Innovative Approaches to Short Video Production

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Abstract: In the era of information explosion, short videos have experienced explosive growth, broadly categorized into two forms: long videos and short videos, differentiated by duration and information content. Long videos generally carry a higher information load and have a longer duration, while short videos are characterized by their brief duration and relatively lower information content. As the industry has evolved, with both long and short videos becoming key entry points for traffic, videos have undergone a simplistic classification leading to a coarse differentiation of audience groups. Examples include platforms like Douyin, Bilibili, Youku, iQiyi, Tencent, among others. User-Generated Content (UGC), primarily in the form of short videos, serves as the main framework where users spontaneously create and upload content to platforms. These platforms utilize a "decentralized" algorithm to drive traffic, creating new entry points. UGC is characterized by low cost, down-to-earth content, authenticity, minimal information load, and strong interactive elements. However, with the emergence of competition, since 2019, platforms have witnessed the rise of a considerable number of "pseudo-UGC" production models through information flow advertising. Many Multi-Channel Networks (MCNs) have entered the scene, using "pseudo-UGC" methods for video marketing, giving rise to a new wave of "short video teams." These teams consist predominantly of internet dramas, variety shows, and spontaneously formed groups, shaping a diverse landscape of "innovative short video production methods."

Keywords: Short Video, Production Methods, User-Generated Content (UGC)

1. Introduction:

With the continuous growth of the live streaming industry, short videos have been a "treasure trove" serving as its content support and traffic source. The scientific production of short videos to maintain the normal operation of live streaming businesses is a challenging problem that various e-commerce companies need to overcome. This paper will analyze examples and combine personal practical experience to present the methods of short video production in a formulaic manner. It aims to provide feasible solutions to enhance the efficiency of short video content production and ensure the sustainability of content creation.

2. Analysis of Short Video Purposes

Short videos are one form of content that has been widely applied in various fields in recent years, serving as a medium with a conveyance of information and a suitable pace for the educationally underserved new middle class. The importance of videos is further highlighted with the advent of the 5G era. Although the uses of short videos have become diverse, they can generally be categorized into the following major types: Corporate Promotion: Highlighting corporate culture, product selling points, and traffic acquisition. IP Building: Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) and internet celebrities producing content in their professional fields to build influence. Anchor Development: Introducing traffic through videos and entering live streaming rooms. E-commerce: Merchants harvesting traffic, often depicting product usage scenarios. Information Flow Advertising: Advertising companies undertake customer promotion budgets, shoot and produce content, and conduct precision targeting.

The production costs vary for different categories: Corporate Promotion: Low production costs and low traffic placement costs. IP Building: Increasing production standards with rising thresholds. Anchor Development: Mainly mass production, costs based on company resource allocation, with a focus on traffic placement. E-commerce: Primarily focused on products, costs can vary. Information Flow Advertising: Customized based on client needs, with final compensation based on effectiveness. In any entertainment industry riding a wave, there is always a process of "bad money driving out good money" (live streaming, micro-movies, movies, 5-minute short videos, comedy, variety shows, etc.). A genuine word-of-mouth mechanism will only emerge when the market becomes saturated.

3. Innovative Approaches to Short Video Production

3.1. Analysis of Types

Due to the extremely short duration and limited content capacity, the monetization methods are more direct, resulting in a stark contrast between the new types of short video production and long video production. As of 2023, mainstream short video production teams can be distinguished based on two purposes: "to B" and "to C." The "to B" category is directly employed by commercial companies, equipped with complete sales teams and supply channels. Their work revolves around brand and product promotion, with a focus on sales performance. On the other hand, the "to C" category is hired directly by Multi-Channel Network (MCN) agencies, with numerous short video and live streaming influencers within the organization. Their work centers around the influencers themselves, emphasizing data accumulation and audience growth.

Whether "to B" or "to C," the short video production methods differ significantly from long video production methods. Long videos emphasize storytelling, while short videos focus on "hypnotizing" the audience. Short videos prioritize sensory stimulation over long videos. To ensure effective content dissemination, innovative changes can be made in the production process, which directly impacts the cost of video production. On this basis, two new concepts have emerged in the new type of short video production methods—subjective cost and objective cost. Subjective cost, also known as "explicit cost," is perceptible through the video and includes elements such as props, scenes, costumes, and special effects that may seem "cost-intensive." Objective cost, known as "implicit cost," refers to the technical costs incurred by the production team during the process, represented by elements like manpower, cameras, editing, and scripts that are not visible in the final content. During the early to mid-stage of short video entrepreneurship, many founders struggle to differentiate between these two costs, leading to outcomes such as "underutilized resources" and a lack of proportional correlation between investment and output.

3.2. Detailed Case Analysis

Taking "Zhu Yidan's Tedious Life" as an example, Zhu Yidan, originally named Zhu Gen, is a typical private enterprise owner in a fourth-tier industrial city, with investments in multiple companies. One of these companies primarily focuses on web dramas and has a talented director named Zhang Ce. Initially involved in producing workplace short dramas within the company, Zhang Ce later experimented with using the image of a boss as the protagonist. He successfully transformed the image of a small-town boss into the "wealthiest short video influencer on the entire internet." The explicit costs and implicit costs in this process can be analyzed separately.

Explicit costs include various symbols appearing in the videos, such as "Rolex," "workplace," "branded clothing," "blatant special effects," etc. Implicit costs consist of "acting skills of internal company actors," "shooting equipment," "voiceovers," "shooting scripts," etc. When Zhang Ce left Zhu Gen, the online audience's reactions to the Zhu Yidan series were comments like "It's not the same anymore," indicating the loss of the invisible, implicit costs. While Rolex, "Top 10 Employees," branded clothing, and blatant special effects continued, elements like "Farewell to Africa" disappeared for policy reasons or copyright reasons, the original "Push-Pull-Shake-Shift" vertical screen composition method vanished, voiceovers were omitted, and shooting scripts were no longer present. This highlights the importance of implicit costs. When implicit costs become the "surplus value" for new-era short video directors, society's response to boss Zhu Gen shifted from affection to resentment, causing a stir on the internet.

Subjective costs are essential elements in the content, setting the tone for video content and reflecting its connection to reality. Objective costs, to some extent, determine subjective costs and serve as pre-production constraints for video content. Using "Zhu Yidan's Tedious Life" as an example again, due to the differences in explicit and implicit costs, the content presents itself as "Rolex as a crucial prop for conflict resolution," "the workplace as the main shooting location," "low-pitched voiceovers and branded clothing shaping the boss's image," and "shooting scripts using blatant special effects to enhance absurd atmospheres."

Certainly, the formation of the highly abstract "boss image" of Zhu Yidan is based on the subjective reflection of objective reality. This portrayal could be positive or negative. Through Zhu Gen's subsequent actions, it is evident that the Zhu Yidan image is likely positively portrayed because, in the director's mind, Zhu Gen's actions closely mirror Zhu Yidan's every move without restrictions. "Rolex" is genuine, the workplace atmosphere objectively exists, the branded clothing comes from Zhu Gen's own wardrobe, and the blatant special effects are some whimsical thoughts within the director's mind. With the emergence of such images as "Zhu Yidans," it undoubtedly propels the development of "hardcore" and "authentic" elements in short video content. Any genuinely existing profession or character can be showcased in an extremely abstract manner through short videos. This is the initial formation of innovative short video production methods.

4. Innovative Steps in Short Video Production

4.1. Identifying Tags

The stability and sustainability of short videos are crucial for survival in the ever-changing platform environment. The process of identifying tags involves moving from specific to abstract and back to specific, understanding detailed information about the subject, establishing a tag-based cognition for better content creation. Tag-based cognition is one of the most comfortable environments accepted by people in this era because tagging helps individuals better develop within social attribute relationships. For those being filmed, accepting tag-based cognition is essential as it aids in attracting attention and building one's image on the platform. In the world of short videos, tags are not merely

descriptions but symbols and identifications of identity. When a subject can be tagged, they can find their position on the platform, establish closer connections with the audience, thereby increasing the exposure and influence of their content.

Through tag-based cognition, subjects can gain a clearer understanding of their characteristics and strengths, shaping a more attractive image. This not only contributes to enhancing personal or brand visibility on the platform but also attracts more fans and followers. Simultaneously, tag-based cognition helps subjects better understand the social attribute relationships they are part of, enabling them to adapt and leverage these relationships for personal or brand development and growth.

In the realm of short videos, the importance of tag-based cognition is self-evident. It serves as both a bridge between content creators and audiences in establishing connections and a fundamental basis for content creation and dissemination. Therefore, identifying tags and accepting tag-based cognition are crucial steps for both short video creators and those being filmed.

4.2. Establishing Tags

Establishing tags requires consideration of one's differences from others and ensuring that the tags are applicable to the big data algorithms of various platforms. By aligning with algorithm preferences, preliminary traffic accumulation can be achieved. The process of establishing tags is also a team's understanding of the subject matter, a crucial aspect of team creativity.

During the process of establishing tags, the team needs to delve into an understanding of its characteristics, strengths, and positioning, while also taking into account the needs of the target audience and the characteristics of platform algorithms. This necessitates thorough communication and collaboration among team members to ensure that the selected tags accurately reflect the team's core concepts and creative direction. Additionally, the team needs to continuously adjust and optimize tags to adapt to market and platform changes.

Throughout the process of establishing tags, the team's understanding of the subject matter will deepen and expand continuously. Through analyzing and studying various themes and styles, team members can gain a clearer understanding of their areas of expertise and creative direction, enabling them to better determine tags and engage in creative work. This is also a vital aspect of the team's creative process, aiding the team in better grasping the direction and goals of their work, ultimately enhancing the quality and impact of their creations.

In summary, establishing tags is a key step in the short video production process. It requires team members to fully understand their characteristics and strengths, while also considering the needs of the target audience and the characteristics of platform algorithms. This demands close cooperation among team members and ongoing adjustments to ensure that the selected tags accurately reflect the team's core concepts and creative direction, leading to increased traffic accumulation and the enhancement of the work's impact.

4.3. Creating Tags

After establishing tags, the next step involves creating the tags, leveraging creativity and inspiration to ensure that the tags align with the team's actual situation. Each individual is a unique presence, and through abstract cognition and creation, their uniqueness can be showcased, thereby driving the team's development.

During the process of creating tags, team members need to unleash their creativity and imagination, integrating tags with the team's actual situation to ensure the uniqueness and personalization of the work. This requires close cooperation and communication among team members to collectively create works that align with the team's philosophy and tags.

Everyone possesses unique characteristics and strengths, and through abstract cognition and creation, these traits and strengths can be showcased, enriching the team's creative content and driving the team's development. Team members can explore and unearth their potential through continuous experimentation and practice, further enhancing their creative skills and performance.

In summary, creating tags is a crucial step in the short video production process. It requires team members to fully leverage their creativity and imagination, ensuring that the tags align with the team's actual situation. This, in turn, propels the team's development and leads to the creation of more outstanding and unique works.

4.4. Content Production

During the content production process, in addition to divergent creation combining factors such as news and hot topics, it is necessary to refer to the production methods of film and television arts and be guided by the creative theories of dramatic arts to ensure the quality and attractiveness of the work. When referencing the production methods of film and television arts, team members can learn and draw from their techniques and experiences in narration, rhythm, editing, and other aspects to enrich and enhance the expression and quality of their work. Through analysis and study of films and television productions, a better understanding of the audience's psychology and emotions can be gained, leading to a more effective capture of the audience's attention. Additionally, being guided by the creative theories of dramatic arts is equally crucial. Dramatic arts focus on character development, plot design, and conflict resolution, all of which are factors to be considered in the content production process. Team members can borrow techniques and creative concepts from dramatic arts to make the work more vivid and interesting. Furthermore, consideration should be given to the interactivity of internet media, setting interactive points at key nodes to complete the content loop and reproduction. By increasing audience engagement and interactivity, the interaction between the audience and the work can be strengthened, thereby enhancing the dissemination effect and influence of the work. Content production is a complex and diverse process, requiring a comprehensive consideration of various factors and the flexible application of different creative theories and techniques to produce high-quality, engaging, and influential works.

4.5. Monetization of Costs

Once content has garnered a certain audience, monetization becomes the primary task. The direction and intensity of cost control determine the type of audience owners can attract, as well as the audience's consumption level and habits. In this regard, it is necessary to promote products and consumables that match the audience through methods such as live streaming for direct monetization. In today's increasingly aspirational environment for a better life, content monetization becomes a challenge due to the potentially unstable consumption habits and viewing behaviors of the audience. Short video creators often attempt to monetize through a "quantity over quality" approach, limiting the development of content.

4.6. Video Infrastructure

Before the arrival of the 5G Internet of Things era, infrastructure investment had already become a focal point. Video infrastructure involves not only establishing 5G base stations but also the preliminary preparations made to welcome the arrival of these stations. In the era of the Internet of Things, the construction of video usage scenarios is one of the most crucial investments for market entities. However, one of the characteristics of the 5G era is "visible but intangible," making the concept of video infrastructure a paradox. Video, as a visual and auditory language, relies on language, expressions, and actions to establish usage scenarios in offline sales. However, when sales

are shifted online, the limitation of space prevents the creation of these aesthetically pleasing usage scenarios.

5. Conclusion:

Monetization of short videos has always been a highly scrutinized issue. When one cannot find their true positioning on short video platforms, the path to monetization often becomes elusive. Simultaneously, incorporating video creators into various companies and brands is not merely for producing short video products; rather, it is more about infusing video culture genes and narrating brand stories through the language of video. This requires video creators with proficient video language skills, those who can truly understand and apply video language. However, as of now, the use of video language in the field of short videos is still in its early stages. In comparison, video language is more intuitive than written language, dialogue, and body language. With the support of infrastructure, the extensive use of video language will reveal greater potential, breaking free from the limitations of written language and providing audiences and consumers with more intuitive experiences and stimulation. Despite the undeniable expressive power of written language, at this stage, the impact of video language is more immediate. In summary, the new mode of short video production is a summary and speculation, and we also look forward to contributing some new discoveries and experiences in this "war for traffic."

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