

On the Communication Strategies of the Personal WeChat Official Account “Mi Meng” (Postprint)

Authors: Mao Yanqing

Date: 2023-10-08T00:00:00+00:00

Abstract

WeChat Official Account is an extremely widely used feature launched by WeChat. “Mimeng” is a public account with millions of followers, and many of its articles have achieved over 1 million views, making it a breakout success among public accounts. This paper employs case study and content analysis methods to analyze the reasons for Mimeng’s sudden popularity, including content that aligns with reader needs, cultural characteristics such as “poisonous chicken soup”, rants, and entertainment, as well as language styles that are internet-oriented, colloquial, and conversational.

Full Text

Introduction

The WeChat Public Platform, commonly known as Official Accounts, was officially launched on August 23, 2012. Developed by the WeChat team in response to mobile internet trends, this service functions fundamentally as an information publishing platform through which celebrities, government agencies, media outlets, and corporations can push content to users. Among WeChat’s numerous features, Official Accounts represent a milestone, marking the beginning of WeChat’s commercialization.

Mi Meng emerged as a “phenomenon-level” personal WeChat Official Account in 2015. With a single article titled “Why Should I Help You?”, the account gained 200,000 followers overnight and dominated social media platforms. Within nine months of operation, Mi Meng accumulated over 3 million followers with average readership exceeding 1 million per article. Many find Mi Meng’s success incomprehensible, yet through her “poisonous and spicy” chicken soup essays, rosat entertainment spirit, internet-savvy and colloquial language style, and ruthless self-deprecation, Mi Meng rapidly won the hearts of millions of fans, particularly young readers.

1. Content that Meets Reader Needs

The “Uses and Gratifications” theory posits that audiences actively select media to satisfy psychological or social needs, contingent upon both media accessibility and its ability to fulfill those needs. With extremely high mobile phone penetration rates, WeChat Official Accounts have become widely accessible, empowering users as active participants rather than passive recipients. For Official Accounts, only by adhering to a “content is king” philosophy and continuously producing high-quality content that satisfies user demands can sustained attention be maintained. Mi Meng’s articles exhibit several distinctive characteristics.

1.1 Story-based Advertising

Advertising constitutes a crucial revenue stream for enterprises, and story-based advertising represents a common format employed by WeChat Official Accounts. This approach utilizes literary techniques to embed product and service information within unique narrative plots for promotional purposes. Mi Meng’s advertising rate reaches approximately 400,000 RMB per placement, with the account maintaining strict control over content—contractually stipulating “no commissioned topics, no content revisions.” Mi Meng typically selects established products with strong brand recognition, reputation, and customer loyalty. In “A Friendship That Doesn’t Require Washing Hair Is Called Childhood Friend,” Mi Meng narrates her story with her childhood friend Dayu, reflecting on how such friends represent our irretrievable youthful era of passion and glory, and inviting readers to join their childhood friends at Pizza Hut for games and durian pizza. The article concludes with screenshots of Pizza Hut’s promotional games, seamlessly achieving advertising objectives. Similarly, in “Why Is Your Annual Salary Just Someone Else’s Monthly Salary?”, Mi Meng shares real cases about KK’s industry insight, win-win partnership philosophy, and Zhong Xiaozhong’s million-RMB mindset to illustrate that “perspective matters, and the way to expand perspective is to associate with exceptional people.” For readers lacking such connections, she recommends downloading a paid voice Q&A app called “Fenda.”

Mi Meng’s advertising sophistication lies in how compelling titles and narrative content integrate tightly without the awkwardness of clickbait. Moreover, her titles never display brand names, allowing advertisements to connect seamlessly with stories.

1.2 Following Hot Topics with Eye-catching Headlines

In the communication process, gatekeepers select specific events from thousands of daily occurrences for coverage, focusing audience attention to create social hotspots. Mi Meng’s articles consistently follow social trends while seeking unique, unconventional angles, with nearly every piece capturing audience attention. Examples include “Luo Er: I Can’t Sell My House Because I Must

Leave It to My Son,” which condemns Luo Er for exploiting social sympathy for profit; “The Best Marriage Is Spiritual Compatibility” and “What Compatibility? It’s Just Not Enough Love,” responding to the “Shanghai woman visits Jiangxi boyfriend’s hometown” incident; and “Perhaps We Are All Accomplices in School Bullying,” addressing the socially concerning phenomenon of campus violence.

1.3 Interaction with Readers and Content Reproduction

Mi Meng frequently interacts with readers on WeChat, discussing article themes and engaging in pure banter or expressions of admiration. Through reply messages, she narrows the distance with her audience, cultivating an approachable image. Additionally, to overcome the limitations of personal experience, Mi Meng regularly posts topic solicitation notices, inviting readers to share stories on themes such as “most embarrassing drunk experiences,” “stories with unexpected twists,” “bizarre things bosses do,” “relationships between northerners and southerners,” “jokes from non-standard Mandarin,” “deepest secrets,” and “funniest photos on your phone,” serving as a “confessional” to share selected stories with her broader readership.

2. Unique Cultural Characteristics

Mi Meng’s articles span various genres, including roasts, parenting pieces, inspirational essays, and advertisements, all representing variants of chicken soup culture. After extensive reading, three distinct cultural characteristics emerge.

2.1 “Poisonous Tongue” Chicken Soup Culture

“Poisonous tongue” describes a bold, sharp, and outspoken language style. With over a decade of newspaper experience, Mi Meng understands how to win reader affection. Her viral hit “The Workplace Doesn’t Believe in Tears, Cry at Home” advises readers that no job is without grievances, urging them to swallow their complaints and transform them into fighting spirit rather than wallowing in self-pity. “How to Manage Your Boss” categorizes supervisors into tiger, peacock, koala, owl, and chameleon types, offering strategies for subordinates to “manage” each type to secure resources for organizational effectiveness and personal success.

2.2 Roasting Entertainment Culture

According to the 2016 WeChat User Data Report, the average WeChat user is 26 years old, with male users comprising 64.3%. Mi Meng caters to this demographic’s social psychology, expressing views on social hotspots, relationships, and workplace issues in an entertaining style. Articles like “I Just Love How You Can’t Stand Me Yet Can’t Get Rid of Me” and “If You’re So Nostalgic About the Past, Your Present Must Be a Failure” exude lighthearted entertainment, simultaneously answering fans’ questions and conveying positive energy.

“Roasting” involves identifying loopholes in language or behavior for humorous 调侃. In “I’ve Become What My Parents Hate Most,” Mi Meng uses new colleagues Li Lili and Yang Xiaodan’s experiences to roast Chinese parents’ controlling behaviors, advocating for parents to provide ideal environments where children can become themselves rather than who parents want them to be.

2.3 Self-Deprecation Culture

Self-deprecation involves mocking oneself to lower one’s status and connect with readers, creating an approachable and humorous image. Mi Meng cultivates a persona as “fat, short, ugly, procrastinating, vulgar, fickle, and obsessed with crayfish,” making her highly relatable. In “As a Direction Idiot, I’m a Walking Joke,” she mocks her poor sense of direction; “How to Wear Luxury Brands Like Street Vendors” pokes fun at her weight; “I, a Short Person’s Epic” targets her height; and “How I Successfully Ran a Company into the Ground” employs biting self-irony to summarize lessons from failure, noting that “success is always disruptive, but failure is predictable because failure follows clear patterns.”

Through self-deprecation, Mi Meng transmits personal experiences and lessons in a relaxed, humorous manner, fundamentally different from traditional preachy chicken soup essays. Many readers describe her as a walking joke machine, with numerous former critics becoming fans after witnessing her self-mocking humor.

3. Internet-based, Colloquial Language Style

As a mobile media platform, WeChat incorporates various internet slangs to satisfy reader preferences. Terms like “foodie,” “living long enough to see anything,” “gaining knowledge,” “art style,” “so charming it explodes,” “stunningly beautiful,” “incredibly handsome,” “adorably cute,” and “explosive feeling” frequently appear, lending a playful and endearing quality. In “Don’t Worry, the Love You Want Is Being Delivered,” Mi Meng uses internet slang, colloquialisms, and a chatty, conversational tone to narrate a fan’s winding yet fulfilling love story, reassuring single readers that “don’t worry, the love you want is probably being delivered,” creating a warm, inspirational chicken soup piece. Similar styles characterize articles like “The Most Advanced Romance Is Daily Chores,” “What to Watch During the National Day Holiday,” “Love That Can’t Be Measured in Money Isn’t True Love,” “The Best Marriage Is Being Each Other’s Die-hard Fans,” “Life Is Long, Be with Your Interesting Self,” and “Unlucky Girls Always Have Good Fortune.”

4. Limitations of the Mi Meng Official Account

Mi Meng states, “I now particularly believe in the 10,000-hour rule—to achieve success in any field requires 10,000 hours of accumulation.” Leveraging extensive traditional media experience, painful lessons from entrepreneurial failure, and precise grasp of self-media dynamics, Mi Meng has become a leading personal

WeChat Official Account with millions of followers. However, several limitations merit consideration.

4.1 Too Few Fixed Columns

Mi Meng maintains only one fixed column, “Weekend Stories,” with other content appearing random and lacking systematic planning. Developing additional fixed columns could enhance reader interaction and loyalty.

4.2 Excessive Chicken Soup Content

While chicken soup articles constitute Mi Meng’s signature strength, providing warmth and comfort to many, a WeChat Official Account is not a psychological clinic. Such inspirational content cannot suit everyone and struggles to provide targeted solutions.

4.3 Need for Innovative Advertising Models

Mi Meng primarily employs story-based advertising to promote products. In the micro-communication era, as audience attention fragments and user demands become increasingly personalized, WeChat Official Account marketing must innovate through banner ads, interactive advertisements, video ads, and other formats. Enhanced user interaction through replies, comments, regular dialogues, and themed activities can maintain fan activity and loyalty. Integrating social hotspots with advertising marketing and analyzing audience characteristics for market segmentation could enable personalized communication and customized push notifications.

Conclusion

Just as customers are merchants’ gods, readers are likewise gods to WeChat Official Accounts. Only by reasonably understanding audience psychology and new media patterns, improving content quality, depth, and aesthetic taste, continuously identifying gaps, and producing excellent work can an Official Account’s reputation, credibility, and loyalty grow, thereby maximizing social and economic benefits.

References

- [1] Zheng Xingdong. Audience Psychology and Media Guidance [M]. Xinhua Publishing House. 2004.
- [2] Liu Nian’guo. Chicken Soup VS Venomous Snake: Two Schools in the Beautiful Writing Circle [J]. East West North South, 2016(5).
- [3] Hai Xin. “Female Hooligan” Mi Meng’s Self-Media Jianghu [J]. Qilu Weekly, 2016(25).

[4] Zhang Chi, Pan Guozhi. Alternative Mi Meng: One Person's "Textual Jianghu" [J]. Contemporary Youth, 2016(4).

(Author's Affiliation: School of Education and Modern Arts, Shangqiu Institute of Technology)

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

Source: ChinaXiv — Machine translation. Verify with original.