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Strengthening the “Four Forces” to Amplify the Party Newspaper’s Voice: Practice and Reflection on Building an All-Media Publicity Matrix in the Converged Media Era at Jiaozhou City News Center, Shandong (Postprint)

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Abstract

Promoting media convergence development is a major strategic deployment by the Party Central Committee to consolidate the ideological propaganda front and strengthen mainstream public opinion. In recent years, the Jiaozhou News Center has, through four measures—building platforms, forging talent, Party building guidance, and high-level positioning—enhanced journalists’ “footwork, vision, mental acuity, and writing skills,” thereby leading the “communication capacity, guidance power, influence, and credibility” of the center’s all-media publicity matrix.

Full Text

Enhancing the “Four Forces” to Amplify the Voice of Party Media: A Practice of Building an All-Media Propaganda Matrix in the Converged Media Era at the Jiaozhou News Center, Shandong

Abstract: Promoting the integrated development of media represents a major strategic deployment by the Party Central Committee to consolidate ideological positions and strengthen mainstream public opinion. In recent years, the Jiaozhou News Center has advanced its all-media propaganda matrix by enhancing journalists’ “footwork, eyesight, brainpower, and penmanship” through four key measures: platform construction, talent forging, Party building guidance, and high-level positioning, thereby strengthening its communication power, guidance power, influence, and credibility.

Keywords: “Four Forces”; All-Media; Talent Development; Propaganda and Ideology

As the mainstream media close to the people of Jiaozhou, the Jiaozhou News Center has consistently adhered to Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era and the spirit of the 19th Party Congress. Under the strong leadership of the Municipal Party Committee and government, the Center has focused on central tasks and served the overall situation, remaining true to its original aspiration and keeping its mission firmly in mind. By enhancing journalists’ “footwork, eyesight, brainpower, and penmanship,” the Center has strengthened the “communication power, guidance power, influence, and credibility” of its all-media matrix, providing powerful public opinion support for building a livable, happy, and modern airport new district.

On the morning of November 14, 2017, the Jiaozhou Municipal Party Committee Propaganda Department received news that the Central Civilization Office had released the list of the fifth National Civilized Cities, with Jiaozhou ranking first among 50 county-level cities nationwide. Following the principle of releasing authoritative information at the earliest moment, striving to seize the initiative, win the right of discourse, and firmly occupy the commanding heights of public opinion guidance, the frontline command and rear editors of the News Center engaged in continuous communication, repeatedly revising and reviewing the content while carefully selecting photographs, with all new media personnel operating at high speed and intensity. At 9:42 AM, the breaking news “Great News! Jiaozhou Becomes a ‘National Civilized City!’” was first released on the “I Love Golden Jiaozhou” Toutiao account; at 9:55 AM, a more comprehensive version with additional photos and text, “Victory for All Jiaozhou People! We Are a ‘National Civilized City!’ We’re Number One!” was published on the “I Love Golden Jiaozhou” WeChat public account. Both messages were released at the earliest possible moment, becoming the “official announcement,” and quickly generated tremendous response in Jiaozhou, being reposted by nearly 100 official and self-media outlets in Jiaozhou and Qingdao. The News Center’s articles frequently serve as the sole or first release on converged media platforms, leading the mainstream public opinion.

1. Platform Construction for Growth

In recent years, the Jiaozhou News Center has built fourteen converged media platforms through multiple channels, actively exploring the path of media convergence and making strenuous efforts to advance integrated development toward a comprehensive communication pattern of “new media first, all-media follow-up, and converged media dissemination.” As network and digital technologies have become increasingly widespread in society, the concept of “Internet Plus” has been continuously strengthened, presenting both new opportunities and challenges for traditional media while providing conditions for new media

integration. The News Center has continuously dedicated itself to platform construction, using news planning to lead content innovation, and has built fourteen converged media platforms including the *Golden Jiaozhou* newspaper, *Golden Jiaozhou Digital Newspaper* (computer and mobile versions), “I Love Golden Jiaozhou” WeChat public account, Toutiao account, NetEase account, Baijia account, People’s Daily account, Douyin account, “Xianchangyun” live platform, Palm Jiaozhou client, Shandong Mobile Newspaper Jiaozhou News, Jiaozhou Party Building Service Platform “Palm Jiaozhou” and “Jiaozhou Release” sections. Among these, the *Golden Jiaozhou* newspaper has a daily circulation of over 40,000 copies, while the Center’s converged media platforms have more than 1.5 million users, with an average daily readership of nearly 1 million across all platforms, playing a positive role in telling Jiaozhou stories well, spreading Jiaozhou’s voice, and enhancing the city’s reputation and visibility.

Since their launch, these platforms have enabled faster content release, more precise push delivery, more effective dissemination, and more professional services, becoming the vane leading Jiaozhou’s converged media development and the main front for online public opinion. On February 12, 2019, the Jiaozhou News Center officially joined Xinhua News Agency’s “Xianchangyun” APP, adding a brand-new media platform for innovative reporting methods and building an all-media matrix. On that day, which was the first day after Shandong Province’s “Take Responsibility, Implement Effectively” work mobilization conference, the News Center organized more than 20 all-media journalists to go to town offices, departments, enterprises, and other sites to conduct a live broadcast titled “All-Media Live: Jiaozhou Running in the ‘Work Implementation Year’” through the “Xianchangyun” APP. Frontline journalists used the “Xianchangyun” live platform to edit and upload on-site observations in real-time through photos and video live streaming; rear leaders sat at the command center to review and release content at the earliest moment; editorial staff actively responded by forwarding and commenting immediately. The successive live broadcasts set off new upsurges of taking responsibility and implementing effectively, taking a solid step toward more intuitive and immediate video live streaming for news reporting, earning unanimous praise from city leaders and readers.

2. Talent Forging to Strengthen Capabilities

To better adapt to the new requirements of the new era, new situations, and new tasks for all-media news gathering and editing personnel, in March 2019, the Jiaozhou News Center formulated the *All-Media, All-Capable Talent Development Plan* based on the principles of “elite teaching, collective interviews, competition evaluation, and assessment incentives,” aiming to forge a team of all-media and professional talents equipped with multiple capabilities including writing, photography, audio, and video to meet the needs of newspaper, WeChat, and other new media gathering, editing, and publishing.

2.1 Elite Teaching to Consolidate Foundations

The News Center established an elite team of nine lecturers who determine a monthly theme around the capabilities that news professionals need in the converged media era, including gathering, editing, producing, filming, and broadcasting. The eight courses cover *News Photography*, *News Writing*, *Xian-changyun Application*, *Video Shooting and Editing*, *Event Live Streaming and Hosting*, *Feature Writing*, *Public Account and H5 Production*, and *Commentary Writing*, with each session taught by one or two elite team members.

2.2 Collective Interviews for Practical Combat

After each training session, the News Center combines collective interviews with individual interviews, with the editorial committee assigning topics based on the training theme for competition evaluation. Journalists conduct interviews with dedication, restore facts with their pens, and write warm news stories in accessible language. They walk, observe, listen, and record, working hard to enhance their footwork, eyesight, brainpower, and penmanship, competing for innovation and excellence. With professional standards and professional dedication, they discover changes in Jiaozhou's towns and villages, tell touching stories from the front lines, and reflect enterprises' pioneering spirit, vitality, innovation, and responsibility. The News Center has conducted four news competition and gathering activities, including "Into Jiaobei," "Into Ligezhuang Town," "Into Yanghe," and "Into the Police Camp," testing learning outcomes in practice and enhancing gathering and editing skills through training.

2.3 Competition Evaluation to Strive for Excellence

Through carefully organizing various thematic competition activities, the News Center enables editors and reporters to receive comprehensive training and improvement through frontline interviews and competition contests, laying a solid foundation for building an all-media, all-capable talent team. The editorial committee and elite team score based on the quality of individual works submitted by all-media personnel during collective interviews, setting first, second, and third prizes. All-media journalists actively participate in collective interview activities, enthusiastically submit individual news works, and create a competitive atmosphere of learning from, catching up with, and surpassing each other within the Center. The four competitions have received more than 60 news works, with outstanding pieces such as "*Steel Camel*" *Advancing on the New Silk Road*, *Beautiful Peach Town*, *Village Revitalization Work Team Draws a New Picture of Beautiful Countryside*, *Data Runs More, People Run Less*, and "*One Matter, One Discussion*" *Small Projects, Big People's Livelihood* standing out. Seven competition-winning articles, including *Using Cloud Platforms, Handling Affairs Without Leaving the Village*, were adopted by higher-level media such as *Rural Masses*, *Qingdao Daily*, and "Study Strong Nation."

2.4 Assessment and Incentives to Demonstrate Vitality

The News Center links news competition results with individual workload performance assessments, field study trips, honor applications, and performance evaluations. Simultaneously, before Journalists' Day in 2019, based on personnel performance, the Center comprehensively selected "Party Member Pioneers • Golden Newspaper All-Media Assault Team 'Sharp Knives'" and "Blasters," further stimulating the enthusiasm and initiative of all-media personnel. On the stage of "Good Journalists Tell Good Stories," the Center enhanced organizational vitality and showcased media professionals' elegance. The implementation of the *All-Media, All-Capable Talent Development Plan* has solidly promoted journalists' "Go, Transform, and Improve" campaign. With the drive to "take responsibility and implement effectively," the Center has stabilized the "position" of doing well in stage-specific key propaganda, captured the "hilltop" of short video planning, design, and creation bottlenecks, and will promote high-quality development of the Center's work with a fighting posture and warrior's responsibility, providing solid guarantees for Jiaozhou's news propaganda work.

3. Party Building as the Compass to Forge "Original Aspiration"

Party media bear the Party's surname. The Jiaozhou News Center consistently maintains high alignment, deep integration, and broad combination between Party affairs and business work, creating a distinctive Party building brand of "Party Media Unites Hearts, Spreads Righteousness" that continuously demonstrates journalists' unremitting pursuit of transmitting the Party's orders and the people's voices, sharing the same direction as the Party and the same heart as the people, playing the strongest note of "Being a Pioneer of County-Level Party Media, Becoming a Positive Energy Propaganda Influencer."

3.1 Party Building First to Promote "Four Forces" Enhancement

The News Center holds monthly "three meetings and one lesson" and regularly conducts "Theme Party Day +" activities, organizing all Party members to re-visit their admission oaths, conduct political studies, and tell role model stories. In early 2017, it issued the *Notice on Competing for "Top Ten Gold Medal Journalists and Outstanding Contributors of 2017"*; in early 2018, the *Implementation Plan for Deeply Carrying Out the "Party Member Pioneer • Gold Medal Journalist" Creation Activity*; and in early 2019, the *Implementation Plan for Deeply Carrying Out the "Party Member Pioneer • Golden Newspaper All-Media Assault Team in Action" Series of Thematic Practice Activities*, establishing an activity leading group, determining selection criteria and methods, and calling on all Party members and cadres to learn from excellent examples, benchmark against standards, and base themselves on their posts to promote action through knowledge.

3.2 Selecting Excellence to Showcase Editorial Elegance

In recent years, through methods of self-recommendation by Party members and cadres, voting by branch committee members, and research, the Center's Party branch has comprehensively considered Party members and cadres' political literacy, work performance, work highlights, and the quantity, quality, and effectiveness of their connections with town offices and departments. It has successively commended 10 "Top Ten Gold Medal Journalists," 5 outstanding contributors, 5 five-star "Party Member Pioneer • Gold Medal Journalists," 8 four-star "Party Member Pioneer • Gold Medal Journalists," and 9 three-star "Party Member Pioneer • Gold Medal Journalists," creating a strong atmosphere of striving for excellence and benchmarking for improvement throughout the Center and stimulating the enthusiasm of Party members and cadres for entrepreneurship.

3.3 Promoting Models to Strengthen Responsibility

Telling China's stories well can be said to be a requirement for every news practitioner, while recording, disseminating, and inheriting every touching story can also make a journalist. By deeply 挖掘 ing role models around us and continuously carrying out the "Good Journalists Tell Good Stories" activity, in June 2019, the Jiaozhou News Center actively participated in the Jiaozhou "Good Party Members Around Me" speech competition co-hosted by the Jiaozhou Municipal Party Committee Organization Department and Propaganda Department, deeply 挖掘 ing the role model story of Fu Hongyu, Director of the Network Media Department. Yu Yuanyuan's passionate speech won the second prize in the competition. Simultaneously, the News Center actively responded to the Provincial Party Committee Organization Department's online "Discover Role Models" recommendation activity, reporting the advanced deeds of three Party members—Li Yan, Chen Kai, and Zhang Jing—based on self-recommendation and recommendation by departments and research by the branch committee.

In the united and striving family of the Jiaozhou News Center, there are many excellent role models like Fu Hongyu. Stories told by Ren Xianwen (*Loyal Records, Innovative Services*), Wang Binghui (*Press the Shutter, Regardless of East or West*), Liu Minjun (*My "Love Affair" with Puji Reform*), Chen Kai (*Shouldering Youth Responsibility on the News Front*), Li Fengyan (*The Heroic Elegance of the Editorial Department*), and Yu Yuanyuan (*The Wonderful Answer Sheet in the Rain*) have caused strong repercussions within the Center. These role models have been included in the 2018 Journalists' Day feature film *Jiaozhou News Center: Party Media Unites Hearts, Original Aspiration Builds Dreams*, further strengthening Party members and cadres' sense of responsibility and professional happiness.

3.4 Public Welfare Benefiting People to Promote Social Righteousness

In recent years, many media outlets have gradually shifted from simply reporting on public welfare activities to participating in them. This change in identity enables media to better leverage their characteristics to advocate for and promote public welfare behaviors. The Jiaozhou News Center is not only a propagandist but also an advocate, practitioner, and leader of public welfare activities, always using public welfare actions to trigger societal public welfare consciousness and fully support the city's central work.

First, the Center has meticulously built the *Golden Jiaozhou* public welfare platform, assembling over 100 public welfare teams in Jiaozhou City and conducting more than 20 public welfare activities annually. It has established the *Golden Jiaozhou* Junior Journalist Corps, jointly building a new platform with all sectors of society to provide youth students with social practice and social observation opportunities free of charge.

Second, the Center has actively cooperated with Jiaozhou City's "People Around Us Tell Stories Around Us" propaganda campaign, editing and publicly publishing the *Jiaozhou • New Era* special edition for the 2018 New Year and the *New Era • Positive Energy—People and Stories in the Eyes of News Center Journalists* series, 挖掘 ing and promoting a large number of good role models and guiding citizens to eliminate the foul and promote the good, and to respect virtue and do good deeds. In 2018, the News Center vigorously carried out the "Show Students' Talent, Promote Heroes' Fame" campaign of presenting *Golden Jiaozhou* newspapers to schools and donating *New Era • Positive Energy* public welfare book series to town offices and communities, further promoting heroic spirit and inheriting red genes. The editorial staff donated more than 20,000 public welfare books, enriching town office and community reading rooms with more down-to-earth, attractive, and sticky book fragrance, receiving unanimous praise from grassroots masses.

Third, the Center has fully played the role of enterprise service managers, planning and promoting publicity for Qingdao Bolan Group Co., Ltd. and Qingdao Global Clothing Co., Ltd. through the *Golden Jiaozhou* newspaper and the "I Love Golden Jiaozhou" WeChat public account, greatly enhancing brand awareness. Leveraging the "4+1" village assistance mechanism, Jiang Huizhen, the director of the News Center, organized journalists to hold a "Preserve Beautiful Moments for You" public welfare photography event in Shenshanhou Village, providing free photo shoots for elderly people's exclusive photos, family portraits, and children's healthy growth photos, and presenting a 3.6-meter-long, 1.3-meter-wide *Shenshanhou Village Happy Families' Beautiful Smiles* to the village. The Center also partnered with Jiaozhou Zhentang Traditional Chinese Medicine Hospital to conduct a "Deliver Health, Deliver Healthcare, Walk into Shenshanhou" free clinic, providing villagers with disease consultation, rehabilitation diagnosis, and health education services.

4. Standing at the High End to Lead Trends

At the 2018 National Propaganda and Ideology Work Conference, General Secretary Xi Jinping emphasized the need to continuously enhance footwork, eyesight, brainpower, and penmanship, and strive to build a propaganda and ideology workforce that is politically solid, highly capable, realistic and innovative, and capable of winning battles. In recent years, the Jiaozhou News Center has actively seized higher platforms, competing, communicating, and learning alongside top-tier county-level media nationwide and province-wide, leading journalists to continuously master new knowledge, become familiar with new fields, broaden new horizons, and increase their capabilities and “four forces.”

In 2016, the Jiaozhou News Center joined the China News Photography Society as a governing unit, actively participating in annual meetings and gathering activities organized by the society’s county-level media branch. Through news competition awards and other activities, journalists photographed alongside photography masters from Xinhua News Agency, People’s Daily, and other central media, broadening their horizons and enhancing their capabilities, playing a “leading goose” and “backbone” role among peers in the province.

In 2018, the Jiaozhou News Center joined the China County Newspaper Research Association as a governing unit. Jiang Huizhen, Director of the News Center, and Sun Hai, a principal-level cadre, respectively won the “Top 100 Excellent Newspaper Professionals” honorary title in the fourth national county-level regional chief editor management category and journalist editing category at the 33rd annual meeting of the China County Newspaper Research Association. In May 2019, the Jiaozhou News Center actively mobilized editorial staff to participate in the 2018 China County-Level Regional Newspaper News Award selection and the *Recollection, Reflection, and Prospect* themed news competition celebrating the 40th anniversary of reform and opening-up, with 10 people and 9 works winning awards, reaching a new high in award numbers, with new media works winning awards for the first time.

In 2017, at the inaugural annual meeting and forum of the Regional New Media Branch of the China News Technology Federation, the Jiaozhou News Center was elected as the executive vice president unit. Jiang Huizhen, Director of the Jiaozhou News Center, delivered a keynote speech at the “Media Convergence Development” chief editor forum. The paper “*Micro Era*” *Luminous Bodies, Positive Energy at Your Fingertips*, written by Jiang Huizhen and Liu Jie, was published in *China Media Technology* and *Youth Journalist*, and was rated as an excellent paper at this forum, effectively promoting the vigorous development of county-level media. By learning from the experience of alliance units of the News Technology Federation, in 2019, based on the requirements of the new era civilization practice center and converged media center, the Jiaozhou News Center will purchase new equipment such as integrated video recorders on the basis of previously purchased cameras, SLR cameras, handheld gimbals, and aerial photography equipment, establish the SCO Converged Media APP

and the News Center Cloud Command Platform, build a News Center Big Data Analysis Center, and create a converged media comprehensive operation platform that meets the requirements and development trends of the new era.

In 2016, the Jiaozhou News Center initiated and established the Shandong Provincial County Newspaper Research Association, serving as the vice president and secretary-general unit. It actively organized business seminars, “Double Top Ten” selections, and Shandong Provincial Good News • County Newspaper Media Special Award evaluations, leading 50 member units to conduct business exchanges, training, news award selections, and converged media seminars both inside and outside the province, guiding grassroots Party media across the province to strengthen their “four forces” and develop healthily, and leading the Jiaozhou News Center to win honors such as Shandong Provincial Top Ten County Newspaper Media and Shandong Provincial Excellent County Newspaper for consecutive years.

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

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