

From Print Media to Electronic Media to New Media: The Impact of Media Transformation on Brand Communication

Yuhan Song^{1,a,*}

*¹School of Journalism and Communication, Nanjing University, Nanjing, 210000, China
a. 221810161@smail.nju.edu.cn*

**corresponding author*

Abstract: The continuous evolution of media—from print to electronic and now to new media—has significantly influenced how brands transmit information and interact with consumers. To achieve better communication outcomes, brands have actively adjusted their communication strategies in response to these media changes. This study explores the evolution of brand communication strategy in three stages (print communication era, mass media era and new media era). Furthermore, it delves into the underlying motivations, implications, and emerging trends associated with these changes. In the print media era, brand communication mainly depended on paper ads and printed materials, reaching a limited audience slowly. The mass media era saw broader reach, faster dissemination, and enhanced brand image shaping through TV and radio. The new media era, characterized by social media and digital platforms, has made brand communication more interactive and personalized, with UGC and real-time big data deeply influencing strategy formulation and execution. Media change has a profound impact on the media selection, content and mode of brand communication. Media fusion and integrated marketing will become critical strategies for brand communication in the future.

Keywords: Brand communication, advertisement, communication strategy, band, media

1. Introduction

From print media to Electronic media to the era of new media, media is constantly improving, which affects the transmission of brand information and profoundly changes the way brands interact with consumers. In order to better communicate themselves, the brand is also moved by the trend, and actively adjusts the communication strategy in different media times to obtain better communication effects and deeply plant the brand image in the hearts of consumers[1]. While most of the current researches on brand communication focus on brand communication in the new media era, limited studies address brand communication from a historical perspective of media evolution. This study aims to offer a profound analysis on how brands, within the context of each media epoch, harness distinct media attributes to adjust and refine their communication approaches, thereby fostering more potent brand construction, market penetration, and consumer engagement. By meticulously analyzing brand communication practices across different periods, this study provides theoretical support for contemporary brand communication while enriching the discourse on marketing communication.

Through the research on the relationship between media and brand communication, this paper reveals the impact of media change on brand communication, and deeply discusses the motivation

behind it, which is helpful to enrich the research in related fields of marketing and understand the evolution law of brand communication strategy more comprehensively. At the same time, this paper can guide the formulation and optimization of brand communication strategies from a historical perspective, and helps brands to effectively communicate in the fierce market environment and maintain competitiveness and vitality.

2. Brand Communication in Print Media Era

2.1. Characteristics of Communication in the Print Media Era

Print media have undergone a long period of evolution. Early forms of textual communication relied on heavy and difficult-to-preserve materials such as tortoise shells, metal vessels, and bamboo slips. By the late 9th century, carved and printed books became accessible to a broader audience, democratizing knowledge and reducing the exclusivity of information to the elite[2]. Advances in technology reduced costs, making printed materials more affordable, transforming information into a shared societal resource.. Textual symbols, combined with simple imagery, emerged as the predominant carriers of information during the era of print media.

The advent of print media also facilitated easier replication and storage of information. The lightweight nature of printed materials, such as newspapers and pamphlets, classified as "cold media," enabled repeated reading. Consequently, memory and understanding were greatly enhanced. Moreover, these printed items required audiences to actively engage their senses to comprehend the content, empowering them to make significant choices in the information they received.

The print media era also faced several challenges. The one-way communication model limited interaction between the communicator and the audience, making it hard for feedback to be shared promptly, which hindered adjustments to content and strategies. Moreover, slower production times restricted the timeliness of reporting.

2.2. Brand Communication Strategy in the Print Media Era

In the print era, static, flat advertisements were the primary form of brand communication. Newspaper ads and illustrations served as carriers of text and imagery, conveying brand information to the public authoritatively[3].

Due to the freedom of choice, people tend to select newspapers of their interest for regular reading, resulting in relatively clear and stable audience groups for each newspaper. Brands took advantage of this to conduct precise targeting and choose specific newspapers for promotion and publicity. In the early 1920s, following World War I, European society gradually stabilized, and economic progress injected new vitality into the fashion industry. During this time, fashion magazines such as Vogue became important channels for women to obtain fashion information. Chanel, as a leader in the fashion industry, also chose to publish advertisements in these magazines, leading trends with an elegant and practical attitude, successfully shaping its brand image among women seeking beauty and sophistication.

Brand communication often focused on a specific product in this era, shaping a trustworthy brand image through the promotion of product advantages. The primary goals of brand communication were to raise awareness and boost product sales, amplifying a particular feature of the brand's products to create impact within limited space, enhance brand recognition, and leave a lasting impression on consumers .As a well-established personal care brand, Lux soap often advertised in newspapers, featuring images of beautiful women alongside the soap embossed with the brand name. This approach emphasized the association between the product and beautiful skin, highlighting cleanliness and nourishment while addressing the brand's philosophy less frequently.

3. Brand Communication in the Electronic Media Era

3.1. Characteristics of Communication Change in Electronic Media Era

In response to the ongoing need for information dissemination, media has continuously transformed. From printed materials such as newspapers to television combining audio and visual elements, mass media has significantly shifted driven by technological advancements, and the paradigm and effect of communication have also been updated. Television has greatly enhanced the immersion of communication, catering to the dual experience of vision and hearing, and delivering certain information in the creation of scenarios, fully engaging the senses of the audience. Its visual and auditory capabilities made brand messages more vivid and accessible, promoting a culture of consumption that integrated seamlessly with TV content. It is precisely due to the high level of immersion in information dissemination that audiences have formed a learning process without conscious involvement. Television advertisements exemplify a form of passive learning where viewers unconsciously receive and process the information in advertisements while watching programs. This learning method does not require viewers to invest significant attention and energy, allowing brand and product information to be subtly embedded in memory.[4]

Television media reaches a broader audience compared to print media. It presents sound and images that are easy to comprehend, catering to diverse educational backgrounds. Different viewers from various walks of life can enjoy the same TV content, thus expanding its influence and transcending geographical limitations. Advertising plays a vital role in generating revenue for television. It actively promotes a culture of consumption. This advertising intersects with TV culture, making television a significant platform for commercial communication[5].

3.2. Brand Communication Strategy in Electronic Media Era

Television media provides a wider creative freedom for brand communication, enabling them to craft emotionally resonant messages through visuals and storytelling. While one-way communication from brands remains the dominant approach, the integration of visuals and sound enhances the impact of their messages. Brands are moving beyond merely promoting individual product features; they aim to create emotional connections with consumers. By telling compelling stories and producing content that resonates emotionally, brands can strengthen recognition and foster loyalty among their audiences.

Product placement has emerged as a new trend in brand communication. It refers to the activity of embedding service or brand information within media content, influencing people's perceptions of the brand through subconscious means and affecting their actual decision-making through subconscious memory retrieval[6]. Product placement is often executed through celebrity demonstrations. Unlike simple endorsement strategies, brands make full use of the demonstrative and influential role of celebrities, aiming to lead the consumption choices of their followers.

The concept of brand image has undergone continuous construction in advertising practice. By the 1990s, the advent of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) theory breathed new life into brand communication strategies. The emphasis of brand communication emphasized two-way engagement, integrating various marketing communication elements, such as advertising, sales promotion, public relations, personal selling, and direct marketing to forge long-term, two-way, and enduring relationships with consumers[7].

4. Brand Communication in the New Media Era

4.1. The New Trend of Communication in the New Media Era

New media has woven an extensive network where each individual serves as a node interconnected with others. However, in the era of new media, the convenience of information dissemination allows people from different regions to access specific information simultaneously. This phenomenon leads to a renewed gathering of individuals over a broader scope, which validates McLuhan's prophecy of society "returning to a tribal state.[8]" Consequently, loosely organized communities emerge, becoming a significant concept in the study of communication in the new media age.

The rise of social media has created new platforms for communication, where all forms of authority can be challenged, users have become the mainstay of dissemination, and the fragmented distribution poses a challenge to traditional structures. Beyond spontaneous sharing, short videos represent a new trend in dissemination. Changes in the pace of life have led to an acceleration in the pace of communication, with people spending less time on the same piece of information and instead absorbing diverse information disseminated by various entities.

The widespread application of big data has further transformed in communication during the new media era. Data abstracts human habits and needs, transforming them into essential resources for making communication choices, thereby greatly enhancing the personalization and accuracy of dissemination.

4.2. Brand Communication Strategy in New Media Era

Social media has emerged as a significant platform for brand communication. Brands are present on social media in diverse forms, including paid display advertisements, brand personas participating in social networks, published branded content, and opportunities for consumer engagement[9]. User-generated content (UGC) is a prevalent trend in current brand communication, where brands encourage users to share their experiences interacting with the brand, enhancing the credibility of the communication through internal identification within consumer groups. UGC also serves as a crucial means of interaction, fostering closer relationships between brands and consumers.

Big data and AI continue to empower brand communication. Based on the characteristics of new media, brands increasingly adopt personalized communication strategies, precisely delivering messages to target groups and providing customized services. Real-time feedback and timely adjustments support brand communication, maximizing communication and marketing effects. Additionally, the integration of multiple platforms and online-offline channels has become an important consideration for brands in formulating communication strategies. By implementing their ideas and projecting consistent brand images across diverse channels, brands aim to strengthen user engagement and foster greater loyalty.

Brand storytelling is also an important means of brand communication in the new media era. Storytelling not only helps establish long-term and stable emotional connections with customers but also enhances brand value and facilitates self-growth. By incorporating key timelines and utilizing graphics, videos, and other formats to tell stories, brands can advocate for inclusiveness and equality or embody youth and vitality, thereby finding a special place in the hearts of consumers through shared values.

5. The Influence and Enlightenment of Media Change on Brand Communication Strategy

5.1. How does Media Change Affect Brand Communication

The most immediate impact of media on brand communication lies in its channels. While early strategies focused on single-product promotion, social networks that are highly integrated into daily life, brand communication has enriched its forms through media updates. Furthermore, due to the development in the degree and manner of influencing human cognition, advocating values and leading lifestyles have become crucial means for shaping brand images. Brand communication has transcended the realm of material choices, reaching into people's spiritual worlds. It is worth noting that the precision of brand communication is continuously improving with technological advancements. By conducting ongoing research and segmentation of their target audience, brands can gradually embed their products or services into the lives of specific groups and deliver targeted messaging. This not only enhances user engagement and loyalty but also leads to reduced costs and increased efficiency.

5.2. Suggestions on Improving the Communication Effectiveness of Current Brands

First, brands can leverage the role of opinion leaders by identifying the "common ground" for information exchange across different circles (i.e., the intersection of interests, needs, and value expressions)[10]. This involves embedding themselves into the logic of people's lives, work, and society, thereby creating a two-tier communication model that enhances the effectiveness of dissemination through suitable intermediaries.

Second, brands should strengthen interactive experiences by regularly conducting various activities such as giveaways and topic initiations to create brand communities and maintain their vitality. They should also emphasize UGC by encouraging consumers to share their experiences, provide suggestions, and give feedback, thereby fostering positive word-of-mouth and harnessing the power of UGC.

Finally, brands can fully leverage digital technology to create immersive consumer experiences that convey brand information from multiple dimensions. By thoroughly exploring and analyzing data, they can achieve infinite segmentation of consumers, creating personalized recognition and purchasing experiences for each individual.

6. Conclusion

In the print media era, brand communication relied on newspapers and brochures to establish brand recognition through authoritative advertising. With the advent of electronic media, brands fully engaged audiences' senses and built brand images through the creation of imaginative scenarios. In the new media era, personalized pushes and UGC have become effective brand communication strategies. Brand communication strategies have evolved from static to dynamic, from singular to diverse, and from broad casting to precise targeting. They must adapt to changes in media, with media fusion becoming a new trend. Print media, once dominant, has transitioned to television media offering broader reach and creative space. Nowadays, social media enhances brand-consumer interaction. Brands should leverage these shifts, utilizing UGC and personalized strategies powered by big data and AI, while ensuring high-quality and precise messaging, to effectively boost communication effectiveness.

Brand formation and word-of-mouth accumulation are the result of a series of communication activities. When studying brand communication, this paper mainly takes advertising communication and digital communication in the new media era as the main forms, and rarely involves experience communication and public relations communication, and lacks in richness and comprehensiveness.

In future research, the implementation of case analysis will facilitate the provision of more comprehensive and graphic exemplification in support of brand communication research . By examining the evolution of a brand ' s communication tactics across diverse stages of media maturation, this approach will enhance the depth of understanding. Additionally, integrating analytical methods into data aggregation and evaluation processes will facilitate more precise measurement of the effectiveness of brand communication strategies.

References

- [1] Yu, Mingyang, and Shu, Yongping. "On 'Brand Communication'." [J]*International Journalism (in Chinese)* 03 (2002): 63-68.
- [2] Wang Bin. "From technical logic to practical logic: the spatial process of media evolution and the spatial turn of media research." [J]*Journalism and Communication Research* 18.03 (2011): 58-67+112.
- [3] Tan Huihuang. *The logic and trajectory of the evolution of advertising forms*. [D]2017. Wuhan University, PhD dissertation.
- [4] Krugman, Herbert E. "The impact of television advertising: Learning without involvement." *Public opinion quarterly* 29.3 (1965): 349-356.
- [5] Liang Tingting, and Ouyang Hongsheng. "TV Culture: A Mass Consumer Culture." [J]*Journal of Southwest University for Nationalities (Humanities and Social Sciences Edition)*. 03 (2007): 100-104.
- [6] Research Group on Product Placement Advertising, Public Opinion Institute of Renmin University of China, Yu Guoming, Ding Hanqing, et al. *Product Placement Advertising: Research Framework, Regulatory Construction, and Effectiveness Evaluation* [J]. *International Journalism Review*, 2011, 33(04): 6-23
- [7] Zhang Jinhai, Cheng Ming. *From product promotion to integration of marketing and communication - a historical review of the development of advertising communication theory in the 20th century* [J]. *Journal of Wuhan University (Humanities Edition)*, 2006, (06): 812-817.
- [8] Wang Zhan, Feng Fan. *Research on brand communication and marketing strategies in the context of community economy* [J]. *Journal of Social Sciences of Hunan Normal University*, 2017, 46(01): 141-148.
- [9] Voorveld, H. A. M. *Brand communication in social media: A research agenda*[J]. *Journal of Advertising*, 2019, 48(1), 14-26.
- [10] Yu Xiao. *Analysis of Brand Communication Strategies in the Social Media Era* [J]. *Press Circles*, 2011, (04): 122-123+133.