

On Improving the Professional Competence of Television Talk Show Hosts under Media Convergence: Postprint

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Abstract

In recent years, with the stability of our country's social environment and the enhancement of economic strength, information networks and news dissemination media have become increasingly numerous, and channels for people to obtain information have become increasingly extensive. "Converged media" is rapidly integrating into our lives. Meanwhile, as the number of television programs continues to increase, the problem of insufficient professional competence among many television talk show hosts has been frequently exposed. This paper analyzes the importance of enhancing hosts' professional competence in the era of "converged media", and explores the professional competence that television talk show hosts need to improve and the methods for such improvement.

Full Text

A Brief Discussion on the Enhancement of Professional Competence for TV Talk Show Hosts in the Converged Media Era

Abstract: In recent years, with China's stable social environment and growing economic strength, information networks and news media have proliferated, vastly expanding the channels through which people access information. "Converged media" is rapidly integrating into our daily lives. However, as the number of television programs increases, many TV talk show hosts have frequently demonstrated insufficient professional competence. This paper analyzes the importance of enhancing hosts' professional competence in the converged media era and explores the specific competencies that TV talk show hosts need to improve and the methods for achieving such improvement.

Keywords: converged media; TV talk shows; host; professional competence

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“Converged media” refers to the comprehensive integration of television, radio, newspapers, and other complementary communication media in terms of content forms, human resources, and promotional methods, creating a new media paradigm characterized by “compatible content, interconnected resources, shared promotion, and integrated interests” [1]. In this converged media era, improving professional competence has become a crucial means for hosts to enhance their professional capabilities and increase program ratings and click-through rates. In recent years, some excellent TV talk shows, particularly those focusing on personalities or economic topics, have progressed rapidly. As this program format gains wider acceptance and popularity among the public, it imposes higher demands on TV talk show hosts’ professional competence. For any industry to achieve long-term, stable development, quality is far more important than quantity. Therefore, strengthening the cultivation of professional competence among TV program hosts is particularly essential.

1. The Importance of Enhancing Hosts’ Professional Competence

In the converged media era, information dissemination has multiplied in channels, and the turnover rate of trending social information has accelerated dramatically. Against this backdrop of frequent information updates, a TV talk show host’ s understanding of current social hotspots has become one of the key factors affecting program quality. As converged media development gradually accelerates, social groups increasingly demand mastery of current events, important matters, and trending information. They can understand contemporary hot issues through the internet and mobile messages, while the world changes every moment, causing these social hotspots to evolve simultaneously and become outdated very easily. Therefore, if TV talk show hosts still treat certain “outdated” social hotspots as the focus of discussion with guests, they will undoubtedly fall behind the pace, fail to attract audiences, and even cause audience aversion, ultimately directly impacting program quality [2].

In the converged media era, the number of various information dissemination platforms has grown exponentially, with self-media platforms and traffic platforms springing up like mushrooms across the internet and television. How to stand out in this fierce media competition? Enhancing hosts’ professional competence is undoubtedly an effective method to promote the development of TV talk shows. As the converged media industry gradually matures, people can obtain information and understand current social hotspots through WeChat, Weibo, mobile videos, and internet searches, rather than relying solely on traditional television media. The media market will inevitably be divided among numerous mobile internet media platforms. When faced with increasingly more choices, audience groups will certainly demand higher program quality. As the soul of a TV talk show, hosts should strengthen their professional competence to contribute to improved program quality and enhanced market competitiveness.

In the converged media era, information dissemination is characterized by fragmentation and segmentation. People often form their overall impression of a TV program based on the fragmented, scattered content they have viewed, and then comment on and disseminate it. Fragmented, scattered information has an amplifying effect during dissemination, and hosts, generally serving as the soul of a TV program, have their professional competence amplified as well. Generally speaking, people tend to amplify and disseminate content that they find personally interesting or controversial. Coincidentally, in the current converged media era, many self-media platforms such as Weibo short videos, forums, Kuaishou videos, and Douyin short videos can split originally complete programs and disseminate them in fragmented form [3]. As dissemination channels increase, the video's view count and audience numbers soar accordingly. If a program host's lack of professional competence is amplified and disseminated through short videos, it will not only cause the host to face criticism and be questioned about their professionalism but also negatively impact the entire program.

In the converged media era, everyone is a disseminator of social information and can act as self-media to disseminate and comment on social issues. Against this backdrop, TV audiences' requirements for TV talk shows are no longer received by program organizers with delayed feedback as in the past. Instead, information can be promptly delivered to program organizers, who can then make targeted adjustments to talk shows based on the validity of such feedback and respond to audiences to meet their demands for content, focus points, and interaction methods, thereby gaining audience recognition and higher ratings and view counts. As the leader and controller of a talk show, hosts often become the focus of audience attention. Therefore, better professional competence enables hosts to flexibly adjust program content, rhythm, and interaction methods according to audience feedback, promoting programs that better align with audience psychological appeals and viewing requirements.

2.1 Basic Abilities

Today's broadcasting and hosting industry has developed theoretical and systematic learning, with numerous higher education institutions incorporating broadcasting and hosting into their teaching programs, delivering a large number of excellent hosting talents to society. However, as people's demands for video program content gradually increase, the enhancement of hosts' basic knowledge level has become increasingly important. For TV talk show hosts, professional competence in speech and behavior is the most fundamental and crucial ability. In talk shows, the use of language skills and appropriate body language expression can reasonably guide topics, drive the atmosphere among guests and the audience, and demonstrate the host's professional competence and the program's comprehensive level.

2.2 Knowledge Reserves

Talk show hosts serve as a communication bridge between interviewees and TV audiences. This requires hosts to have a general framework understanding of knowledge in their guests' fields, especially when facing guests with strong professional backgrounds, to avoid being at a loss when communicating with program guests. Guests on talk shows are often elites from various industries with different areas of expertise. If hosts lack certain knowledge reserves, communication with guests will inevitably fall into awkward situations, fail to generate interesting interactions, and be unable to attract audiences or improve program quality.

2.3 Brand Recognition

Looking at today's hosting industry, one common characteristic of popular talk show hosts with high-quality programs is their prominent personal charisma and distinct personal brand recognition. Therefore, to stand out among numerous TV talk shows and gain audience recognition and certain screen appeal, hosts must possess certain individual styles and personal charisma. Otherwise, they will easily be eliminated in the current fierce market competition [4].

3.1 Continuous Practice and Experience Accumulation

As the saying goes, "One minute on stage takes ten years of practice off stage." A relaxed and composed on-stage style cannot be formed overnight. An excellent program host is not born but must accumulate experience through extensive practice and correction to perfectly solve various problems encountered in each hosting opportunity. Hosting experience will ultimately lead to qualitative change based on quantitative accumulation. Especially for TV talk shows, hosts should reflect after each program: "How was my hosting effect today?" "Was the interaction with guests appropriate?" "Was my language appropriate and body expression proper?" "How can I do better next time?" Through more self-analysis, weaknesses and defects in hosting will gradually improve, language and body movements will become more appropriate and proper, and program quality will certainly improve significantly [5].

3.2 Study Hard to Increase Knowledge Reserves

In TV talk shows, the depth of knowledge required in certain professional fields is often not high—hosts need not be experts in the field—but TV talk show hosts must have broad knowledge reserves, especially for financial and personality interviews where professional knowledge reserves are essential. This enables smoother communication with guests. Though this requirement seems not high, it presents certain difficulties in actual implementation. Therefore, program hosts should read more industry-related books in daily life, integrate professional knowledge from books, and especially when facing highly specialized knowledge,

consult experts in the field privately and be able to articulate it in their own accessible language. This way, when encountering similar knowledge points in future programs, they can easily communicate with guests and explain to audiences, fully fulfilling their role as a communication bridge between interviewees and TV audiences [6].

3.3 Don' t Follow the Crowd, Insist on Shaping Personal Charisma

Everyone' s character traits are unique and colorful, determined by personal growth experiences, learning experiences, and life and emotional experiences. From the perspective of TV programs, a host' s individual characteristics can be understood as their language characteristics and hosting style on the program. Blindly learning and imitating other TV talk show hosts' language characteristics and hosting styles is meaningless for program presentation. Different types of programs require different characteristics and brands with strong personalization. The 21st century is a society that advocates personalized communication and establishing individual styles. A host with distinctive personality who can integrate their characteristics into the program and make the program a brand is an excellent host who can attract and move audiences.

The arrival of the converged media era has significantly impacted traditional media, but opportunities and challenges coexist. As the soul of a TV talk show, hosts have the responsibility and obligation to contribute to the construction and development of TV talk shows, study hard, continuously improve, adapt to new communication forms, shape an image of a host with rich characteristics and full enthusiasm in programs, and further improve program quality with higher professional competence to attract audience attention and achieve better communication effects.

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