

On the Strategic Breakthrough of County-Level Television News Programs by Leveraging the Converged Media Environment (Postprint)

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Abstract

With the rapid development and expansion of electronic information technology, television news media programs are undergoing subtle yet profound transformations. The emergence of the converged media environment has provided television news programs with favorable technical conditions and novel promotional channels; however, it has also led to the diversification of multimedia forms, posing a tremendous challenge to television news programs. Amidst this fierce competitive landscape, how county-level television news programs can break free from traditional constraints and achieve a strong breakthrough is a critical issue that all media professionals must contemplate. This paper systematically elaborates on the existing deficiencies of county-level television news programs within the converged media environment, the necessity of leveraging this environment for strategic breakthrough, and the pathways to achieving program innovation, enhancing competitive capabilities, and securing long-term development. It offers reasonable recommendations for county-level television news programs, aiming to foster their stable and healthy development.

Full Text

A Brief Discussion on County-Level TV News Programs Leveraging Opportunities for Breakthrough in the Converged Media Environment

Abstract: With the rapid development of electronic information technology, television news media programs are undergoing subtle yet profound transformations. The emergence of the converged media environment provides television news programs with favorable technical conditions and novel promotional channels. However, the diversification of media types also poses significant challenges. In this fierce competitive landscape, how county-level television news

programs can break free from traditional constraints and achieve a strong breakthrough is a critical question for every media professional. This paper systematically elaborates on the shortcomings of county-level television news programs in the converged media environment, the necessity of leveraging opportunities for breakthrough, and strategies for achieving program innovation to enhance competitiveness and ensure long-term development. It offers reasonable recommendations to promote the stable and healthy development of county-level television news programs.

Keywords: converged media environment; county-level television stations; news programs; breakthrough

As a representative of traditional media, television stations once dominated an era in China. However, with the emergence of new media, television has gradually lost its former prominence, falling into predicaments of funding shortages, insufficient momentum, and audience loss. Many county-level television stations, hampered by weak innovation consciousness, lack of advanced management experience, and unoriginal news materials, are being replaced by new media and teetering on the brink of closure. Therefore, in this severe environment, only by actively seeking change can television stations secure a lifeline.

1. Shortcomings of County-Level Television News Programs

County-level television stations serve as channels for disseminating national policies and conferences while bearing the responsibility of relaying CCTV news programs, making them significant for local audiences. However, numerous deficiencies persist in local television news programming, primarily manifested in the following aspects:

1.1 Inaccurate Program Positioning

First, due to funding shortages and limited resources, county-level television stations cannot access large-scale, high-value news opportunities like municipal or provincial stations, and their news production and editorial teams have limited capabilities, resulting in inherent competitive disadvantages. Second, the prevalence of new media has made news gathering easier, leading to diversified news categories and more choices for audiences. Some news outlets even violate journalistic principles to attract eyeballs, raising questions about authenticity and posing enormous challenges for county-level television stations. Finally, county-level television news programs should adopt more granular perspectives that align with people's livelihoods and focus on news that resonates with grassroots communities. However, many county-level stations have gradually alienated themselves from the masses in their attempts to transition toward covering major news stories, yielding unsatisfactory results.

1.2 Limited Reporting Scope

Traditional county-level television news programs primarily collect material on people's livelihood issues, usually through citizen petitions rather than in-depth field investigations at the grassroots level. Over time, this approach lacks diversity in news coverage and gradually deviates from the "three closenesses" principle (being close to reality, life, and the masses). If journalists could delve into grassroots communities to collect materials and dig with dedication, they would undoubtedly yield unexpected rewards. Moreover, as the television stations closest to ordinary people's lives, county-level stations have access to the most authentic and representative grassroots materials.

1.3 Lack of Prominent Local Characteristics

The greatest advantage of county-level television news programs lies in their local characteristics. However, in many cases, local television stations blindly pursue higher-level standards while neglecting the most representative and audience-favorite local news materials. Over time, this causes them to lose emotional resonance with grassroots audiences, resulting in the loss of local viewership and ineffective communication.

1.4 Inadequate Public Opinion Supervision

Public opinion supervision plays a vital role in enhancing the authority of county-level television news programs and ensuring news authenticity. However, television stations typically exercise insufficient supervision, with some even having nominal supervision departments that exist in name only. Although the reasons vary, the ultimate consequence is inaccurate information gathering, leading to broadcasted news that lacks accuracy and violates fundamental journalistic principles.

2. Challenges and Opportunities in the Converged Media Environment

2.1 Immense Survival Pressure from Converged Media

Television stations once flourished under the traditional media paradigm, but new media has rapidly replaced their leading position. This is primarily because new media offers vast information resources, large storage capacity, diverse material types, and rich presentation formats, with portable devices enabling anytime, anywhere viewing. Television news, constrained by broadcast schedules and content limitations, is gradually being forgotten by audiences. For instance, with smartphones, people can watch their favorite programs and search for desired news even on the subway, unlike television which requires viewing at home on a fixed schedule. Consequently, the emergence of new media has severely impacted the mainstream position of county-level television news programs.

2.2 Deficiencies in Production and Editing

County-level television stations serve as the government's "mouthpiece," playing a crucial role in transmitting information from top to bottom. However, an increasing number of county-level stations now focus solely on the "top-down" approach—conveying meeting contents and relevant policies to grassroots audiences—while failing to effectively collect public feedback and performance evaluations. This interrupts the communication bridge with the masses, reducing television news programs to channels for promoting government image and achievements. The result is narrow news categories, one-sided content, and single perspectives that eventually lose freshness and cause audience fatigue.

2.3 Diversified Information Channels for News Gathering

Traditional television news material collection required journalists to dig deep among grassroots communities to obtain stories, with some events remaining unreported when deadlines approached. In the new media era, however, grassroots feedback channels have multiplied, and the age of free online expression has arrived. Many public opinions and news broadcasts now have more promotional channels, providing great convenience for county-level television news gathering and effectively guaranteeing authenticity. County-level television stations, being the media channels closest to the grassroots, can more easily connect with the masses, explore popular news types, and understand real life at the grassroots level. Such news holds the greatest value. Moreover, as bridges connecting grassroots communities with relevant departments, effective feedback can better facilitate the central government's understanding of grassroots living conditions to make correct decisions and formulate policies that serve the people. Additionally, local television news programs rooted in grassroots communities serve the masses, making them most familiar with local customs and conditions, and their broadcast news most distinctive, down-to-earth, and eye-catching.

3. Breakthrough Strategies for County-Level Television News Programs in the Converged Media Environment

To successfully break through in the converged media environment, county-level television news programs must leverage the powerful advantages of new media while maintaining their own strengths. They must reform and innovate comprehensively in news topic selection, editing, production, and promotion to ensure a strong breakthrough and maintain their leading position. Specific strategies include:

3.1 Comprehensive Reform of Conference News

As important channels for publicizing policy meetings, television news programs bear the responsibility of broadcasting conference news. Therefore, news quality and categories must undergo strict review to ensure accurate transmission of

orders to the masses. However, conference content requires appropriate adjustment: first, using accessible language for broadcasting; second, fully understanding main conference contents and highlighting key points during reporting. For example, regarding medical system reform meetings, coverage should emphasize reform main points and issues of greatest public concern, such as medical insurance reimbursement and drug price adjustments, while systematically summarizing aspects like reforming the medical system that are distant from grassroots life. Only by distinguishing primary from secondary issues can news quality be guaranteed. In news editing, editors should not be confined to main conference content but can intersperse related news to increase multidimensionality.

3.2 Truthful and Pragmatic News Content

The fundamental principles of news are authenticity and timeliness, and grassroots news is no exception. Only by selecting topics closest to life and issues people care about most can audience attention be attracted. However, authenticity must be maintained—false information should not be selected or news content altered to attract eyeballs. Additionally, since county-level television news audiences primarily consist of farmers, content selection can focus on agriculture-related topics, such as agricultural reform policies issued by higher authorities. Finally, authentic reporting on grassroots life can enable the government to truly understand public opinion and make corresponding policy adjustments.

3.3 Characteristic Management of News Programs

County-level television stations must remain rooted in grassroots communities and conduct in-depth reporting on local characteristics. As primary grassroots publicity entities, county-level stations can focus on reporting local characteristic news to introduce native culture to municipal, provincial, and even national levels, enabling insightful individuals to find entrepreneurial inspiration, attract investment, and promote local economic development. Meanwhile, characteristic news serves as a living postcard showcasing local customs and culture to the nation. Second, grassroots journalists require regular training to develop abilities in discovering characteristic news, and they can collect more distinctive news through converged media channels for in-depth reporting to attract more audiences.

The converged media environment represents an unstoppable force in today's media landscape that indeed poses enormous challenges to the survival of county-level television stations. However, by discovering the value and advantages of local news and fully utilizing the extensive reach of new media transmission channels, diverse public feedback channels, and reduced difficulty in news gathering, county-level stations can comprehensively reform traditional conference reporting habits, continuously clarify television news program positioning, and leverage their natural grassroots advantages to continuously excavate valuable news materials that resonate with audiences. Only in this way can county-level television news programs continue to attract audience attention, evoke

emotional resonance, and reconnect grassroots communities closely with the government, enabling the government to better serve the people.

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