

Research on Social Media Marketing of the Palace Museum in China

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Abstract

This paper attempts to sort out the exploration path of the Palace Museum of China in social media marketing from the perspective of social media, and sort out the current marketing status of the Palace Museum from creative content, creative e-commerce, cultural brand, event marketing, etc., and combine the promotion channels of social media, including social media such as Weibo, wechat, official website setting, digital experiment, APP games and other forms. Find out the innovative channels and marketing strategies of the Palace Museum of China for social media marketing. By combing the social media marketing of the Palace Museum of China, this paper tries to find out the experience and marketing methods of social media for the promotion and dissemination of traditional culture, and provides new ideas and new directions for the transmission, inheritance and development of the museum's cultural industry.

Keywords

Social Media; Marketing; The Palace Museum in Beijing; Museum.

1. Introduction

With the change and development of social media, a new marketing method begins to appear, that is, social media marketing. Social media marketing has the characteristics of strong participation, fast transmission speed, low cost and high accuracy, and has been applied by many industries and has achieved great results. In the field of museums, there are some successful cases of social media marketing. For example, the Taipei Palace Museum posted its cultural creative products on its official homepage, which immediately triggered a viral spread and hot discussion among netizens, directly promoted the sales of the products and supporting products, and caused the relevant parties in the mainland to imitate them.(L Zollo, R Rialti, A Marrucci, C Ciappei., 2022) However, the application and research of social media marketing in most mainland museums are still in the initial stage, and most of them only stay in the initial behaviors such as opening microblog and public homepage.(H Arasli, M Abdullahi, T Gunay, 2021) In terms of research, few scholars have conducted systematic research and discussion on the social media marketing of museums.

The development mode and organizational operation mode of museums are relatively traditional. In the context of the accelerated integration of the Internet and traditional industries, for traditional museums, the use of social media marketing is an opportunity for museums to use the Internet to promote their own transformation and upgrading. (G Zabelskyte, N Kabisch, Z Stasiskiene, 2022) This paper will start from the following aspects: what is social media marketing, why should museums carry out social media marketing activities, and how should China's Palace Museum conduct social media marketing, so as to clarify the possible connection between museums and social media collision, hoping to provide some useful ideas for relevant research.(Iles P, Mabey C, Robertson I. HRM, 2020).

2. Literature Review

Before the 1960s, people thought of "marketing" as finding buyers for a company's products and encouraging consumers to buy them. Moreover, "marketing" to people is only a function specific to business enterprises. Until 1969, Kotler, the father of modern marketing, expanded the concept of marketing in his article "Expanding the concept of marketing". He believed that the concept of "marketing" not only serves commercial enterprises, but also serves all organizations, institutions and groups, including museums. (Organ D W., 2021) In the 1980s, some people in the museum world began to put forward the concept of marketing. For example, in 1984, the American Association of Museums published the article "Museums in the New Century", which proposed that "museum marketing is a series of efforts to try to establish the ideological foundation for the general audience to understand and appreciate the museum". (Dunlop P D, Lee K., 2019) In 1985, DiMaggio published an article in *Museum News*, the official publication of the American Association of Museums, entitled "When profit is a matter of substance, cultural institutions enter the market", arguing that "marketing should be used when it is conducive to achieving the objectives of cultural policy". (Leana C R, Buren H J V., 2018).

Other important works in this period are *Museum Strategy and Marketing*, co-authored by two brothers, Neil Kotler and Philip Kotler, in 1998. In the book, the author divides museums into four types: the traditional museum centered on the collection; Modified traditional museums; Community-centered museums and storytelling, experience-centered museums reveal the mission of these different kinds of museums and explain the strategic relationship between mission, audience, and funding. The book also provides a wealth of museum marketing cases. (Boekhorst J A., 2018).

Entering the 21st century, the research on museum marketing is more in-depth. For example, in 2003, Zhen Shuonan proposed in his article "Marketing of Cultural and Natural Heritage: Taking Museums as an Example" that the marketing of "museums" should be the main tool for the management of cultural and natural heritage. (Boekhorst J A., 2018) In 2007, Song Xiangguang published an article entitled "The Purpose and Characteristics of Contemporary Museum Marketing", which pointed out the purpose, method and characteristics of museum marketing from the aspects of museum organization, service object, work task, work flow and output. According to him, the purpose of contemporary museums is "to establish a close partnership with museum beneficiaries and sponsors through marketing methods to achieve their respective and common development needs". In 2006, Australian museum scholar Ms Lynda Kelly and other authors co-authored the book "How Will Social Media Affect Museums?" In this article, she believes that the emergence of social media will greatly change the communication mode and information dissemination mode of museums. (Rank J, Carsten J M, Unger J M, et al., 2017) At the same time, she also analyzes the challenges that museums may encounter under the social media environment. In 2010, Chinese scholar Zhong Ping proposed in his article "Museum Network Communication in the WEB Era" that museums could use blogs, microblogs and other platforms for network communication. (Lennon R, Weber J M, Henson J., 2011).

Canadian communication scientist Marshall McLuhan pointed out that the purpose of new media marketing is to manipulate, utilize and control people, and the essence of new media is to stir up fanaticism rather than enlighten people. (Decrop A, Snelders D., 2020) Tapping into the collective public mind of consumers is the essence of modern marketing and the core of new media marketing. Nowadays, whether it is Weibo, wechat, or live broadcast, small videos, any new media platform has timeliness, but as long as it captures the people's heart, it is the key factor that determines the marketing trend.

Looking at the current research on social media marketing, most of them only make an overview of the case, without combining the characteristics of the case with the characteristics of social media, and rarely make a systematic breakthrough and summary of the marketing methods and marketing ideas based on social media. In short, the research of this paper is based on the marketing status quo of the Palace Museum of China. Discuss social media marketing strategies for specific traditional cultural products.(Agapito D, Valle P, Mendes J. , 2021).

3. Research Status

3.1. Cultural Creativity Provides Content Support for the Palace Museum's Social Media Marketing

In recent years, the Palace Museum has made full use of its rich collection of cultural relics and its distinctive cultural characteristics to refine cultural connotations and develop cultural creativity. (Souiden N, Ladhari R, Chiadmi N E., 2020) On the one hand, it promoted the design and development of cultural and creative products, and a large number of cultural and creative products with distinctive characteristics of the Palace Museum came out; On the other hand, it also provides quality content for social media marketing. The former solves the problem of "what exactly is the social media marketing of museums", while the latter optimizes the effect of social media marketing of museums. The Palace Museum's success in social media marketing owes much to the research and development of its cultural and creative products. Shan Jixiang, director of the Palace Museum, has repositioned the museum's cultural and creative products after visiting the Palace Museum in Taipei. For cultural creative products, from the perspective of elements, stories and inheritance, each cultural creative product deeply integrates the cultural characteristics of the Palace Museum, reflects the elements of the Palace Museum in design, and integrates cultural stories behind the elements of the Palace. (Kani Y, Aziz Y A, Sambasivan M, et al.,2020) In addition, the cultural and creative products of the Forbidden City began to pay attention to functionality. By allowing the public to use the cultural and creative products of the Forbidden City, the purpose of inheriting the Forbidden City culture was achieved.

As of November 2022, the Palace Museum has developed a total of 8,683 products. Cultural creative products that integrate functionality, practicality and cultural connotation are more conducive to being the target of museum social media marketing. Social media marketing is more topical and can attract the attention of the public. When the public pays attention to and buys these cultural and creative products, the cultural significance of the products can also be passed on to the public. The contribution of cultural creativity to the Palace Museum's social media marketing is also reflected in the operation of its marketing account. This is particularly evident in the Palace Museum's Taobao wechat subscription number. The main account of the subscription account of the Palace Museum Taobao wechat is the Palace Museum Cultural Service Center, which helps promote and sell the cultural and creative products of the Palace Museum on the Internet together with the official Weibo of the Palace Museum Taobao and the Palace Museum Taobao store.

3.2. Social Media Marketing Channels are Diversified and Distinctive

In the process of social media marketing, the Palace Museum does not simply rely on a certain platform, but chooses diversified channels and adopts different strategies and methods for different marketing purposes and user groups. As a single tourist destination, museum collections are the core of attraction. Traditional museums generally publish museum exhibition information in destination cities with conservative publicity, with small coverage, fixed audience, and small circle radiation, without new ideas and creativity, which makes it difficult to attract tourists' attention and plays a negligible role in attracting tourism. (Bai

Huiping, 2008)In the era of "Internet +", the development of social media and multimedia technology provides a new way for commodity publicity and marketing. Based on Internet thinking, the Palace Museum actively uses TV, film and other media to expand brand influence, and actively interacts with users on various new media platforms, and works with other brands to expand the audience pool and form a multi-dimensional integrated cultural communication matrix. On the one hand, the Palace Museum has cooperated with TV media and video websites to penetrate the brand image into users' lives. It has cooperated with Beijing Satellite TV to launch the entertainment variety show "On the New, Forbidden City", and launched documentaries such as "I repair cultural Relics in the Forbidden City" and "National Treasure" on bilibili video Barrage network (referred to as Station B, the largest video barrage website in China). By means of story description, the traditional culture is exported to the audience, and the cultural identity and emotional resonance of the audience are aroused. In addition, the Palace Museum also uses wechat public accounts and Weibo social accounts to directly and efficiently communicate with users and deconstruct traditional history with humorous language. On the other hand, the Palace Museum also actively joins hands with other brands to create new value elements to enrich user experience. For example, the popular movie "Big Fish and Malonia" was released in 2016, and the Palace Museum co-signed with it. Launched joint customized products, to achieve the effect of breaking the circle of marketing.

3.3. Build Digital Platforms to Attract Potential Audiences

With the help of sophisticated learning technologies, the Palace Museum of China actively builds digital platforms to attract potential audiences, and uses new brand interpretation methods to enter the vision of new audiences. Beijing Palace Museum actively builds digital platforms such as official research website, Weibo, wechat and app to build digital Palace Museum, present the brand image of Beijing Palace Museum in a three-dimensional way, and share the high-quality cultural and wide resources of Beijing Palace Museum to more audiences. For example, the digital Palace Museum is set up so that the audience can sit at home and "walk into" the Beijing Palace Museum to feel the baptism of history and culture; Add multimedia elements to the exhibition, enhance the digital breadth, let the audience shine, stimulate the audience's willingness to actively share experience on social media, and complete the flexible online and offline interactive research; The official research website group, which integrates the English version, the youth version and other sub-websites, can conveniently provide the required services for different audience groups. Since 2017, the revised official research website has obtained 95% satisfaction, with 15.11 million page visits and nearly 4 million visitors, a significant increase over the previous year; More than 1 million new downloads of the Palace Museum app series in 2022; A number of digital exhibitions have appeared on the international stage, and the results of this series of practices have proved that Beijing's Forbidden City has accumulated a lot of popularity among young people.

4. Suggestions on the Development of Social Media Marketing for the Palace Museum of China

4.1. Develop a Social Media Content Strategy

Social media platform is a communication tool, media tool, not open an account on the platform, just release some information will be fine. Museums need to move away from the notion that using social media tools is social media marketing. The key to a museum's content strategy is cultural creativity. Museums occupy a large number of cultural resources, can provide special cultural knowledge, this advantage is unmatched by any other institution. Museums bear the responsibility of inheriting and developing culture, and the essence of cultural development lies in cultural innovation, which requires museums to adhere to cultural innovation in the process

of social media marketing and provide refreshing cultural creativity for the public. (Zou DQ, Zhao P, Li F., 2007) This is the fundamental difference between museums and other institutions in the process of social media marketing. It is also the core competitiveness of museums to realize social media marketing of public image, display and exhibition and social media marketing of derivatives.

4.2. Do a Good Job of Marketing Effect Evaluation

Assessing the effectiveness of social media marketing is an important part of the overall marketing process. However, due to the short time of the emergence of social media, various theories are not mature, how to evaluate social media marketing has always been a difficult point. Some scholars divide social media marketing evaluation into quantitative evaluation and qualitative evaluation. Items evaluated quantitatively include AD yield, exposure, cost per click, user engagement, third-party data, periodic and long-term sales data, and search engine marketing; The qualitative evaluation includes network public opinion analysis and influence analysis. However, I believe that such an evaluation method, although it has its merits, is not necessarily suitable for museums. To evaluate the effect of social media marketing, museums should combine online data with offline data based on their actual situation. The evaluation of museum social media marketing effect can be divided into two parts: the evaluation based on museum itself and the evaluation based on social media platform. Museum-based (offline) assessments focus on museum visitor traffic. For example, after a certain social media marketing for a display exhibition, we should pay attention to whether the number of visitors to the museum has increased (year-on-year or quarter-on-quarter) compared with the previous (similar exhibitions), and at the same time, we should cooperate with the "satisfaction survey of visitors to the museum" to comprehensively evaluate the effect of marketing.

Based on the evaluation of social media platforms, it focuses on the operation of marketing accounts and the sales volume of online sales of museum derivatives. In this link can use the Internet operation data statistical tools. For the operation of marketing accounts, focus on the number of reads, retweets, and comments. At the same time, different data should be collected according to different social media platforms. For example, if Weibo is used for social media marketing, the statistical tools provided by Weibo should also be used to calculate the ratio of net new fans, active fans, blog exposure, page traffic (page views, unique visitors, average visit time). At the same time, the content strategy can be adjusted at any time based on statistical analysis of fan characteristics (fan gender, fan age, fan label, region) and fan habits (daily active time, weekly active time, terminal use).

4.3. Establish a Sound Brand Communication Mechanism

After the Palace Museum in Beijing tried various forms of brand communication activities, the online and offline network involved is becoming more and more complex. In the past two years, the emergence of cultural and museum programs has brought the "museum craze" from online to offline, changing the audience's concept, and also changing the new traditional concept of museum operation and brand communication. (Rozier-Rich S, Santos C A., 2021) Therefore, the establishment of a sound brand communication mechanism can carry out brand communication more effectively, and is also conducive to the optimal allocation of resources. At present, Beijing Palace Museum has not completed a set of mechanisms in brand communication strategy research, and the ideas of each brand communication activity are not clear enough. For example: some brand activities online, offline cooperation is low, although the brand activities will bring the audience into the Forbidden City, but many audiences only out of the psychology of curiosity to visit, do not understand the background of the exhibition and the specific content of the exhibits.

The core values of a museum's brand are influenced by the variety, quantity and quality of its collections, but these are fundamental. For museums, a long-term brand communication

mechanism is exhibition, through professional exhibitions to improve the influence and visibility of the museum brand, to obtain a wide range of social repercussions. The Metropolitan Museum of Art in the United States pays more attention to collection exhibitions in terms of brand communication, it has held a total of 17 permanent academic exhibitions of different regions and different topics, and often curates some special exhibitions to expand the visibility of the museum, such as the "Mona Lisa of the Louvre" traveling exhibition and the "Treasures of Tutankhamun" special exhibition.

4.4. Enlightenment on the Development of the Palace Museum's Social Media Marketing Innovative Application of Brand Social Media Communication Technology

Since 2012, the Beijing Palace Museum brand has begun to develop multi-platform, multi-channel, multi-dimensional and diversified communication. Facing an audience that has been influenced by digital technology to change their lifestyle and thinking patterns, Beijing Palace Museum also needs to redeploy its social media marketing strategy. Even the "solemn, noble and mysterious" Beijing Palace Museum also needs to form a more friendly and close relationship with the audience, enhance the brand reputation and create a better brand image. In the face of the great changes brought about by mobile Internet technology, the audience's cognition is always quickly refreshed. In the process of brand social media marketing, Beijing Palace Museum should actively go to the scope of the audience, actively deploy the brand new strategy, and effectively manage its own brand image.

At present, nearly 80% of the area of Beijing's Forbidden City is open to visitors, but less than 2% of the more than 1.86 million cultural relics are on display, which is still a big gap compared with world-renowned museums. Therefore, the Beijing Palace Museum is applying a variety of new technologies to solve the problems of cultural relics restoration, protection and exhibition research. For example, the Palace Museum game app and the Palace Museum animation that children also like, the Palace Museum VR museum used by tourists, the digital Palace Museum that interacts with the audience, and the promotion of various interesting H5. Every new attempt of Beijing Palace Museum has attracted wide attention from both inside and outside the school and the audience, which has verified the role of new technology in the brand communication of Beijing Palace Museum.

4.5. Spread Influence Through International Platforms

In recent years, the Palace Museum in Beijing has frequently appeared in international exhibitions, showing the world the long history and culture of China's Palace Museum. From the online point of view, Beijing Palace Museum's current online channels for brand communication are mainly Chinese local social platforms such as Weibo, wechat and other media platforms. In order to enhance the international influence of Beijing Palace Museum, Beijing Palace Museum can also take the initiative to carry out brand communication on international media platforms. Efforts should be made to enhance the intensity of communication and improve and maintain the brand image on international media platforms. The exhibition of the Forbidden City in Beijing can show the cultural strength of China to the people of the world. At the same time, it also attracts many foreign tourists to visit China and feel the rich art, culture and long history of the Forbidden City in Beijing. Beijing Palace Museum has the awareness of enhancing its influence through international platforms, and it mostly appears as a participant in the international arena, but the final brand social media marketing effect is not obvious. In the future, the Beijing Palace Museum will strive to attract more famous foreign museums to hold exhibitions in the Palace Museum, so that the foreign museums participating in the exhibition can promote the Beijing Palace Museum and bring the Beijing Palace Museum to the life of people around the world with their culture.

4.6. Build a Comprehensive Innovative New Media Marketing Team

The key to the success of new media marketing is to have a marketing team composed of professional new media talents and marketing talents. The support of the new media marketing team is the most important human resource guarantee for the successful development of new media marketing for the Palace Museum's listed cultural products. This marketing team should include: new media content marketing, new media technology development, new media operation, new media e-commerce team, and new media business development team. (Gefen D., 2002) In order to ensure the adequate supply of new media talent resources, in addition to internal training, we should also make full use of design competitions and other ways to attract excellent students from design colleges and universities, independent designers, or manufacturing enterprises to join the design and development of cultural products of the Palace Museum. Through business expansion and new media operation, we constantly strengthen cooperation with unique design brands, and design and develop valuable cultural products relying on the rich traditional cultural resources of the Palace Museum. At the same time, in the application of new media platforms, operators and technicians firmly grasp the consumer psychology of users, integrate practicality, functionality and creativity into the promotion, and constantly open new marketing markets for the cultural products of the Palace Museum through new media channels and new media operation methods. (Burnham T, Frels J, Mahajan V., 2003) With such a team guarantee, the new media marketing of the Palace Museum can not only retain the cultural effect of the Palace Museum, but also ensure the realization of economic benefits. In the long run, it has far-reaching significance for the Palace Museum to realize the circular profit of traditional cultural institutions.

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