Changes in the Operational Thinking of City Image Promotional Films in the Omnimedia Era

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Abstract

The city image promotional film can fully display the history, culture and spirit of a city, however, because the creative ideas and processes are very modeled, and the running forms are very simple, it is difficult to achieve the propaganda effect and value that the promotional films should have. If we want to change this situation, we must have the innovative thinking of omnimedia, innovate and explore in the content creation and promotion links. This paper proposes to implement innovative strategies in the creative ideas, contents, propagation and promotion forms of city image promotional films in the omnimedia era, and hopes to make the city image propaganda works thrive in the omnimedia era.

Keywords

Omnimedia; City image promotional film; Network propagation; Internet technology; Integrated innovation.

1. Concepts and Functions of City Image Promotional Films

In recent years, more and more cities in China have begun to pay attention to the shaping and depiction of their own city image, and have shot many promotional films about the city image with various topics and versions one after another, and put them on various domestic media, and hope that people can quickly understand their city through this form of viewing. The city image promotional film strives to set up city image in the audience's mind, it shows a city's history, geographical character, regional culture, etc. It is regarded as a visual business card for a city or a region, and it has become one of the important ways to enhance the soft power of a city.

In the past 20 years, the role of city promotional films in shaping the city image and enhancing the city's soft power has been valued and supported by local governments, tourism bureaus and other departments. The competition among cities has gradually shifted from economics to culture, the proportion of cultural elements in the city promotional films is increasing. [1] Under such a trend, if a city can shoot a high-quality and high-level city image promotional film, it can not only fully enhance the city's appeal, influence and competitiveness, can effectively promote the rapid economic development of the region and the city, and can also further explore the local culture, which has a certain value in tourism and the spiritual cultivation of local people.

2. City Image Promotional Films are in Trouble

With the rapid development of China's economy and the rapid change of science and technology, the construction and face of various cities have shown new changes and improvement. In addition, with the popularity of smart phones in China, various software and hardware applications based on the Internet have emerged as the times require. Taking video programs as an example, people are not limited to watching TV and computers at home, but use various video APP software on smartphones to watch and appreciate video programs anytime,

anywhere. On the basis of the rapid development of new media information, people's use habits of media and aesthetics of video have great changes. During this process, the development of city image promotional films seems to be stagnant, and the problems in the process of creation and propagation have gradually become prominent.

2.1. Homogenization of Creative Contents

The image promotional films released by many cities are displayed around local scenic spots, cultural landscapes, modern construction and other contents, and there are very obvious homogenization phenomena in the contents displayed. What each city is expecting for are basically topics such as livability and good working conditions, green ecology, and tourism, etc. Due to the same creative conception and expression ideas, as a result, the features of these cities cannot really be clearly distinguished and impressed by the audience. Almost all of the contents shot by these cameras includes such characters as playing children, running young men and women, and leisurely elderly people, these images, as character symbols in the film, give vigor and vitality to the whole promotional film, there is nothing wrong with this idea. However, these similar contents and elements are almost used in many promotional films, which will inevitably make viewers difficultly identify the features of the city. Naturally, they cannot generate emotional resonance and agreement.

2.2. Stereotype of Creative Means

Generally speaking, city image promotional films are designed and produced by professional film and television production organizations. For business production organization, there are often certain stereotyped expression means in the works, for example, the camera's shooting angle, scene, lens use, shooting performance means are relatively fixed and stereotyped. In the process of video editing, the fast editing in the "pipeline" means improves the production efficiency, but the contents of the video are relatively lack of personality. Because the works often pursue visual shock, the shots in many promotional films contain various technical shooting means which seem to be dazzling and bewildering. However, in fact, due to the lack of creative ideas, they feels like these cool effects are just same stuff of shots. In addition, in the later synthesis process of video images, some film and television effect templates are often used, the material of the shot video is imported into each template by category, then use the relevant "best parameters" set in the template are used to generate some video effects in batches. At first glance, these video clips using templates do look very "luxury", but in fact, the same video effects are commonplace in other cities' promotional films. Therefore, the homogenization of the contents and effects of these promotional films can easily make viewers feel "stereotyped " and familiar.

2.3. Single Promotion Channel

In order to make the promotion and propagation of promotional films have more credibility and authority, many decision-makers of city promotional films still choose the promotion channels based on traditional thinking, mainly relying on TV media platforms, moreover, they tend to use the combination of local and national TV media for on-time broadcast. Taking CCTV as an example, CCTV-4 (CCTV International Channel) broadcasts no less than 20 city advertisement images every day. [2] In fact, this form of promotion was more effective before 2015, the TV audience at the time was still relatively broad. With the large-scale popularization of smartphones, many young and middle-aged groups have gradually turned to video APP on smartphones and tablet computers, as a result, the ratings of traditional TV media are lower than it was in the past, and it will inevitably affect the propagation effect of the city image promotional films in the traditional TV media.

3. Omnimedia Contact with Audiences in the New Era

The 6th issue of "Qiushi" in 2019 published a speech by Chinese President Xi Jinping, General Secretary of the People's Republic of China, "Accelerating the Promotion of Media Integration Development and Building an Omnimedia Propagation Pattern". The article proposed that the omnimedia is developing continuously for the first time, and full-course media, holographic media, full-staff media, and full-effect media appeared. General Secretary Xi's statement pointed out the direction for us to discern the current complex propagation pattern, and the concept of "omnimedia propagation" should become the innovative guide and action coordinate of China's media integrated development to a new stage. [3]

The so-called omnimedia is that various media expression means (multimedia) such as text, sound, video, animation, web pages, etc., the propagation media information adopts various media expression means (multimedia) such as text, sound, video, animation, web page, etc., uses different media forms such as radio, television, audio and video, film, publishing, newspapers, magazines, and websites (business integration), propagate through the integrated radio and television network, telecommunication network and Internet (network convergence). Finally, users can complete the integrated reception of information with various terminals such as TV, computer, and mobile phone (three screens in one), so that anyone, any time, any place, and any terminal can obtain any desired information [4]. The integration of media forms at the level of media contents, channels and functions, and the concept of "omnimedia" has begun to be widely used. [5] Integration, cross-border and openness, these three key words are the core elements of omnimedia, and they are the best embodiment of innovative thinking mode in the era of omnimedia.

In the era of omnimedia, the big increase of netizens has caused the TV audience to begin shrinking, with the help of PC and mobile phones, people can obtain information more actively and conveniently. [6] The propagation channels that people contact every day are not only numerous, but also novel in form and comprehensive in content. Many people are accustomed to obtaining various domestic and foreign information through mobile social APP, for example, data shows that users' reliance on social APP for news has dominated. At present, more than 70% of Chinese people obtain external information through social media. [7] The most outstanding among a large number of APPs is WeChat. It has developed a multi-functional integrated platform, which can not only socialize, pay, play and interact, among them, the official account function can propagate and promote various types of information, and users can easily forward the information pushed by the official account to individual or chat groups, and form rapid point-to-surface propagation effect.

Moreover, in the era of omnimedia, TV boxes based on Internet emerge as the times require, TV boxes and various video APPs make the old and new contrast and complement each other, users can demand all kinds of programs they want to watch. These video APPs are the same as mobile phones and computers, intelligent big data analysis is carried out through the on-demand preferences of users, and further push programs that users may like through multiple platforms. The traditional TV media were forced to make open and innovative attempts, used their own clients to carry out deep cooperation with popular video APPs, push and broadcast some TV programs (exclusive copyright) with high ratings on the Internet, and attract the audience to scan the QR code with their mobile phones to participate in the activities and interactions in the program.

4. Operation Strategies of the City Image Promotional Films in the Omnimedia Era

In the era of omnimedia, both traditional media and emerging media have begun innovating and exploring. Therefore, for the city image promotional film, it not only uses sound and painting to comprehensively express the contents of urban humanities, history, construction and landscape, etc., but also pays attention to the innovation and exploration of these contents in the form of creation and promotion. If we don't discern the future development situation and changes of the media, and blindly conform to stereotypes, act according to the traditional thinking and inertial thinking, no matter how good the content of the city image publicity works is, it cannot achieve the desired propagation effect. We can achieve real breakthroughs in difficult situations only if city promotional films articulate with new ideas, new technologies, and new platforms in the creation of form and content, and let more people pay attention to the image display of a city in various ways, so that people really want to know a city and really want to go to a city.

Therefore, the creation and promotion of city promotional films must look at the transformation and connection from traditional media thinking to Internet media thinking. It must have comprehensive and innovative ways of thinking in forms and contents, focusing on the needs of the audience. It is also important to grasp the psychology of the audience (potential consumers) and understand their appeals and preferences, to conceive the design scheme of promotional films in the new era pertinently.

4.1. Make Media Matrix of City Image with Multiple Scenes and Platforms

In today's era of information explosion, it is definitely no nowhere enough to rely on just one publicity platform for promotion. In the introduction of the city image promotional film, it is necessary to reach the target audience in multiple scenarios and platforms, it can aim at audiences with different features, and put them on new media and mainstream media platforms with different styles at home and abroad. [8] It is necessary for the creative team to consider making media ecological matrix of city image.

In recent years, domestic Internet media applications are mainly WeChat, Toutiao, Douyin, Xiaohongshu, Weibo and Himalaya. These APPs are "must-have" applications of smartphones, including social interaction, dynamic video, broadcast audio and other different emphasis areas, therefore, the installed rate of these applications is very high and users are extensive. If a city's image propagation works can be linked with these platforms for matrix propagation, it will inevitably expand the propagation effect of the city's image and fully enhance its influence among the public.

For city image promotional films, it is very necessary to introduce for target audiences with different ages and features. In addition, according to the division of different scenes and platforms, they can be divided into three scenes: home, business, and portable, then, according to the features of different scenes and platforms, different types and styles of city image propagation works will be introduced to build a set of complete and systematic omnimedia matrix of city image promotion (as shown in Figure 1), so as to realize the joint efforts of multiple media platforms, and truly form omnimedia, all-round three-dimensional propagation and promotion pattern of city image promotional works.
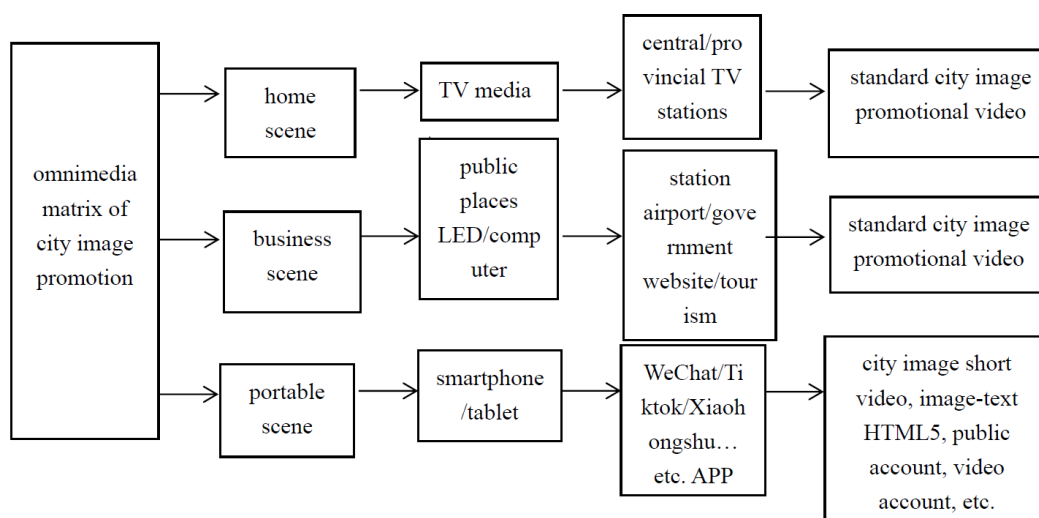
Figure 1. Omnimedia matrix of city image promotion according to different scenes

4.2. Creation of City Image Propagation Films Should Pay More Attention to Creativity

In the omnimedia era, not only should we have omnimedia thinking in promotion, but we also need to break the inherent thinking in creation, pay attention to creativity, and lay emphasis on the essence of advertising. The problems in city image promotional films, to a certain extent, because they did not understand the essence of the advertisement of the city image promotional film, advertisements need creativity to realize the propagation. In the congested Internet information environment, a large number of city image promotional films have little response after they are introduced, it is related to outdated creativity, lack of narrative focus, and the continuation of creative idea of the traditional well-rounded panoramic display narrative, this kind of stereotyped creativity is difficult to leave a clear impression on the audience, let alone the possibility of secondary propagation. Now some places have noticed the importance of creativity to city image promotional films, for example, the 2022 Internet celebrity tourism city image promotional film "Come to Fujian, Enjoy the Fujian Fine Food" reflects the change of this creative thinking. This series of image promotional films is made by officially released by Fujian Culture and Tourism Office. In the creation, the food with single topic is narrated, and the famous Shaxian snacks are used as the narrative fuse to further elaborate the diversification of Fujian's food, so that the audience can understand the central topic of the series "Come to Fujian, Enjoy the Fujian Fine Food". This official creation uses funny, idol drama, Wong Kar Wai and other styles, adopts innovative film shooting methods, and has excellent production standards. Finally, it is popular with "Gen Z" and netizens, and it quickly dominates the various hot search lists. This is the power of creativity. The creation of city image promotional films must change the way of thinking, tap local features, present distinctive local characteristics, and learn to use Internet thinking to create and use Internet language to advertise.

In addition, some cities in China have gradually begun to explore the possibility of linkage between cartoon elements and city culture, the most representative of which is the use of cartoon city image posters. First, the animation form can be used to create exclusive city image posters, namely according to its own characteristics, especially unique cultural, historical or mythological elements. The virtualized animation image has a high degree of freedom in imagination, innovation and design, therefore, the shape of the poster of the animation city image can be either a person, an object, an animal or a imaginary character image. The model IP of the animation city image poster is extremely flexible, and can be presented differently

according to different topics, activities, promotions and specific needs (as shown in Fig.2). At the dynamic level, if the animation poster as a "narrator" in the promotional film, and introduce the features and highlights of the city with witty movements or expressions, then the vividness and interest it reflects will definitely bring new vitality to the whole work, and it will make the audience fresh and unforgettable. Furthermore, these image IPs can also be directly the "actors" of the city's topic cartoons, for example, the cartoon city image poster – Cute Lion of Shishi City, Fujian, designed by animation designer Zeng Shengrong, these funny little lions have become the main actors of the cartoon "Lions Come and Change Luck" (as shown in Figure 2). At the static level, these animation images can be used as "brand mascots" of city tourism cultural and creative industries, link their image IP with cultural and creative products, and form tangible display of city culture and image brands (as shown in Figure 2, Figure 3, Figure 4).

Figure 2. The cartoon "Lions Come and Change Luck" starred by Cute Lion, the cartoon city poster of Fujian Shishi

Figure 3. The application of the cute lion image of Fujian Shishi cartoon city poster in the field of home goods

Figure 4. The application of the cute lion IP image of Fujian Shishi cartoon city poster in the field of cultural and creative products

4.3. The Addition of New Online Media - The Cross-Border Promotion of City Image

In the era of omnimedia, new requirements have been put forward for the creation and conception of city image promotional films, the platform on which the promotional video is introduced after it is completed, the form of innovative display, and the possibility of interaction need to be focused on. In recent years, whether it is CCTV media or TV programs in local media, some variety shows that require audience's participation and interaction, in order to attract more TV audiences to participate in the voting, quiz, games and other links of the program, the program team relies on the Internet and guide the audience to "scan" the QR code on the TV screen with their mobile phone, and then move to the APP on the mobile phone for online interactive participation. This "scan" step is a necessary link in the transition from traditional media to the Internet. Now, for the propagation of city image promotional films, the above-mentioned transition and transformation means can be used in the idea of cross-border integration of promotional film propagation platforms, and various links form an organic whole. For example, the promotional film broadcast on TV as the origin, relying on the Internet and combining audience interests, the diversity of city image promotion, propagation and interaction outside traditional media platforms are fully expanded, For example, when a city image promotional video is broadcast on a TV platform, the audience can be guided to scan the QR code to enter the APP interface on the smartphone side through the relevant introduction, and introduce more information and interactive activities related to the city, in this way, the audiences' (potential consumer group) impression, cognition and understanding of this city can be improved (as shown in Figure 5).
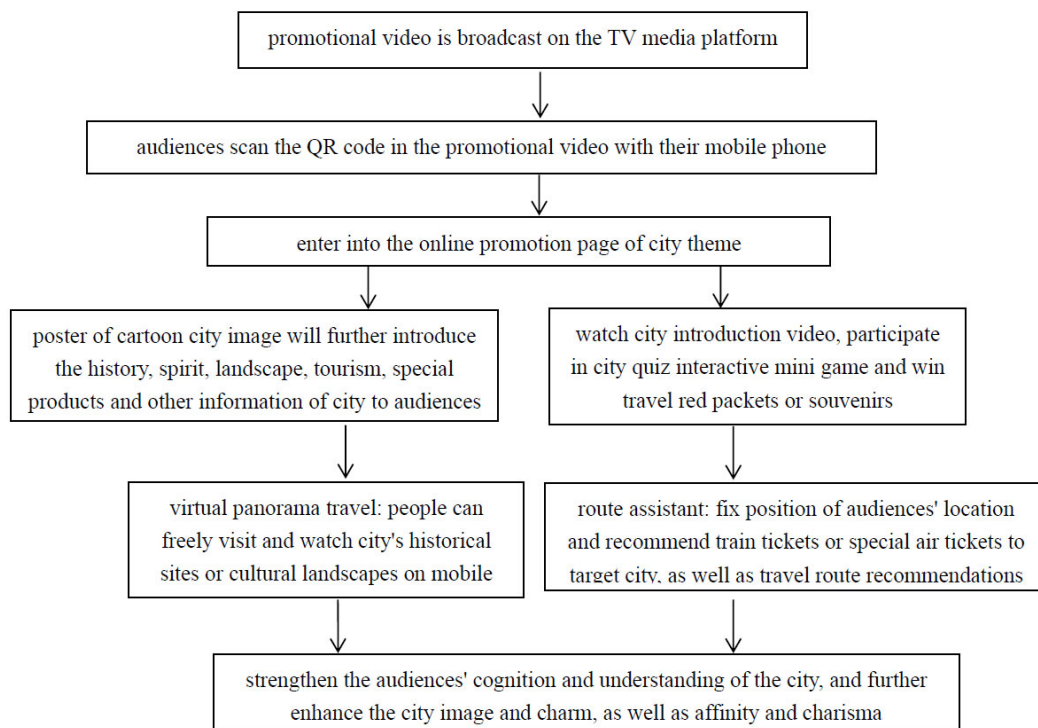
Figure 5. The transformation process of city image promotional films from traditional media to Internet media propagation

5. Conclusion

China has entered into the fast lane of the 5G era and is running towards the goal of Web 3.0, with the continuous development of Internet technology in the future, omnimedia propagation should become the basic awareness that all disseminators should have. In the era of omnimedia, for the operation of city image promotional films, the creative team should lay more emphasis on the application and innovation of creative thinking and Internet thinking. Only by conforming to the features of omnimedia, constantly carrying out new explorations and attempts in topic, contents and channels, making diversified city image propagation content, and forming new creative idea of "same topic, offline and online, and diverse forms", we can make the city image propaganda work achieve a good propagation effect in the omnimedia era.

Acknowledgments

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