Analysis on the Phenomenon of Live-Stream Marketing by Mainstream Media

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Abstract

Against the background of the COVID-19 epidemic, mainstream media have given full play to their advantages and live-stream marketing through media + government, media + web celebrity and other means to help economic recovery, which has achieved good results and improved their own image. Mainstream media should pay attention to maintaining media credibility, paying attention to culture, avoiding legal risks and other issues when live-streaming marketing.

Keywords

Live-Stream Marketing; Mainstream Media; Advantage; Mode; Public Credibility.

1. Introduction

The COVID-19 epidemic has had a tremendous impact on the real economy. The sales of high-quality agricultural and sideline products in many parts of the country have been in trouble, which has seriously affected the restoration of social and economic order and people's employment. In order to increase sales and reduce the losses brought by the epidemic to the local economy and local farmers, the central mainstream media represented by CCTV, People's Daily, Xinhua News Agency, etc. give full play to their advantages of talents, resources and brands, join hands with e-commerce live broadcasting platforms and social networking platforms to test live-stream marketing to help the local economic development. For example, on April 6, 2020, CCTV News held a live broadcast of “Thank you for making the order for Hubei”. The first two-hour broadcast attracted over 10 million viewers and sold over 40 million yuan worth of agricultural and sideline products from Hubei [1]. In addition, the local mainstream media in all provinces and cities are also full of firepower, they are carrying out live-stream marketing in various forms.

The effect of live-stream marketing by mainstream media is obvious. It plays a leading role of mainstream media, improves the exposure of products, opens up sales channels, and has a positive impact on economic recovery and their own image. However, from the perspective of challenges and risks, mainstream media need to pay attention to maintaining media credibility, preventing fake and inferior commodities, focusing on culture and avoiding possible legal risks.

2. The Advantages of Live-Stream Marketing by Mainstream Media

Different from network anchors with goods, mainstream media have their own advantages in live-stream marketing. They endorse live stream marketing with the media’s own communication power, influence and public credibility, so that consumers can be more assured to consume.

2.1. Strong Public Welfare

Some scholars have pointed out that under the general trend of media convergence, the development of China’s media industry is moving towards the four important trends of new
“four modernization”: video-oriented, MCN-oriented, tech-oriented and service-oriented. In terms of service-oriented, it means that in the new era of communication, media should not only be engaged in the business of “communication layer” but also in the business of “service layer”. Media services will penetrate every link of human social life[2]. The current upsurge of live-stream marketing by mainstream media is the embodiment of media service. Different from commercial network anchors, mainstream media pay more attention to social benefits and take public welfare publicity and support as the goals of live broadcasting, showing a strong public welfare nature. For public welfare, the mainstream media will strictly control the quality of products and recommend local products with high quality, rich varieties and distinctive features to netizens during the live-stream marketing. In the COVID-19 epidemic, the mainstream media has highlighted the unsold agricultural products because of the epidemic and related products that help local enterprises to resume production. It not only creates more marketing channels and profit sources for merchants and farmers, but also provides better service and more solid guarantee for netizens. For example, on April 12, 2020, the famous CCTV hosts Ouyang Xadan and Wang Zulan carried the goods together in a live broadcast titled “Thank you for making the order for Hubei province”. The live broadcast was mainly aimed at various specialties of Hubei province, with the sales volume reaching 61 million yuan[3]. This kind of live-stream marketing for public benefit is full of positive energy, which can resonate with the majority of netizens, making the live-stream marketing by mainstream media more like a buying "carnival" in which the whole nation helps the economic recovery.

2.2. High Credibility
The core goal of live-stream marketing is to promote sales, and the credibility of webcast subjects is an important factor influencing whether netizens approve products or not. Mainstream media have high public credibility, and have been recognized and respected by the public for a long time. This is also the advantage of their live-stream marketing, which can bring them huge traffic. With the help of their original sense of public trust, the mainstream media can turn the advantages of public credibility into influence, arouse the resonance of many consumers, and stimulate huge consumption momentum. The reason the first public service live broadcast activity of CCTV News “Thank you for making the order for Hubei” attracted over 100 million viewers and the sales volume reached over 40 million yuan all benefited from the high public credibility of live-stream marketing by mainstream media.

2.3. Powerful Influence
The mainstream media have strong communication power and influence, and has also accumulated many fans on the new media platform. For example, both CCTV News and People’s Daily have over 100 million fans on Douyin, while Hubei Daily has over 20 million fans. This provides the basis and ability guarantee for the live-stream marketing by mainstream media. With the support and attention of a large number of fans, the live-stream sales volume has a more reliable guarantee. If the mainstream media can fully transform their professional advantages during the live-stream marketing, it will have a tremendous impact. For example, on April 13, 2020, People’s Daily new media, together with the team of well-known anchor Weijia, Taobao e-commerce platform and celebrities and artists, launched a series of public benefit live broadcast titled “Place an order for Hubei”, which has been watched by over 100 million people and taken nearly 3 million orders. The related topics have been read over 1 billion times and the number of interactions has far exceeded 500,000[4]. On the night of May 1, 2020, Hubei Daily carried out the first live-stream marketing on Douyin, and 6,886 orders were sold within two hours, ranking first among provincial media on Douyin platform in China[5]. These show the significant influence of live-stream marketing by mainstream media.
3. The Mode of Live-Stream Marketing by Mainstream Media

3.1. Mainstream Media + Government Officials

In the COVID-19 epidemic, in order to expand the sales of unsalable agricultural products, many parts of the country adopted the mode of mainstream media + government Officials to promote local agricultural products and quickly promoted nationwide. The public credibility of the mainstream media and the public credibility of the local government strengthen the authority and credibility of the live-stream marketing, which can well endorse the brand for the merchants and farmers and open up the sales market. On the evening of April 18, 2020, Xinhua News Agency and Douyin jointly conducted a special live broadcast, in which five governors from Huanggang, Enshi, Jingzhou, Jingmen and Shiyan, took part in the live-stream marketing. Within two and a half hours, over 500,000 pieces of 15 kinds of local characteristic agricultural products were sold[6].

3.2. Mainstream Media Presenters+ Web Celebrity

This is a combination of a mainstream media host and a web celebrity. The mainstream media presenters have been trained in professional skills and professionalism, with high professional quality and profound cultural connotation. The rhythm control during the live-stream marketing is relatively professional, and the words used in the live-stream marketing can be more in line with the actual status of the product and avoid exaggerations and false propaganda. In particular, famous presenters with their own traffic will direct their original fans to live streaming e-commerce platforms, thus ensuring their popularity. And web celebrity image is close to the people and earth, full of human interest. The combination of the two can complement each other, gather fans with consumption potential, improve user cognition in live streaming, and easily have considerable traffic. For example, on April 6, 2020, CCTV host Guangquan Zhu cooperated with Jiaqi Li in live-stream marketing. This public service live broadcast attracted 10.91 million views, with 122 million views, and the number of thumb up broadcast stations reached 160 million[7].

4. Issues that Should be Paid Attention to in Live-Stream Marketing by Mainstream Media

For mainstream media, if they just blindly try to catch up with the air outlet of live-stream marketing, they are not fully prepared and rush into the field, and the result is often "ground covered with chicken feathers". Mainstream media broadcast with goods must pay attention to the following aspects of the problem.

4.1. Maintain the Public Credibility of Mainstream Media

Different from ordinary stars, web celebrity and entrepreneurs, the core advantage of mainstream media is its public credibility. The public credibility of mainstream media includes the social attributes of the media and the social popularity and influence of the media practitioners, especially the presenters. It can not only enable the mainstream media to gain the recognition of consumers and enterprises, but also get the traffic support from e-commerce platforms and traffic platforms. The willingness of netizens to place orders for products recommended by mainstream media also stems from their trust in their mainstream media identity. However, quality and after-sales service are the lifeblood of mainstream media. Whether the mainstream media can accumulate good public praise or not depends on the quality of the goods and after-sales service. Therefore, mainstream media should be careful in choosing partners and strictly control the quality of products. Mainstream media need to be not only good product promoters, but also good quality inspectors. They should not only recommend high-quality, diversified and distinctive local products to Internet users, but also
establish long-term cooperative relations with businesses and establish smooth after-sales service channels. In this way, the public credibility of mainstream media can be maintained for a long time, or it will cause significant damage to the public credibility of the media.

4.2. **Abide by Laws and Regulations and Avoid Legal Risks**

Mainstream media should strictly abide by relevant policies and regulations when taking part in live-stream marketing, and strictly review every link of the activity to prevent sales fraud, fabricating and exaggerating product features and other problems. Some presenters exaggerate when promoting goods, mislead consumers, even lure consumers to trade, all these behaviors have legal risks[8]. On July 1, 2020, China Advertising Association issued and implemented the Code of Conduct for Network Live-Stream Marketing, in which article 6 stipulates that the subject of network live-stream marketing shall not make up or tamper with transaction data and user evaluation by traffic fraud such as brushing bills, hyping credit. No false commercial propaganda shall be conducted to deceive or mislead consumers. Commercial advertisements released in network live-stream marketing shall strictly abide by the Advertisement Law of the People’s Republic of China[9].

4.3. **Focus on Culture**

The live-stream marketing by mainstream media are mostly public benefit. In addition, they have rich talent resources and strong content production capacity. Therefore, their activities of live-stream marketing should not only focus on product sales but also consider social benefits. In the process of live-stream marketing, besides focusing on the information of commodities, it can also be integrated into introducing manufacturers’ enterprise culture, local customs and customs of origin, folklore, historical allusions, tourism resources and other aspects. This will not only enrich the content of live broadcasting, meet the needs of audiences in various aspects, but also highlight the humanistic nature and improve their shopping experience. For example, in mid-June 2020, CCTV News held a live broadcast of “Bringing intangible cultural heritage home”. Presenter Ning Wang teamed up with Jiaqi Li to show traditional intangible cultural heritage skills to netizens. Ning Wang says, “Today we seem to carry goods, but in fact we are carrying culture, we are carrying knowledge, we are carrying our hearts and minds with our ancestors.”[10] Whether they are fans or consumers, they want nothing more than high-quality products and joyful experiences in purchasing goods when they take part in live activities. Therefore, in addition to the quality of products, the content of cultural output can also add points to live-stream marketing.

5. **Conclusion**

The live-stream marketing by mainstream media is an innovative exploration in the market environment under the epidemic situation. They should not only fully tap their own advantages, help product sales and boost economic development, but also stick to the mission and responsibility of mainstream media in live-stream marketing and maintain the public credibility accumulated over the years.

**References**


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