

Innovation Strategies for Local Television Large-Scale Events in the Converged Media Era: Post-print

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Abstract

As a new type of media, converged media utilizes various popular contemporary media forms to achieve mutual compatibility of resources, content, and publicity, thereby attaining communication goals of shared benefits. In the current context of rapid network technology advancement, media professionals must actively adapt to the transformation of the times and apply converged media technology to the innovation process of large-scale television events, so as to enable effective innovation in television activities. This paper will conduct an in-depth exploration of innovation strategies based on the nature of large-scale television events and provide detailed elaboration.

Full Text

Preamble

Title: Innovative Strategies for Local Television Large-Scale Events in the Converged Media Era

Abstract: Converged media, as a new media form, utilizes various popular media formats to achieve mutual compatibility in resources, content, and publicity, thereby realizing the promotional goal of shared benefits. With the rapid advancement of network technology, media professionals must actively adapt to the changing times and apply converged media technology to the innovation process of television large-scale events, as this is the only way to achieve effective innovation in television activities. This article conducts an in-depth exploration of innovative strategies for large-scale television events based on their characteristics.

Keywords: Converged media; Television events; Local television stations; Media innovation

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Large-scale events serve as the centerpiece of television stations, and their importance is self-evident. In the converged media era, the rise of the internet and new media has posed enormous challenges to traditional media represented by television. How can television large-scale events attract audiences, consolidate their viewer base, maintain their fundamental position through excellent ratings, seize strategic development high ground in the converged media era, and create sufficient living space? These have become serious questions for media professionals to consider.

1. The Necessity of Developing Large-Scale Television Events

The information flow in social development overwhelms people. How can broadcasters capture audience attention and ensure that important information attracts and reaches target groups in a timely and accurate manner? This has long been an area where traditional media, particularly television, has excelled through the planning and implementation of large-scale events. However, without powerful dissemination platforms and channels, even the most elaborate television large-scale event can only result in regrettably brief noise from a substantial investment, potentially sinking directly into the vast sea of information. Therefore, without practical and effective information dissemination that brings tangible benefits to audiences, events remain merely events themselves.

With the rapid development of information technology in the new era, the media industry, as the main body of information, has entered a stage of explosive growth. Competition among media for advertising resources and market share has become increasingly fierce, and the elimination rate in the media industry continues to rise. Currently, due to the connectivity of network technology, competition between media is no longer limited to intra-city rivalry within the traditional media industry but has evolved into broader contests between national and provincial, provincial and local, and local and self-media entities. In this landscape, local media cannot compare with provincial or national media in terms of funding, technology, resources, or talent, while lagging behind self-media in cost, acceptance, entertainment value, and timeliness. This situation of being inferior to those above and having no advantage over those below has intensified competitive pressure on local media and narrowed their market development space.

To gain sufficient visibility and influence and to expand and increase revenue channels, local media urgently need their own “signature assets” as competitive means to aggregate audiences. It is precisely based on such challenges and impacts that large-scale events have been brought to the forefront as the primary competitive tool for local television.[1] Everything in the world must absorb

and integrate advanced elements during its development process, and television large-scale events are no exception. Electronic technology has packaged print media, audio broadcasting, and video information into massive platforms that can be extracted at minimal or even zero cost to user satisfaction. Consequently, television methods for large-scale events have already been integrated by converged media. However, this does not mean that large-scale events no longer need television methods; rather, they need to expand their dissemination platforms while strengthening television methods, taking flight on the wings of new media, making new media work for them, while traditional media runs parallel, creating joint dissemination efforts.

2. Bottlenecks Facing Large-Scale Television Events in the Converged Media Context

Traditional media was once the main force in the information field, but the arrival of converged media has complicated the competitive landscape in the media industry. The operational mechanisms that once helped traditional media maintain their market position have gradually shown signs of disconnect from the times and inability to cope with the surging new generation of media. Traditional media currently faces three major problems: weakening platform advantages, lack of customer awareness, and scarce professional talent. The combined effect of these three points has caused traditional media's audience base to decline daily and their fundamental position to be gradually eroded.

If traditional media wishes to restore its vitality and continue to find new development space in the converged media era, it must address these three aspects and eliminate their adverse effects on long-term development.

2.1 Weakening Platform Advantages

Traditional media was once the mainstream in the information industry, possessing credibility, professionalism, and high coverage rates that other information media could not match. The coverage rate of radio and television even reached an astonishing 96.95% at its peak, indicating that radio and television were the information acquisition channels for nearly all households in the former information industry.[2] However, after network technology entered China and developed and expanded rapidly and forcefully, the high coverage rate of traditional media has been gradually diluted, and the unique platform advantage once belonging to traditional media has gradually been lost. New media has won people's favor with fresher information and better real-time interaction. For example, the "Shiyang Youth Innovation and Entrepreneurship Competition," previously an annual event organized by Shiyang Radio and Television Station and co-hosted by Shiyang Municipal Human Resources and Social Security Bureau and the Shiyang Municipal Committee of the Communist Youth League, has been transferred to social companies in recent years. These social companies utilize third-party new media resources, combined with their own platforms

and lower hosting fees, increasingly attracting government agencies to entrust various events to them. Consequently, traditional media is no longer the first choice for governments, enterprises, and social organizations to plan and hold large-scale themed events as in the past; new media has become a better choice based on its cost-effectiveness and immediacy.

2.2 Lack of Customer Awareness

Due to television's long-standing dominant position in traditional media, it has experienced client saturation in various information businesses such as advertising, which has led to complacency among television industry practitioners, weak customer awareness, and a lack of proactive work attitudes.[3] In the era when traditional media was nearly monopolistic, the drawbacks of this work attitude were not obvious. However, in today's converged media era with faster information flow and more choices, this work concept is no longer accepted by the masses. The passivity of television signal acquisition and the limited nature of information sources are being continuously eliminated by people. In contrast to the outdated nature of television media, new media mechanisms are more flexible, interaction with audiences is more direct, and broadcast content better meets audience viewing needs, all of which have caused traditional media's clients to gradually flow to new media.

2.3 Weak Team Capabilities

Television large-scale events differ significantly from other television formats, as they involve many links and steps and thus require composite and specialized talent. However, current television media does not attach sufficient importance to internal talent acquisition, training, and development. Without a sound personnel mechanism as support, elite talents are unwilling to join television media, and media organizations cannot cultivate high-end technical talents themselves, ultimately resulting in increasingly weak control over large-scale events. For instance, each time Hubei Shiyuan Radio and Television Station undertakes a large-scale event, it can only piece together relatively professional talents from various departments, lacking a systematic, professional, and highly effective media event team, leading to low work efficiency and subpar event quality.

3.1 Enhancing Technical Capabilities

The innovation of television large-scale events is, in essence, a series of transformations brought about by the innovation of information technology. Therefore, in developing and utilizing information technology, strength must prevail. The arrival of digital technology has enabled the rapid development of new media while also providing conditions for the professional transformation of traditional media industries. In the converged media era, television media should actively integrate with network technology platforms and apply electronic technology to their own communication systems. Media organizations should actively con-

duct technical training for internal staff to resolve issues such as insufficient total positions, unreasonable structures, dispersed positions, and large demand fluctuations during the media convergence process, enabling traditional media to adapt to the needs of new media, follow the path of integrated development, strengthen mainstream public opinion positions, enhance communication capabilities and influence, and build a professional talent team combining new media and traditional media. In recent years, Hubei Shiyuan Radio and Television Station has focused on strengthening new media talent team construction. The station director transferred the former editor-in-chief who had built the new media platform “Qin Chu Net” from an unknown small website into an internet company integrating news portals, government portals, news clients, WeChat, and e-commerce; the new media team has grown from the original dozen or so people to more than fifty, and all frontline staff are required to understand new media applications and actively participate in new media work practices.

Facing the surging impact of new media on traditional media, while strengthening internal staff technical training, we must also recruit external elite technical talents, create a management environment suitable for talent development, stimulate the vitality of professional technical talents, enhance the technical strength for television-new media integration, enable ourselves to effectively utilize network technology to strengthen publicity efforts, diversify and enrich communication forms, break through geographical and temporal limitations in the communication process, increase event audiences, and enhance user-television platform stickiness.

3.2 Pursuing Integrated Planning

In the grand pattern of converged media, television large-scale events must still embody the principle of planning first, but this concept must comprehensively consider various elements in converged media, such as the unique characteristics of communication platforms including newspapers, radio, television, WeChat Moments, and self-media. Event planning should comprehensively utilize these platforms, standing at the commanding heights of converged media to maximize the ideal effects of media large-scale events. Shiyuan Radio and Television Station has actively explored this approach. In the planning of the 2018 “Fang County Book of Songs Yellow Rice Wine Culture Tourism Festival,” the event itself was classified and characterized according to its different features and assigned to various media within the converged media system—the newspaper *Shiyuan Weekly* published a special issue titled “A Cup of Nostalgia,” providing in-depth introduction to the historical origins of Fang County yellow rice wine and local customs; the radio station “Shiyuan News Frequency” mainly provided dynamic real-time updates and specially invited Book of Songs culture researchers and yellow rice wine brewers for discussions; television’s “Shiyuan News Channel and Culture and Tourism Channel” mainly conducted special reports and live broadcasts; while new media’s “Shiyuan Radio and Television Weibo-WeChat-Client” conducted pre-event publicity and hype on one hand, and on the other

hand, aggregated and integrated information from all the above media for global online promotion. This demonstrates the role of converged media in large-scale events, where each medium plays to its strengths while complementing others, creating a three-dimensional amplification of the event.

3.3 Strengthening Communication Channels

With the explosive development of information technology, the richness of media has also diversified audience demands. Powerful real-time interaction has changed the interactive relationship and conditions between large-scale events and the masses, transforming audiences from passive information recipients to active recipients who also serve as secondary disseminators. Therefore, television media needs to change its attitude toward audiences and strengthen communication with viewers by opening more interactive spaces, such as using WeChat, Weibo, and other network tools for real-time communication with traditional media, enhancing audience participation, utilizing the timely and interactive communication characteristics of new platforms to meet audiences' diverse needs when watching events, expanding event communication coverage, and maximizing event publicity. A particularly noteworthy example: in July 2017, during the CCTV competition "Charming Chinese Cities" online voting stage, Shiyan, with only 3.5 million people, had to compete against Maoming City in Guangdong with nearly 8 million people, more than double its population. This seemingly unwinnable competition turned into an intense chase under the strong offensive of new media like WeChat and the internet, with Shiyan once surpassing Maoming and achieving a reversal. The people of Shiyan used various new media channels to strengthen communication, making the impossible possible.

3.4 Adopting Open Operational Models

Television stations' large-scale events must align with urban development characteristics and cultural features. For example, Hubei Shiyan Radio and Television Station planned a program called *Come, Challenge!* last year. Through talent, skill, and entertainment competitions, the program became a weekly focus for citizens and attracted many young residents to actively participate, becoming a rare influential variety show in the region with strong local relevance and entertainment value, thereby generating certain social influence. Television stations should integrate this influence with local development, such as contacting well-known local enterprises to jointly invest in event planning. By binding interests with enterprises, costs and risks for businesses are reduced, stimulating their desire to participate and helping to improve their own publicity and promotion levels.

Meanwhile, Shiyan Radio and Television Station has also planned many large-scale events such as the tourism economy-themed Fang County Book of Songs Yellow Rice Wine Culture Festival, Yunxi Rural Life Festival, entrepreneurship

planning television competitions, football baby selection contests, and annual economic figure selections. In various events, the station fully utilizes its influence to collaborate with local enterprises, achieving win-win outcomes for both enterprises and radio and television programs.

Television stations should fully utilize new media advantages to develop operational models in media activities, continuously attract user attention, stimulate user contribution, strengthen user cognition, and employ various methods unique to new media, such as practical subsidies (red envelope giveaways), interest topics (audience hotspots), and online games to activate new users, increase active visits, expand the visibility of media activity brands, and thereby broaden operational channels.

3.5 Reducing Event Costs

Facing the impact of new media and the squeeze from heterogeneous media such as radio and newspapers, the converged media era inevitably requires multimedia integration to expand market space. Leveraging television's original leading advantages to drive the common development of other media can achieve a cost investment of "1+1<2" and economic income of "1+1>2." To this end, we will adopt project-based operations, conduct division of labor and cooperation among different media, consider the characteristics of converged media in staffing and task management, integrate investment costs with event tasks and staff, break administrative affiliations across different media, use projects to govern all aspects of events, multi-dimensionally link television's advantages with network new media, radio, and newspapers, enhance event selling points and monetize them, forming a "five-finger clenched fist" to compete in the market.

Currently, Hubei Shiyuan Radio and Television Station has implemented project-based operations for large-scale events in recent years, with noticeable results. 2018 became the best year for revenue generation through large-scale events in its history. With a single revenue outlet externally, it forms joint force to "seize new docks" with unparalleled resource advantages in the region, leaving peers daunted; internally, a single account governs distribution according to work contribution, with departmental income redistribution based on contribution size according to relevant regulations and established standards.

3.6 Innovating Publicity Forms

Television stations must understand how to absorb the advantages of self-media and utilize network technology strengths during event promotion and execution, such as increasing interactivity with audiences to meet their participation needs. Hubei Shiyuan Radio and Television Station once jointly held "People's Square Flash Mob" and "Museum Flash Mob" activities with a local media company. In these events, audiences became performers, and performers became audiences. The program team completely removed activity restrictions—the stage for flash mob activities was these public places, participants were random passersby and

visitors, and the spectators were those who stopped to watch. Event participation had no restrictions, and people could achieve diversified dissemination through various electronic tools and network platforms, sharing their performances with friends and family. Thus, in the activities, audiences played dual roles as both performers and disseminators, significantly enhancing the communication and influence of television large-scale events.

Utilizing the characteristics of new media, as people update and utilize electronic software, there are increasingly more innovative methods in publicity forms. For example: when Shiyuan City holds large-scale events at People's Square, it gathers hundreds of internet celebrities to report live on-site through self-media while talking about their experiences; ten thousand citizens vote online for the passionate scene of competing in CCTV's "Charming Chinese Cities." These internet celebrities report in various forms—some singing and dancing, some creating their own performances—while others use short videos, carefully packaged and produced, to promote certain products through network live streaming platforms.

From flash mobs and internet celebrity live streaming, we can see that enhanced experiential quality is the key to attracting audiences. In addition to being able to undertake these "minor techniques," television media possesses greater advantages with high-definition multi-camera live broadcasting capabilities. In self-media, interactivity is limited to online platform interaction, and due to funding constraints, self-media cannot contract relevant event venues or hire corresponding staff to arrange sites, whereas television media faces no such obstacles. In large-scale events, television media can simultaneously achieve two-way interaction between the virtual and real worlds, utilizing its traditional media advantages to leverage the authority and reliability of events, effectively enhancing audience experiential quality, thereby attracting vast audiences to participate and ensuring successful events.

4. Discussion

The arrival of the converged media era has made communication platforms more diverse and abundant. New media has gained widespread popularity among the masses and accumulated a large following due to its people-friendly and down-to-earth attributes. For television media to form sufficient competitiveness with new media, it must absorb the advantages of new media and integrate them into its own communication methods. Compared with new media, local television possesses the advantage of richer and more abundant resources; compared with provincial and national media, local television has the advantage of being closer to the people. Therefore, in the new era of converged media development, television media must fully leverage its own advantages, build an information-based media team, clarify the design and planning of large-scale events, and simultaneously incorporate sufficient interactivity to enhance public acceptance of event implementation, enabling television events to truly integrate into audience groups. On this foundation, continuously improve converged media man-

agement levels, cultivate composite talents suitable for the converged media era, popularize information technology among media professionals, build an innovative talent team, break down barriers between different media, and enable local television to use new media to plan media large-scale events that are close to the people, accept government orders, and suit the market, thereby achieving dual harvests of social and economic benefits.

The arrival of converged media has intensified competition in the media industry to a white-hot stage. To survive, media must keep pace with the times while making good use of the cards in their hands. Television media also needs to grasp this key point in the converged media market environment by actively incorporating innovative elements when conducting large-scale events to maximize audience acceptance, thereby gaining abundant vitality and viability in the media industry's development in the new era.

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

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