Era**

### **2.1 Flexible and Innovative News Gathering, Editing, and Planning Capabilities**

The convergence media era features rapidly changing information pathways and an unpredictable news landscape, requiring TV journalists to innovate in news gathering, editing, and planning while responding flexibly to diverse news types. News gathering and writing efficiency has become exceptionally critical. Too often, journalists rush to scenes after receiving news tips but miss optimal interview opportunities due to lengthy preparation periods. Additionally, switching between multiple news scenes frequently disrupts journalists' thought processes and editing quality, leading to information omissions and errors. In this era, news gathering tools and workflows have undergone fundamental transformations. Modern TV journalists can leverage new technological products to streamline preparation, replacing tension with composure. Furthermore, various network and information technologies facilitate more efficient editing, transmission, and even live broadcasting of processed materials. Drawing from practical experience at Henan Radio and Television Station, shouldering responsibilities in the new era requires sustained frontline news gathering commitment, mastery of advanced filming equipment, and cultivation of improvisational and on-site adaptability for breaking news events.

### **2.2 Timely Comprehensive Communication Capabilities**

Convergence media era journalists must develop comprehensive communication capabilities encompassing shooting (both video and photography), writing (news editing), analysis and commentary, and adept use of modern media tools (such as live streaming platforms) for real-time, on-site information dissemination. Today's television news must compete with other media forms in speed, accuracy, and agility while excelling at mining and analyzing news data to present content visually. To achieve effective visualization, journalists can utilize various

apps for comprehensive reporting, moving beyond the traditional “pictures with truth” approach. They can expand audience perceptions of television news by establishing online live channels corresponding to TV programs. Indeed, under the short video wave propelled by convergence media, audiences typically spend no more than five minutes browsing fragmented content, imposing high demands on video clarity, visual appeal, and information hierarchy. Consequently, possessing comprehensive communication capabilities is essential for TV journalists.

### 2.3 Fundamental Ability to Closely Follow Audience Preferences

In the past, limited media communication methods offered audiences few choices for news consumption. Whether through television, newspapers, or radio, audiences could only passively receive information rather than freely select it. By contrast, the convergence media era has seen audiences demonstrate the strongest preference for mobile reading, closely related to the temporal freedom and flexibility of information access. From this perspective, contemporary audiences highly value their autonomy in information selection. Therefore, TV program-related live channels should dedicate resources to optimizing broadcast effects to enhance user stickiness and program identification. Additionally, journalists must leverage data statistics to analyze audience age distributions and correlate age with news content interests, providing foundations for adjusting work rhythms and content strategies. Previous research indicates that audiences across all age groups show strong interest in positive, engaging, and visually rich news content. Taking the “Xiaoli Help” program on my station’s livelihood channel as an example, the program has established the persona of a female superhero “Xiaoli” with a catchy, accessible opening line: “Xiaoli, twenty-eight years old, walks through streets and alleys for everyone…For help, find the ‘Five Golden Flowers’.” Local audiences have developed strong affection for this warm-hearted, distinctive female superhero image, which handles everything from household item exchanges to establishing a charity platform with the Zhengzhou Red Cross. This unpretentious, problem-solving program image has truly resonated with the public.

### 2.4 High-Level Team Collaboration Capability

Strong teamwork has always been indispensable, particularly in today’s convergence media era. If various media tools can interact and collectively serve news dissemination in this new context, the importance of collaboration within TV journalist teams becomes self-evident. Compared to their predecessors, contemporary TV journalists shoulder more formidable missions and must acquire increasingly diverse skills and professional qualities. From a specialization perspective, maximizing each team member’s strengths creates synergistic effects in news communication. Some journalists excel in comprehensive planning, others demonstrate high flexibility in emergencies, while some specialize in news marketing through daily observations and experiences. This 强强联合 (strong-strong

alliance) cooperation model represents the optimal path to efficient work.

### **3. Professionalism Requirements for TV Journalists in the Convergence Media Era**

The convergence media era has transformed both media communication methods and communication thinking compared to the traditional media era. For journalists, the most direct manifestation is significant changes in work methods, with media terminals now including various portable tools such as tablets and smartphones. This shift simultaneously enhances work convenience and exposes journalists to unprecedented competitive pressure from peers. In this context, only by continuously improving their professionalism can journalists better adapt to job requirements.

#### **3.1 Higher Ideological and Political Literacy Adapted to the New Era**

Despite substantial changes in the television news communication landscape during the convergence media era, the fundamental requirement for ensuring news reliability and authenticity remains unchanged. This demands that journalists maintain high ideological and political consciousness. In this era of convenient information exchange and explosive information volume, maintaining a clear and calm mind while preparing to conduct news verification and analysis has become the norm. This requires practitioners to possess higher ideological and political literacy than before. For example, many TV news media organizations, seeking to attract audience attention, excessively emphasize news freshness and entertainment value, employing exaggerated techniques or even fabricating and sensationalizing headlines to enhance news appeal. Such practices clearly mislead public opinion and ultimately undermine authoritative credibility over time. From a workflow perspective, all news production must undergo rigorous review, and this is especially true for TV journalists.

#### **3.2 Convergence Media Cognitive Level Adapted to New Era Tasks**

In this “universal media” era where information spreads at high speed 24/7, the convergence media era has elevated demands for timeliness and authenticity to unprecedented heights. Using the COVID-19 pandemic as an example, information spread at unprecedented speeds both nationally and globally. In addition to traditional television media, various new self-media platforms (WeChat, Weibo, Douyin, Kuaishou, etc.) have played increasingly prominent roles in news dissemination. Today’s audiences primarily learn about breaking news through these self-media tools, sometimes receiving only basic event details yet still satisfying their information needs. From this perspective, contemporary TV journalists should diligently study convergence media itself and its related developments, establishing the concept of “optimal news insurance intervals” while cultivating critical skills for rapid news capture, collection, editing, processing, and publication to greatly enhance communication efficiency.

### **3.3 Integration Literacy of Old and New Media Matched with New Era Objectives**

The convergence media era has endowed news media work with the distinctive characteristic of integrated development. Literally, convergence media represents the combination of multiple media forms. Although traditional media has developed inherent, suitable models through long-term evolution, it has also exposed certain drawbacks under convergence media impact, such as deficiencies in convenience and flexibility compared to emerging media forms. Correspondingly, new media has captured substantial market share through advantages in massive information, efficient dissemination, high real-time performance, and clear network marketing benefits. In this new era of old and new media alternation, television media can only maintain its advantages and achieve continuous self-renewal by advancing with the times and fully absorbing strengths from all sides. TV journalists must fully recognize this reality, permeating this understanding into every work detail—including work thinking, habits, news collection, and editing—to truly drive sustained development of television news media in the new era.

### **3.4 News Marketing Literacy Associated with Expanding TV News Application Channels**

The convergence media era has significantly unleashed the marketing value of television news, making news marketing an inevitable trend. While the ultimate goal of news marketing is to realize economic value, it also substantially promotes the release of news potential value. During news marketing, if skilled marketing editors handle news reporting and accompanying advertising placement, hot keywords in the news industry and related sectors can be greatly optimized. Such optimization can even drive substantial changes in audience keyword searches. Once certain keywords stand out among massive vocabularies, they attract large audiences and generate chain reactions. Taking a successful news marketing case from Zhejiang Satellite TV's "1818 Golden Eye" program as an example, a local "hairline boy" named Xiao Wu was charged 18,000 yuan for a "free service" at a barbershop. After the parties involved called the police, the news event was uploaded to self-media platforms. Xiao Wu's righteous expression spawned numerous memes, and he successfully became an internet meme celebrity.

## **4. Recommendations for Optimizing Comprehensive Qualities of TV Journalists in the Convergence Media Era**

The convergence media era has invigorated all industries with vitality. For television news, institutional innovation represents the driving force for sustainable development, which cannot be realized without optimizing the talent growth environment. First, television media organizations must continuously establish, improve, and perfect internal management systems for journalist talent while

strengthening emphasis on incentive mechanisms. For instance, internal position management should be flexible, implementing position-based hiring and compensation systems comprehensively. Establishing two-way selection and competitive employment systems proves crucial for stimulating practitioners' subjective initiative. Second, organizations must attach great importance to talent incentives, emphasizing performance and contributions in work evaluations while focusing on key positions, frontline journalists, and talent with high new media technical proficiency. Furthermore, cultivating high-quality news practitioners cannot be accomplished overnight; sustainable talent development platforms must be built. Encourage individuals to select candidates for field study and observation at peer organizations through regular job rotation, self-nomination, and mutual evaluation to cultivate composite talents.

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

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