

Two Types of Content Marketing in Video Distribution Platform - A Case Study of Bilibili

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Abstract: According to CNNIC report, China's online video users account for 94.5% of the total Internet users with an enormous scale of 975 million, making content marketing in video distribution platform a craze. As a younger and prosperous video distribution platform, Bilibili holds a large potential market of the ZGeneration, attracting more and more brands to employ content marketing. This essay lists the prevailing types of content marketing in Bilibili, points out the functional content marketing and entertainment content marketing which are of greatest influence. Comparing with each other, the two types of content marketing suit different products and conditions, and have their unique ways to impact on audience.

Keywords: Bilibili, Video distribution platform, Functional content marketing, Entertainment content marketing

INTRODUCTION

Content marketing is not a recent concept, Granat(2011) reckons that storytelling is the key of content marketing, and it remains effective both in mass media age and self-media age. Pulizzi J. believes telling a story in content platform helps the brand cut the cost of message distribution. Ekrek even foresaw the condition of brand being a message producer in 2000, which was known as PGC afterwards.

Yi-Jin Zhou of Zhongshan University selected 193 related essays from the EBSCO academic resource platform, the VIP information Database and the CNKI Chinese Journals, drawing a conclusion that the concept of content marketing refers to a marketing strategy that transmits valuable and entertaining product or brand information in various forms of media content through assorted channels, in order to arouse customers' participation and improve the brand recognition in the process of interaction [Yijin, *et. al.*, 2013]. Zhou's study based on abundant literature from 2009 to 2013, basically defined the concept of content marketing.

Hui-fen Fu of University of International Business and Economics conducted an empirical study of Lenovo, Huawei, HTC and Samsung in 2015, finding that the content marketing of consumer electronics brands can be divided into five categories: function, entertainment, social interaction, brand engagement and self-actualization [Huifen, *et. al.*, 2016]. The five categories are widely used as the types of content marketing in academia.

Xi-Ming Li of Beijing Institute of Technology notes that The major e-commerce platforms introduce short video content in the form of independent short video channels or applications, and use its features of being real and intuitive to help users quickly

understand the goods, Meanwhile, video platforms cooperate with ecommerce to improve user accounts and attract users to purchase goods directly in short video applications, forming a closed-loop transaction within the platform, so as to transform the purchase intention into purchase behavior, shorten the consumption time [Meijuan, *et. al.*, 2017].

Mei-juan Zhang of Wuhan University mentioned the decision-making mechanism of users has changed In the digital media era, she put forward the 5W of content marketing, shed light on the strategy of content marketing.

However, as a young and prosperous video distribution platform, Bilibili is rarely mentioned in both external and domestic academia, this essay choose Bilibili as a case, pointing out the influence and strategy of functional content marketing and entertainment content marketing.

CONTENT MARKETING IN BILIBILI AND ITS BACKGROUND

According to "the statistical report on the development of China's Internet (CNNIC)" as of December 2021, China's online video(short video included) users reached 975 million, an increase of 47.94 million compared with that at the end of 2020, accounting for 94.5%of the total Internet users. Video content acquisition has become a commonplace on the Internet. When the integration of social media and video distribution platform becomes a tendency, UGCs(Users generated content) lead the way of content marketing in the platform, bringing about five types of content marketing [Ximing, *et. al.*,2020].

Among five types of content marketing, which refer to functional content, entertainment content, social interactive content, brand engagement content, self-actualization content, and emotional content,

entertainment along with functional ones are most widely utilized in video distribution platform like Bilibili, followed by social interactive content and brand engagement content. Many message producers (known as 'uppers') in Bilibili are focused on functional content, which is known as 'testing video' or 'product review'.

FUNCTIONAL CONTENT MARKETING

For instance, when a potential is going to purchase a new smartphone, he will probably type in the keyword 'smartphone' to looking for its comments--there are always some uppers already tried the smartphone he is interested in. In the technology zone of Bilibili, 'He tongxue' is one of the most popular uppers in technology zone, his first video is about his new iphone, now his follower reached 9 million and his program type has changed into brand engagement content. In February 2021, he telephoned Tim Cook of Apple in California, chatting about tech brand. His video about a DIY Airdesk made the stock of sponsor Yuege Co., Ltd rose more than 14%.

However, only the top upper can bring about such a phenomenal case. Geeks in technology zone around one million followers who are crazy about electronic products often lay out mutually competing products on their desk then spout eloquent speeches comparing them. 'Xiaobaiceping' and 'Damipingce' launched their product review in Q4 2021 with over one million views. However, the placement ad in functional content is proved too stiff to get public approval. In the era of social media, the booming right of the audience makes the effect of content marketing uncertain. In the aspect of netizen, it is 'rational praise' that depends. After I searched recent video examples in technology zone of Bilibili, successful content marketing means high level of likes and shares with hardly any negative comments or challenges. They have three things in common: professional, open and wide-ranging.

Professional means the uppers characterize themselves as a product expert, delivering professional test and review. Self-media are not capable of such rigorous testing, so it turns out to be PGCs(Professional Generated Contents) and OGCs(Occupationally-generated Content) that can achieve most attention.

Open requires the uppers inviting the audience to participate in a vote as a reference opinion, making sure the voice from various position is audible. This will provide clutter in marketing if the advantage point of product is not outstanding or affectionally attractive.

Wide-ranging is an advanced demand in content marketing, it ensures high level of objectivity and overall involvement. However, wide range product review represents not only the competing product, but also the products in other price level, which may lead to churn and high cost.

These features make functional content marketing perfect for high involvement products such as vehicles and electronic products, but not fit for the low involvement products like FMCG. Besides, where there is a search, there is a need. The conversion rate of functional content marketing is therefore considerable.

ENTERTAINMENT CONTENT MARKETING

As a younger platform, cultural and entertaining contents are of great appreciation in Bilibili, causing entertainment content marketing an earlier and more extensive form of business model. In entertainment, knowledge and lifestyle zone of Bilibili, entertainment content marketing are common among uppers with ten thousand viewers or more, and are widely accepted by the audience if the marketing insert is reasonable. A catchword 'taking meal' hits the street which implies taking sponsorship of content is like taking a meal from the sponsor. In knowledge zone, history is a popular topic and is related to some strategy games. In the cases of a video about the Battle of Red Cliff, 'Lishidiaoyanshi'drew a perfect balance between the climax of his story and the game Three Kingdoms Strategic Edition. The video got 900000 views and 44000 likes. The favor of the upper's content was transformed into the curiosity towards the game, making the audience take instant action in the video platform.

Otherwise, if the upper get rid of the story arc, entertainment content marketing can become interesting. It is proved that combining the unexpected advertising with story-telling is also loved by the masses. However, the conversion rate is in doubt that the attention is usually focused on the story or content rather than the advertisement in this kind of marketing. Some audience even skip the advertisement and leave the point of time when the advertisement is over to guide other audience skipping it as well. As for entertainment content marketing, the advertising needs to be part of the story or show, which asks a highly designed content. Moreover, an entertainment content marketing should grasp the immediate purchase or click behavior otherwise the marketing is likely to drop off into oblivion. Above all, entertainment content marketing is made for low involvement products like FMCG and digital item.

SUMMARY

To sum up, the functional and entertainment content marketing are never panacea nowadays. They fit separate fields of product and assorted style of uppers. Under the influence of audience power, their usage ought to be circumspect. One thing is for sure, the audience acquire content to amuse themselves and grasp comments of each other, not to be educated by advertising. When a content marketing comes with a proper narrator, an undivided story arc as well as

fitting time to show up, they can hardly missed by curious audience.

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