

Research of Social Media Marketing Strategies of Chinese Domestic Films

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Abstract. Social media has a very important role in the promotion and marketing of movies, and it is one of the reasons for the success of movies. This paper will first introduce the background of the marketing strategy of Chinese domestic movies. With the rapid development of social media, unique communication characteristics have attracted more and more people to gather and use it, simultaneously bringing opportunities and challenges to Chinese domestic films. The current situation will also be analyzed. Filmmakers have made some development and progress in marketing methods by constantly finding suitable marketing strategies in practice, but filmmakers still have deviations in film marketing strategies. Many problems need to be reflected and improved, such as excessive hype. The most important thing is the countermeasures. In the face of many problems, film marketers need to understand the current market preferences of the public. And then establish a standardized system for social media marketing of films, as well as pay attention to all methods that can help promote films, such as developing and marketing film derivatives.

Keywords: Social media, Marketing strategies, Chinese domestic films, Problems and solutions, Communication.

1. Introduction

1.1 Research background

As people's living standards continue to improve, watching movies has become one of the most important ways to entertain people. The movie industry has become increasingly popular and has great prospects for development. So many people go into the film and television industry, and the movies have become rich in science fiction, comedy and animation. The success or failure of a movie depends on the artistic value of the movie itself and the marketing and promotion of the movie. Domestic movies' social media marketing strategy started with a movie called "Hero" in 2002, and people gradually discovered the importance of social media marketing. Artistic value is the fundamental condition for high box office revenue of a movie, while marketing and promotion are the prerequisites. Because social media can not only promote and understand the audience's preferences and needs through direct communication with the public, making the publicity and marketing more targeted. In recent years, the progress of information technology has brought more and more software into people's lives, such as microblogging, WeChat, and public reviews, which has brought a lot of benefits to the social media marketing of movies and thus achieved good results. For example, for the Chinese movie "Solo Moon" released on July 29, 2022, they will release the trailer or special features in advance, the play count on July 17 was 30,000, and as time went by, the play count on July 20 reached 230,000. Moreover, the play count on the day before the movie's release was as high as 1.2 million, which made the box office of "Solo Moon" as high as 998 million. It can be seen that social media marketing has achieved some results.

1.2 Literature review

There is much less research on the artistic value, expression, and narrative of social media and film than on the communication marketing of social media. However, when the keyword "film marketing" is searched, the number of literature has increased, which shows that the research on film marketing has been paid more and more attention. Kaifeng Qin proposed that the "weak ties" proposed by American sociologist Mark Granovett -- social ties with fewer interaction times and a

low degree of intimacy, to point out the use of “weak ties” to promote through press conferences, posters, trailers, or other ways [1]. Pan Liu and Jingya Liu analyzed that positioning and communication in film marketing are the most important parts, and referring to Lasswell’s communication mode, more than 20 kinds of marketing methods are sorted and analyzed from the five dimensions of 5W (who, what, whom, why, when) [2]. Hongna Wang found that domestic films are over-marketed, focusing on the unreasonable schedule arrangement of films, and the marketing selling points of films tend to be entertaining [3]. Lei Gu proposed that because of the problems existing in the marketing of movies, he puts forward strategies such as strengthening the supervision and guidance of public opinion and using media platforms to create a movie brand image [4].

Most articles mainly study the current situation, problems, and countermeasures of domestic film social media marketing, and very few articles study the impact of social media marketing.

1.3 Research framework

This article is generally divided into four parts. The first is an explanation of the research methodology used. Secondly, the current situation is analyzed, and the means and strategies for domestic marketing films on social media are studied. At the same time, the problems and the reasons for the problems are analyzed. Thirdly, it proposes targeted methods and strategies for optimizing or improving the problems. Finally, the problems and strategies are summarized, as well as the implications.

2. Methods

The research methods used in this paper are literature research and case study.

2.1 Literature research method

Literature research can also be called the analysis method, which refers to finding directly related materials and papers through domestic and foreign websites or journals, reading them, and then analyzing, summarizing, and inscribing them. In this paper, we analyze how the Chinese film industry and film marketing communication can be developed through social media. At the same time, how to grasp the opportunities and meet the challenges so that the domestic film industry can continue to develop better by sorting out and summarizing the current situation and strategies of film social media marketing.

2.2 Case study

The second research method is the case study, which means finding the required event on various websites or platforms through the article’s content, reading the event and understanding it, then analyzing the causes, results, and impacts of the event, and finally linking it to the article. This approach helps with interpretation and understanding and works well to support the point.

3. Results

Social media marketing for movies means promoting a movie through various social media or platforms. There are many ways to promote a movie, but ultimately it’s all about communicating with the internet users or viewers to meet the needs of the public as much as possible. Audiences can write, share, and discuss with each other through social media, and posting on the Internet can also help promote the movie. China’s domestic movie development history is not very long. The social media marketing strategy for movies was created in 2002 when a movie called “Hero” made people aware of social media marketing. However, it was in the early stage of movie marketing, and people were still trying to use this method to promote, mainly through websites or forums. Slowly, as people become more aware of movie media marketing, and in order to get more people’s attention, movies began to be advertised online, with promotional photos, videos, or posters posted on the web, allowing

viewers to spend more time discussing the movie. At the same time, the importance of social media marketing was discovered to promote the movie. Then later, movies were promoted through blogs, wikis, and other social media. This is now the most common and main method, and the difference is that there are more media such as Weibo, WeChat, etc. [5]. Social media allows marketers to communicate and interact with the public anytime and anywhere, facilitating the public to express their thoughts or share their feelings after watching the movie with other netizens. But also facilitates marketers to obtain timely information and control the trend of public opinion so that they can take targeted measures to change or adjust their communication strategies to achieve better publicity. But at the same time, it also brings a lot of problems.

3.1 Excessive Hype

The famous “Law of Two and Eight” in management (the uneven distribution of wealth and population) is also found in China’s famous social media, Weibo. Eighty percent or more of the influence is created by 20 percent of the people, most of whom are directors, actors, or their close friends, and microblogging brings fans closer to the celebrities and shortens their distance. Other people’s information and elicit reactions from netizens [6]. This presents a wonderful opportunity for movie marketing. More and more people are trying to make movies. In order to make more people know about the movie and go to see it, they will make a lot of publicity through some bad methods, such as deliberately fabricating right and wrong, topic hype, or asking stars with a large number of fans to promote the movie. Although it will attract many people, it will cause public anger due to the movie’s poor quality and may cause others to follow suit.

3.2 Lack of movie derivatives

Movie derivatives are products derived from the elements of the movie, such as dolls, souvenirs, or props related to the movie’s plot, movie theme songs, posters, storybooks, movie-related amusement parks, etc. Movie derivatives are not only an extension of the movie but also can promote the appeal of the movie. For example, the Marvel series of films launched a lot of toys, clothing, or souvenirs or co-branded with other brands, and we call these “peripheral”. Or the Harry Potter series of films and the creation of the Harry Potter Universal Studios in Beijing, China, so that people can not forget the film. However, there is a lack of publicity and marketing of movie derivatives in China because of the weak knowledge of marketing and disseminating derivatives and copyright of derivatives and the lack of development power [7].

3.3 Lacks international experience

In particular, THR reported quoting the chief executive of China’s Bona Film Group, Yu Dong, that China “lacks international experience” in making such “universally appealing” films. “There has been a couple of breakouts like “Hero”, though these aside, there haven’t been many, if any, Chinese films making an impact at the US box office. Whether or not it’s down to experience is an interesting question and leads to the other question as to whether or not China has been trying to make films designed for success both domestically and in the US.” James Mudge said. Cultural differences are one factor that prevents China from making films possible to become hits outside of the country. For instance, “Conquering the Demons” was based on local materials. Also, the language. James Mudge thought Chinese comedies naturally have a more local sense of humor and rely upon local language gags or pop culture references which will likely be lost on viewers from other countries [8]. Chinese domestic movies hardly produce movies for foreign markets, which makes it impossible to get good results no matter how effective the social media promotion marketing of the movie is.

4. Discussion

First, for social media marketing to get good results, the content and quality of domestic movies have to be guaranteed. Most people who watch movies are students or office workers in their twenties

and thirties, so there are many movies about youth, but the number of other types of movies is only a few. Therefore, the content of movies can be expanded to some types of movies, such as martial arts, funny, or fantasy, which can bring freshness to the public [9]. Hollywood movies are popular worldwide not only because of good marketing strategies, but also because of the rich and fine content of the movies. Compared to domestic movies, mostly low-quality movies without ideas and culture use different means to attract the public.

Secondly, a standardized marketing system needs to be established. The marketing of domestic movies lacks systematization, and many marketing models are arbitrarily named as topic marketing, emotional marketing, etc. However, there is no in-depth and detailed market investigation to analyze the content of different marketing strategies. The whole marketing is based on conventions, such as how movies of the same genre are marketed [10]. Such a marketing strategy is full of uncertainty. It isn't easy to assess the real marketing effect. A standardized marketing system will not only help promote movies but also prevent the formation of over-marketing. To establish a film marketing strategy with Chinese characteristics, we can consider it based on other international film marketing strategies and in the context of the domestic film industry. Of course, we also need to do good market research, understand the consumption preferences of domestic audiences, put the needs of the public first, and grasp the psychology of the public. The most important thing is that social media or platforms should strictly review the content posted to ensure that the information is true, valid, and relevant to the film's topic [11].

Third, pay attention to the development of derivatives of domestic movies. The derivatives market of domestic movies has been in the doldrums because the public lacks the concept of derivatives consumption, there are too few formal sales channels, piracy is serious, etc. However, a derivatives market in the doldrums will lower the total revenue of movies, and it may indirectly lead to excessive marketing because investors put all their investment returns on the box office. If the box office is low, then the investors will lose all their money, so in order to prevent. Therefore, in order to prevent this from happening, they will endlessly use different methods to promote and gain the audience's attention [3]. The development and promotion of derivatives can be based on the characters in the movie to make some dolls, mugs, stationery, and other peripherals, or the movie's original music can be released separately or added to the interaction with the fans.

The next solution is to use local resources. Before doing social media marketing, do good research on the local situation, choose the right social media with the largest number of participants, and interact with the public on the platform to get the audience's attention. For example, before the release of the Hollywood movie "Star Wars: The Force Awakens", a popular idol, Lu Han, was chosen as the Chinese promotional ambassador for the movie, and Lu Han's song was officially designated as the theme song of the movie in China. Luhan was called "China's Justin Bieber" and his song received millions of views. Many people also retweeted Luhan's tweets about the movie. Although we need to consider the foreign market, we should not lose the core of the national spirit. The best way is to combine the East and the West, merging the traditional Chinese features with foreign preferences to bring a breakthrough.

Finally, Focus on marketing through social media and multiple platforms. Suppose a movie wants to get a good box office, first of all. In that case, it should cater to the audience's preferences, deeply investigate and study the audience's ideas, and adjust domestic movies' social media marketing strategy according to their viewing habits and values. In addition, movie marketing personnel should pay attention to the use of a variety of platforms for propaganda, such as the use of Tencent, Youku, and iQIYI, to send preview video software. Such as using Weibo, watercress, headlines software such as soft advertisement propaganda, and Alipay software. Such as ticket discount activity, through common online publicity, Get up close and personal with the audience. The use of these platforms has increased the intensity of the pamphlet and enhanced the spread of the film

5. Conclusion

Movies have become one of the important cultural industries in China. Movies easily arouse audiences' interest in visual and auditory, and they bear the heavy responsibility of national economic sources and enriching national life and spirit. Although there are still many problems, such as excessive hype, single marketing channel and mode, and lack of derivatives, there is much room for improvement simultaneously. Film marketers can gradually find a suitable film marketing strategy by reasonably conducting social media marketing, which makes the film marketing strategy more and more perfect.

There are still many problems in developing Chinese domestic films, such as excessive hype by film marketers, insufficient publicity of film derivatives, insufficient awareness of product versions, and single channels and approaches of publicity and marketing. Chinese domestic films must solve all these problems. Domestic films should focus on the content itself, and directors should aim to produce well-made, thought-provoking works that resonate with the audience. The publicity of domestic films should take advantage of various platforms, strive to go to the international stage, show China's traditional culture and modern culture to the world through films, promote the development of domestic films, and enhance the cultural confidence of the country.

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