

Analysis of the Communication Model and Consumer Behavior of Commercial Comic Convention: A Comprehensive Study Based on Online and Offline Channels

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Abstract: Since the recovery of the entertainment industry in 2022, the development momentum of commercial Comic Convention has been rapid, and ACG enthusiasts have begun to participate in Comic Convention activities frequently. As a social environment that connects ACG enthusiasts offline, Comic Convention has become one of the most frequented activity venues for young people. This is also due to the Comic Convention's unique promotional methods and strategies. It uses the Internet and offline activities to jointly promote online. It uses platforms to cooperate in ticket sales and advertising and invites famous guests to cooperate with popular game officials. Complete offline activities are held, and influencers, entertainment bloggers, and guests who young people currently seek are invited. Feedback is continuously improved and perfected on the Internet, and it has developed into the current situation where commercial comic conventions of various types are flourishing. Fan Comic Convention and Only exhibitions are constantly expanding and refining details, but there are still more parts that need to be refined.

1 INTRODUCTION

Comic Convention, as a channel for ACG enthusiasts to directly socialize offline, brings together many groups who like ACG. The main content of the Comic Convention is an exhibition of animation, comics, games, and other related cultures (Wu and Xiang, 2024). In China, there are large-scale Comic Convention gatherings such as Bilibili World, Comicup, Chinajoy, and carnivals organized by game companies themselves. Game companies set up their booths and officials invite popular guests to participate in the on-site activities. Abroad, there is the largest animation Comic Convention market active in Japan and the Comic Convention NYCC in the United States. This study focuses on understanding the impact and feedback of publicity methods under different channels on the public through studying the advertising dissemination of Comic Convention. Commercial Comic Convention has been held all over China in recent years. It has become a relatively mature and well-known large-scale ACG gathering activity for young people. This study also cannot be ignored in terms of its flow of people and the economic value it brings. Therefore, this paper selects large-scale domestic commercial

Comic Convention as the research object to carry out the specific development and uses the literature analysis method to search and read relevant materials and literature. The advantage of this method is that it can well analyze the inseparable feelings and core of Comic Convention and young people, which is conducive to the research. The ultimate research goal of this study is to explore how commercial Comic Conventions spread among the public and to achieve the goal of ACG enthusiasts willing to participate in Comic Convention consumption and high Comic Convention consumption stickiness through a comprehensive analysis of online and offline marketing methods.

2 CONCEPT

ACG is a broad term for fictional culture derived from comics and animations. Its concept also includes creations and products such as paintings, photography, films, publications, network art, and performance art derived from animation or with animation aesthetic styles. Heavy users of ACG culture are mostly millennials and 18-25 years old people. During their growth, TV and audiovisual

programs have become a common part of their lives, and the relative abundance of material life has allowed them to shift more focus to their spiritual well-being. The copyright of Japanese anime is more convenient to be screened on Chinese video platforms, and domestic animation is also thriving in China. Domestic ACG games are beginning to move to the world stage. It can be said that this is a "golden age" for Chinese ACG culture.

Comic Convention is a place where ACG culture gathers in public. People will wear their favorite cosplay clothes and put on exquisite makeup. At the same time, people will have the opportunity to meet the famous cosplayer influencers they admire on the Internet and voluntarily queue up to get their favorite autographs and take photos. Some figures and game peripherals, including rare derivatives not easily found on the market, will be available for purchase at the booth. This also serves as a means of profit and publicity.

With the advent of the new media era, the research framework of communication theory has gradually changed (Cheng, 2023). Interpersonal communication and targeted communication have become a communication method that is more easily accepted by the audience in the new media era. Specifically, first, it has changed from a one-way channel for information dissemination to an intercommunication between information disseminators and receivers. At the same time, the comments and opinions of the receivers can be analyzed in real time, and relevant information can be pushed accurately. Second, the general communication of marketing has changed to integrated communication of marketing, integrating advertising information and analyzing fans' preferences, targeted push, and fan push, so that ACG enthusiasts can see the topics they are interested in and increase their reading volume so that they like it. The platform (or brand) should produce continuous content to push ACG enthusiasts, encouraging them to keep subscribing to and following this topic.

3 COMMUNICATION MODEL

3.1 Online Event Planning Method

Comic Convention's promotion method is primarily online, with offline efforts as a supplement. The main platforms used for promotion include Bilibili (pop-up videos), TikTok, and The Red Book, among others. Most of the ticket sales for the convention are conducted through Bilibili. As the largest ACG video

platform in China, Bilibili has set up a member purchase on the work bar at the bottom of the Bilibili app software. User groups can enter the Comic Convention performance interface from the member purchase at the bottom to purchase tickets for large and small Comic Convention across the country. Most of the well-known large-scale Comic Conventions in various places will cooperate with the Bilibili platform to sell tickets. For example, Shanghai's Bilibili World, Guangzhou Firefly Comic Convention, Chengdu World Line Comic Convention, etc. Secondly, it serves as the exclusive platform for fan exhibitions on the Cpp software, including the country's most well-known large-scale events like the Shanghai Comicup and Guangzhou CPGZ, where tickets are sold.

Online advertising communication mainly relies on platform promotion (Zhao, 2024). Bilibili's splash ads can be obtained through bidding. Large Comic Convention with a budget will choose to put the opening date of Comic Convention and exhibitors on Bilibili's splash ads. The second position is the video ad slot on Bilibili's recommendation page, as well as the long ad slot below the progress bar when the video is clicked. Both can be used to display Comic Convention ads. On TikTok, the official account of Comic Convention is stationed, and the opening date of the next session and the greeting video of the exhibitors are promoted by publishing pictures and texts and previous exhibition videos. On Red Book, exhibitors will be asked to post notes specifically to attract fans to visit and cause discussion.

Comic Convention also has a unique event called "free tickets". It is a free ticket event initiated by Comic Convention officials. Exhibitors need to bring the topic of Comic Convention, as well as their own role-playing photos and exhibition information. If they reach a certain number of likes, recommendations, or reposts on the Internet, they will be eligible for free tickets. Its scope of objects includes cosplayers, photography, etc. If you are an influencer with a large number of fans or a cosplayer or photographer with a good number of likes and reposts, you can even get a year of free tickets.

3.2 Offline Activities

Comic Convention will also promote another city's Comic Convention at another large Comic Convention. For example: Shanghai Comicup has a promotional advertisement for Chengdu Comiday. There are also large-screen advertisements at subway stations, subway and bus handles, and large screens in commercial streets (this is a special case, most of

which exist in electronic large screens in offline shopping malls where ACG enthusiasts gather and there are many anime peripheral stores). There will be flash event check-in points for on-site interactions at Comic Convention, and some influencers and cosplayers with many fans will be invited to cosplay as the required IP characters on site, and then some small activities will be held to receive peripherals and tickets.

4 CASE ANALYSIS

4.1 Audience Groups

Comic Convention's bases are mostly in first-tier and second-tier cities, and new first-tier cities (Liu, 2020; Wang, 2023 & Komachi, 2014). These cities have enough public places and complete facilities to hold Comic Convention, including very convenient transportation and a higher density of ACG enthusiasts. The author uses the well-known 'World Line' Comic Convention in their local area as the research subject to analyze the primary audience of Comic Conventions. Chengdu Comic Convention has been held a total of 17 times by the end of 2024, mainly through Bilibili as the ticketing platform. The Bilibili ticketing platform shows that the number of people who "want to go" for each session is about 10,000. Due to the additional opening of on-site tickets, the actual number of people exceeds this data. Most of the people who use Bilibili to buy tickets are old users who have used Bilibili for many years. By analyzing this group of people, it is concluded that the audience of Comic Convention is mostly young people under the age of 24, with a balanced ratio of men to women. As senior users of Bilibili, most of them are addicted to ACG culture and social circles.

4.2 Communication Effect

From the Audience Perspective Bloggers who do Comic Convention related activities on TikTok have found that the audience profile of Comic Convention is as follows: the majority of people are under 23 years old, and the cities of Guangdong, Shanghai, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Sichuan are the most popular, followed by the three northeastern provinces, Hong Kong, China, and Taiwan, China (Han, 2023). Most of the people are students, followed by office workers and freelancers. Comic Convention is a low-cost place to meet like-minded friends. No matter what background you have, you can participate as an ACG enthusiast. It is a place for relatively equal

communication. Comic Convention has many peers, and you don't have to worry about too many interpersonal relationships at Comic Convention. People who get along in this activity venue have a sense of identity, temporarily escape the pressure and anxiety of real life, dress up as their favorite ACG characters, and release their stress.

In terms of the synergy between online and offline communication, the official account publishes videos and promotional advertisements related to this and previous Comic Convention, as well as exhibitors, events, and venues, and through mutual forwarding and likes among user groups, it gets a high feedback and click-through rate online, thus spreading on the Internet (Takeda, 2023 & Liang, 2024). In addition, its unique promotional method, Comic Convention Free Travel, can be spread on a large scale among ACG enthusiasts, especially on social chat software such as QQ and WeChat that are frequently used by groups.

In terms of communication effect, due to its particularity, Comic Convention's advertising videos will have additional exposure and push flow on Douyin and Bilibili. For activities such as the topic Free Travel initiated by individuals, the basic data is 20 forwards or likes or more, plus the itinerary videos of the exhibitors. For the Chengdu local Comic Convention world line, according to the data in January 2024, 30,000 people want to go to the Comic Convention on the ticketing platform, and the actual number of exhibitors is far greater than 30,000, including people who travel for free and buy tickets on-site, as well as people who come to the exhibition on a whim. Shanghai Comicup was held in Hangzhou, and 400,000 people wanted to go, but because the number of tickets per day was limited, those who were unable to buy tickets also gathered near the venue.

5 DISCUSSION

5.1 Integrated Communication Theory

Comic Convention forms a unified and powerful ACG culture brand communication message through the coordinated operation of multiple communication channels and tools. It emphasizes the integration of different communication forms, including advertising, public relations, and digital marketing content to achieve a high communication effect. All communication channels, whether online or offline, convey consistent IP information and exhibition themes to increase the coherence and unity of the

impression of Comic Convention. Through social media to publish event previews and invite well-known bloggers or KOLs to promote, use online advertising to push information to create online popularity. Offline, the site through the setting of official booths and interactive activities, distribution of brochures and free peripherals direct contact with the group to enhance the experience of fans on site (Xu and Shi, 2022).

Through vigorous publicity before and after Comic Convention, first, conduct an event marketing warm-up online, and through warm-up activities, attract the attention of ACG fans. At the same time, before the holiday, through real-time content updates, such as live broadcasts or short videos to maintain popularity. It can also attract people's attention at the time of ticket release. When selling tickets through the online channel of Comic Convention, the company set up pre-sale tickets, which will be more preferential than offline tickets, encouraging this group to buy pre-sale tickets or participate in some forwarding activities to obtain more preferential information or free admission. The company optimizes the user experience of this group, through the combination of online and offline. Taking Shanghai CP Comic Convention as an example, the company guides Comic Convention to use the App, which can be used to purchase tickets online, view the map of the venue, and the detailed information about the surrounding items sold, to enhance the overall experience of the exhibition and increase the stickiness of this group to the exhibition.

5.2 The Role of Experiential Marketing

Experiential marketing is a consumer-centric strategy that enhances the emotional connection between brands and consumers by providing an immersive experience. This marketing method is particularly important in Comic Convention activities, which can effectively increase the participation and loyalty of this group.

The group of Comic Convention can enhance the sense of participation. This is an event site that brings together anime fans, Cosers, photographers, niche culture enthusiasts and creators, and various projects enhance interactivity. For example, taking photos and checking in with favorite characters, adding contact information, and having a sense of belonging with like-minded friends of the favorite IP. Comic Convention often has limited-time on-site sales of peripherals, which are only available for purchase on site and not sold online and are also the target of user groups scrambling to buy. This kind of participation

not only makes the group feel fun but also deepens their sense of identity with the culture (Zuo and Wang, 2019).

At Comic Convention, they distribute gifts on the podium and have close contact with their favorite influencer (Patel and Binjola, 2020). Coser can evoke emotional resonance within the group for the IP. When a person receives an official gift or obtains the qualification to participate in a special event, he will have a sense of being recognized and valued. This positive emotional experience will be transformed into loyalty to the IP, prompting him to continue to rely on and stick to the IP.

Through on-site interactive activities, the official can directly collect feedback from participants and understand their real thoughts and needs. For example, by setting up special staff to interact with them, take photos, check in, or set questions, the official can understand the real feelings of the group about the on-site activities. This kind of research based on experience can help the official to continuously optimize strategies and improve the satisfaction of visitors to the exhibition.

5.3 Customized Communication

Customized communication is particularly important in modern marketing, especially in Comic Convention. The characters that this group likes to come from different IPs, so they have different interests and needs. Formulating a communication strategy that suits their preferences can improve the marketing effect (Liang, 2024).

Customize the content. At present, there is a feasible plan, the Only Exhibition, which is a Comic Convention that only allows people with an IP to enter, such as the Genshin Impact Only Exhibition and the Nintendo Only Exhibition. However, the storekeeper is currently initiating it in the name of one person, and the facilities are not perfect, the ticket prices are not reasonable, and the hosting experience is insufficient. Therefore, if a small Comic Convention is set up under the experienced big Comic Convention, it will be more popular and trusted. For example: World Line-Genshin Impact Only Comic Convention. Or set up a special IP partition at that venue to divide different venues, but this will lead to an insufficient number of venues and high costs.

VIP customization when users attend the guest signing. The current Comic Convention already has such a strategy, but it is only for the number of signings sold. It can be refined, such as setting different VIP customized price levels, for example, setting the price of early entry and backstage

meetings, so that you can interact with your favorite teacher one-on-one.

6 CONCLUSION

This study found that in the success of commercial Comic Convention communication, the combination of online and offline enhances the communication effect. The key is to preheat in advance through the online channel of social media live broadcasts, attract more people to pay attention and participate, thereby expanding the influence, calling online bloggers to publish videos and notes, and soliciting discussion topics. At the same time, the interactive experience of offline activities can enhance users' sense of participation and cultural identity. Enterprises can effectively spread Comic Convention, increase the IP exposure rate and market influence of the Comic Convention, and achieve greater commercial value.

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