

Exploring Postprint Brand Communication of Medical Enterprises in the Internet Era

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Abstract

2014 marked the inaugural year of explosive growth for internet healthcare, which is projected to increase tenfold over the next decade. The internet is driving economic structural transformation and social development at an unprecedented pace, while people's modes of production and lifestyle are undergoing tremendous changes. Standing at the cusp of this era, this paper will explore how brand communication for healthcare enterprises should transform, how it can align with people's thinking habits and needs, and how to strengthen the relationship between audiences and brands.

Full Text

Exploring Brand Communication for Medical Enterprises in the Internet Era

Abstract: The year 2014 marked the dawn of internet healthcare, with projections indicating tenfold growth over the next decade. The internet is driving economic structural transformation and social development at an unprecedented pace, fundamentally changing people's production methods and lifestyles. At this critical juncture, how should medical enterprises transform their brand communication strategies to align with evolving mindsets and needs, and strengthen the bond between audiences and brands? This paper explores these questions.

Keywords: Internet era; medical enterprises; brand communication

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The emergence of the internet has gradually transformed people's production methods and lifestyles, disrupted conventional thinking patterns, and propelled

human society into the internet era. Consequently, enterprise brand communication is no longer confined to television, newspapers, and radio. New internet-based media, such as Weibo and WeChat public platforms, have created both new opportunities and challenges for corporate brand communication.

2. New Challenges for Medical Enterprise Brand Communication in the Internet Era

Effective brand communication constitutes a critical component of enterprise development. Medical enterprises—particularly pharmaceutical and medical equipment manufacturers whose primary customers are hospitals and government institutions—have historically operated under B2B (business-to-business) models due to policy restrictions on procurement, advertising regulations, and other constraints. However, since all medical enterprises ultimately serve end consumers, the internet era demands a fundamental shift from B2B to B2C (business-to-consumer) brand communication, presenting substantial challenges.

First, brand communication concepts remain outdated. Most medical enterprises still perceive internet-era brand communication merely as website placement or digital reading, demonstrating insufficient understanding of and attention to mobile internet. True transformation requires more than simply changing information distribution platforms; it demands comprehensive restructuring of corporate communication frameworks.

Second, brand communication models have become rigid. Many medical enterprises, enjoying stable performance growth, have established fixed brand communication patterns over the years. Although some have created dedicated new media positions or departments, their information collection and dissemination operate independently from existing communication models. Without full integration between new and traditional media to achieve diversified communication, developing new models means dismantling established communication ecosystems and rebuilding audience bases and platforms from scratch.

Third, brand communication professionals lack adequate expertise. Most practitioners in medical enterprises come from product-related backgrounds rather than formal journalism or brand management training. Their communication strategies tend to prioritize marketing over comprehensive brand building, lacking holistic perspectives, news sensitivity, and professional brand literacy. These limitations leave them ill-equipped to handle the spaceless and timeless demands of brand communication in the mobile internet age.

These three major challenges significantly impact brand communication effectiveness. Additionally, traditional communication models suffer from low dissemination precision, vague audience segmentation, difficult quantification of communication effects, and outdated language styles, further undermining the effectiveness of corporate brand communication.

1. Trends in Enterprise Brand Communication in the Internet Era

The maturation of mobile internet products and technologies has catalyzed several new trends in enterprise brand communication.

The first is information fragmentation. The internet era represents an age of information explosion. With the proliferation of mobile devices, people have unprecedented access to information sources and volume, resulting in more dispersed attention. Combined with accelerated life and work rhythms, audiences have developed fragmented media consumption habits, utilizing brief moments for piecemeal reading and superficial information processing.

The second is decentralized communication. Current online media far surpass traditional mass media in both communication breadth and speed. While traditional corporate brand communication matrices relied on television, newspapers, and websites, the mobile internet era has challenged these conventional models. Through mobile internet, information spreads more widely, reaches audiences more precisely, and offers greater convenience, better aligning with audience habits. Consequently, new media platforms like WeChat and Weibo have accelerated the “decentralization” of communication, becoming crucial channels for corporate brand communication.

The third is interactive engagement. Traditional corporate brand communication followed a “one-to-many” model, with enterprises broadcasting information to passive audiences. With the deepening development and widespread adoption of mobile internet technology, audiences are no longer mere information receivers and feedback providers but have become active participants and secondary disseminators, constituting a vital link in corporate brand communication.

3. New Opportunities Created by New Media for Medical Enterprise Brand Communication

The emergence of mobile internet platforms such as WeChat and WeChat has created entirely new forms and content for medical enterprise brand communication, compensating for deficiencies in timeliness, interactivity, and engagement inherent in mass media.

These platforms offer four key opportunities. First, they facilitate transformation of brand communication concepts. Compared with traditional platforms, WeChat Official Accounts, Weibo, and other self-media channels grant users greater autonomy, allowing them to subscribe or unsubscribe according to their preferences. This enables enterprises to implement user-centered brand communication strategies.

Second, they enrich brand connotation. Self-media platforms employ more relaxed and witty language styles, feature more diverse content, and offer stronger interactivity, making them more accessible and shareable for users living fast-

paced lives. This imbues corporate brand images—originally characterized by solemnity and professionalism—with youthful, dynamic qualities that better align with internet-era customer cognition.

Third, they enhance communication precision. Fans of internet self-media actively seek information, demonstrate higher acceptance, and voluntarily share content, creating secondary dissemination. Furthermore, internet self-media enables quantitative analysis of communication effects, guiding enterprises to conduct targeted communication and interaction, thereby significantly improving precision.

Fourth, they strengthen customer brand stickiness. The ultimate goal of corporate brand communication is to enhance customer brand stickiness and loyalty, transforming product users into brand advocates. Mobile internet deepens customer understanding of and interaction with brands, establishing valuable customer relationships that translate into brand premiums.

These four opportunities will inject new vitality into medical enterprises, serving as exemplary models for the B2C transformation of brand communication in the internet era.

4. Strategies for Medical Enterprise Brand Communication in the Internet Era

In the future, all industries will adopt mobile internet as their primary brand communication platform, aligning with user reading habits and media development trends. Although the internet cannot change medical logic, it is inevitable that medical enterprises will utilize new media to strengthen brand-user connections and imbue brands with new connotations and vitality.

Establishing a modern integrated communication model. This requires creating cross-departmental communication mechanisms, promoting corporate brand communication process reengineering, and facilitating integrated development across multiple media to achieve complementary advantages. Enterprises should implement a “single collection, diversified dissemination” model for information content. For major events, they should coordinate traditional and online media, leveraging respective strengths for differentiated reporting. While traditional media provide in-depth coverage and analysis, online media should engage audiences in interaction and voluntary secondary dissemination to achieve comprehensive communication impact.

Training professional brand communication talent. Enterprises should enhance training for brand communication personnel, strengthening multimedia communication capabilities for both news correspondents and self-media operators. These professionals must possess product and industry knowledge while simultaneously developing sensitivity to news and social trends, evolving from product operators to user managers.

Emphasizing scenario-based communication. In the mobile internet era, personalization in the commercial realm increasingly manifests as community and scenario orientation, with people at the core. Corporate brand communication should no longer focus primarily on products but instead shape communities and scenarios for customers, highlighting emotional resonance points between brand and customer. This approach allows customers to experience authenticity, endows them with comprehensible values, encourages participation and sharing, and creates stories that can spread via C2C (customer-to-customer) channels, cultivating highly sticky target customer groups and establishing brand “trustworthiness”—a higher level of credibility.

Internet technology has made the world increasingly transparent, with information readily accessible and interactions more frequent. Consequently, consumers have elevated their demands and expectations for trust and credibility. It is no longer sufficient for enterprises to be merely “trustworthy”; they must become “reliable.” Trustworthiness has evolved beyond a commercial competitive strategy into a domain of shared reciprocity. Customers no longer solely pursue product cost-effectiveness but increasingly consider corporate brands. While the economic benefits of customer trust may not manifest in the short term, they promise substantial long-term returns.

Leveraging big data analytics. Enterprises must abandon blanket communication approaches and instead use data mining and analysis to target communication regions and customer groups. By utilizing customer databases and classified statistics from professional website indices, they can develop customer personas and formulate differentiated brand communication strategies. Simultaneously, they should monitor real-time customer feedback and evaluations to make periodic adjustments to overall brand communication strategies, achieving precise delivery and dissemination.

Exploring effective brand communication for medical enterprises in the internet era lacks mature precedents. Enterprises must approach this new landscape with open-mindedness, innovative spirit, and calm reflection, achieving integrated, multi-channel, efficient, and precise brand communication by effectively combining traditional media channels with internet platforms.

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

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