



Research on Marketing Communication of E-sports

Industry

--The Example of the Variety Show “We Are the Champions”

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Abstract. After decades of development, the e-sports industry has been changing its communication format in recent years. Based on the analysis of the e-sports-themed online variety show "We Are the Champions", we explore the characteristics of the online variety show's presentation in the context of e-sports. With improvements and innovations in three areas - content set-up, broadcast set-up, and program marketing - "We Are the Champions" has the advantage of applying the e-sports theme to online variety shows. The eSports industry and the media industry, however, still have limitations in their future development.

Keywords: e-sports, online variety show, media communication

1 Introduction

E-sports is a rivalry game based on e-sports games, with information technology as the core hardware and software equipment as the apparatus, in a virtual environment created by information technology, under the unified competition rules, and the guarantee of rules for fair play [1]. With the advent of the mobile Internet era, the level of technology continues to reach new heights, and e-sports, as a product of the information age, fully manifests the characteristics of the Internet and sports competition [2]. In 2003, the Chinese State General Administration of Sports listed

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e-sports as the 99th officially recognized sport; e-sports will be on the stage of the Hangzhou Asian Games as an official competition event [3]. During the decades of rapid development of e-sports events, mobile internet technology gradually rose to new heights, causing e-sports to start moving to mobile. The rise of social media and live internet video streaming technology has widened the way for the mobile dissemination of eSports, and the mobile esports industry has grown in a short period. With the gradual development and improvement of the eSports industry chain, eSports gradually came into the public eye and received wider attention. As an emerging thematic element, eSports is integrating and developing together with other industries.

Zhou Ling [4] suggests that the media industry has a good development trend as a cultural and entertainment industry that disseminates knowledge and information and uses various communication tools as a medium. Therefore, the media industry has become one of the main platforms for the communication development of the eSports industry. E-sports is one of the hottest emerging fields and much research is being done in the fields of informatics, communication, law, and sport. There are many scholars in the field of communication who have studied the media image and social perception of eSports, but as a new hot topic, research on eSports in film and television is not as comprehensive as it could be. With the growing interest in eSports, new films and TV programs have been developed in recent years, covering a wide range of media, such as online variety shows, TV series, and novels. Therefore, this thesis will focus on the current situation of the dissemination of eSports themes in the media-derived film and television industry, taking the online variety show "We Are the Champions" as an example for detailed analysis. "We Are the Champions" is an e-sports training web variety show jointly produced by Tencent Video and King's Glory, a show that focuses on presenting the professional ecology of e-sports and the abilities and attitudes of e-sports players (Tencent, 2022). "We Are the Champions", a spin-off web variety show of the King's Glory e-sports competition, received extremely high attention and discussion, garnering 2.55 billion reads and 20.758 million discussions on Weibo (Weibo, 2022). Studying the results of e-sports in different forms of media communication can provide a reference for the future development of its derivative film and television programs, and also have a positive impact on the development of e-sports itself.

2 Analysis of the "We Are the Champions" Program

Starting in June 2022, "We Are the Champions" tells the story of 30 newcomers from the field of sports and culture, who grow up in the top e-sports clubs, undergo practical training, and compete for side by side for the ultimate glory (Tencent, 2022). As a film and television program that uses a blend of niche topics and emerging communication methods, "We Are the Champions" has received high airplay and discussion since its broadcast. This essay will discuss the characteristics and advantages of "We Are the Champions" by analyzing three aspects: content setting, broadcast setting, and program marketing.

2.1 Content

The storyline of the program is: "Newcomers enter the gaming club in groups - they grow up in the club - they go through practical training - and finally fight alongside their teammates. -The story of the newcomers who enter the club as a group, grow up in the club, go through practical training and finally fight alongside their teammates.

The first stage of the storyline is the entry of the newcomers into the club. In the main body of the program, the initial ranking of the star rookies is announced, followed by a 5v5 'de-watering' tournament, where the pros alter the initial ranking of the star players by their performance in the 'de-watering' tournament. The stars are then grouped to go to different gaming clubs, and the show's main feature depicts the entire process of breaking the ice between the stars and the players and coaches. The second stage of the storyline follows the newcomers as they bond and grow in the club and begin their professional training. The coaches of each team analyze each player's past match data and develop a professional training plan for each player. The star players underwent a month of professional training under the guidance of their coaches and professional players. They work hard with their teammates day and night and gradually bond with them. The third stage of the storyline is when the players grow in the field. As the star players leave the club to compete, each team is split up and regrouped in the process, with the players going head-to-head in a series of reversals, interspersed with promotions and eliminations. The final stage was the live finals. The main event featured the final two teams, S.Carry and 0829, who made it through the semi-finals to the grand final, where they faced off in a BO5 summit match for the final trophy. In addition, celebrity players and coaches who had been

eliminated in previous episodes also returned to take part in the showcase. The main content of each of the eight main episodes corresponds to the storyline. The main theme of the show is to showcase the professional ecology of gaming and the abilities and attitudes of the athletes, and many of the details in the main feature are based on this theme. Through the positive and negative interactions between the celebrities and the professional players, as well as the scenes of the celebrities training in the club, the program exposes the professional and cruel ecology of the e-sports arena from a special perspective, achieving the purpose of sublimating the main theme.

2.2 Programme Marketing

Based on the content of the program mentioned above, the program team developed a marketing plan on Weibo based on the pre-determined storyline direction. The marketing plan was mainly targeted at the hot topics page of Weibo. Weibo marketing is a process in which companies make comprehensive use of the Weibo platform to carry out activities such as publicity and promotion, market information collection, and potential customer interaction, ultimately achieving the role of gaining enhanced brand influence and monitoring online public opinion [5]. The data on the number of reads and discussions on Weibo hot search as the most visual marketing results show the success of "We Are the Champions" 's Weibo marketing plan. Below are statistics on the number of buzz searches associated with the storyline in the "We Are the Champions" section, which is the result of spontaneous buzz formation.

The show's editing techniques and content placement in the show have also been a form of marketing. Firstly, the trending topics are highlighted in the main feature of each episode, taking up more of the airtime. In the trailer, some of the hot clips are also used to arouse the curiosity of the audience, thus achieving an early warm-up effect. Secondly, in the editing of the program, the program team selects tense or intense background music to attract the audience's attention, and mainly uses close-up shots of the characters and multi-camera view playback to highlight the key content and deepen the audience's impression. As a result, through pre-planning and post-editing, "We Are the Champions" has generated some buzz on Weibo.

Statistics of "We Are the Champions" buzzwords. "We Are the Champions"

#Huang Minghao wrestling fire DragonFruit 360 million reads 117,000 discussions

#Yang Mi game id is "please have a candy" 180 million reads 67,000 discussions

#Xu Weizhou cries at Lai Meiyun 180 million reads 65 thousand discussions

#HuangMingHao said he would let Yino have no wilderness area 9.957 million reads 4.8 million discussions

#What is the experience of being approved by parents for playing e-sports 70.995 million read 4947 discussions

#Noyan teaches Gong Jun expression management 44,197,000 reads 14,000 discussions

#Nofear and Ao Ziyi one-on-one fielding bit teaching 41,367,000 reads 55,000 discussions

- Finals-related hot searches

"We Are the Champions" Finals 280 million reads 1.491 million discussions

#LaiMeiYun finally got the Xishi 110 million reads 19 million discussions

#GongJun defeated Zhou Keyu with 73.46 million reads and 30,000 discussions

#AoZiYi battles to peak finals FMVP 502.664 million reads 37,000 discussions

2.3 Play Setting

E-sports is a new theme for film and television programs, the audience is mainly the e-sports fan base. Zhou Ke [6] defines e-sports fan groups into three categories. The first category of fans is the general users. The second category of fans is professional e-sports players and internal e-sports staff. The third category of fans is esports media practitioners. Meanwhile, "We Are the Champions" has invited 30 celebrity artists from all walks of life as new e-sports players, attracting a large number of celebrity fans to watch. The main audience of "We Are the Champions" is therefore gaming fans and celebrity fans, with celebrity fans mainly watching celebrity performances and training routines, while gaming fans tend to watch content related to tournaments and expertise. Due to the length of the program, it was not possible to show both parts of the program in their entirety. Therefore, the program team showed a shortcut version of the match, a little bit of gaming knowledge, and highlights of the celebrities' training and matches. This was a good balance between the needs of both audiences and the tight pace of the show.

In addition, there are two spin-offs from the main series. They are "Training Diary" and "Match Playback". The "We Are the Champions Training Diary" features unseen clips of the stars training in the main feature film as well as highlights of the stars in their matches. The "Match Playback" contains a full replay of all the matches from the show, rather than a condensed version of the main show. Fans of celebrities and

e-sports can choose to watch the program according to their needs, following the prompts from the program team after the end of the main show.

3 Characteristics of Online Variety Shows Under the Theme of E-Sports

Online self-produced variety shows refer to variety shows that are independently produced or co-produced with investment by video websites, with independent program copyrights owned by video websites and operated completely independently, and broadcast through video websites [7]. Based on the above analysis of the program "We Are the Champions" in terms of content sets, broadcast setting, and program marketing, it can be seen that this online variety show has been a great success. As a more popular form of broadcast in recent years, online variety shows have many advantages under the theme of eSports.

3.1 Civilian Topics Resonate

Unlike TV series, reality TV shows have a shorter filming period and are based on everyday life. This makes it easy to select hot topics that are popular in today's society, which can be presented more fluidly and realistically in the natural content of the show. For example, in "We Are the Champions", professional player Meng Tear and star player Wang Lin talk about their parents and children's attitudes towards e-sports during a review of the game. Wang Lin says that she learns King's Glory to find common topics with her son, while Meng Tear expresses her gratitude to her parents for supporting her in pursuing her dream. As a niche topic, e-sports has a small audience. Therefore the audience resonance triggered by the hot topic can make more people aware of the show and expand the audience to attract heat.

3.2 Inclusive Platform Medium

As a niche topic, most viewers currently have a vague concept of e-sports and video games, believing that e-sports is more entertainment than the competition, and its core content is not yet accepted by the mainstream public. Also, due to the unique nature of the gaming profession, most professional players come to gaming clubs to train

before the age of 18, which prevents them from completing their studies properly. This specificity is not currently in line with the mainstream values of prioritizing schooling, and as television is geared towards society as a reflection of popular cultural values, the theme of eSports has been hampered in reaching the masses in the form of TV series and TV variety shows. However, online variety shows are broadcast on video sites, which are more inclusive of niche themes, and viewers can watch selectively on video sites, making them more suitable for the development of e-sports themes.

3.3 Simulating A Real Gaming Arena To Balance the Content of the Program

As mentioned above, online variety shows are mostly reality shows, and in this natural and realistic form, the programs can easily simulate a real gaming arena and focus on showing the process of gaming competitions. In the case of novels, radio dramas, and TV dramas, the presentation serves the storyline and the main character's emotional relationship takes up most of the space, making it impossible to portray the main content related to e-sports. In the case of online variety shows, the details of the competition and the training process of the contestants can be shown in full as the main content. In "We Are the Champions", for example, the main film and the two spin-offs mentioned above showcase the full range of gaming-related content.

4 Conclusion

As one of the hottest e-sports web series in the summer of 2022, "We Are the Champions" has successfully led the e-sports niche to break the circle and gain a high level of attention. The success of "We Are the Champions" is due to the show's unique planning and innovation, as well as the advantages of online variety shows in the context of e-sports. First of all, the team of "We Are the Champions" had a complete storyline and developed a complete Weibo marketing plan based on this storyline. After analyzing the audience groups, the team innovated the broadcast format, successfully balancing the viewing needs of both types of viewers. Secondly, online variety shows have a high degree of appropriateness for the eSports theme, as they can easily choose hot topics to resonate with and expand audiences, and can

avoid the problem of the eSports theme not conforming to mainstream values, as well as presenting the eSports theme completely and comprehensively in terms of content.

The development of the e-sports theme in the media and film industry is in its initial stages of development, and there are still some issues that need to be addressed in the future. Firstly, the e-sports industry should gradually broaden its applications in the media industry, such as film series and documentaries. Secondly, given the above-mentioned issue of the theme of e-sports versus mainstream social values, the e-sports industry should use media platforms to help the public clarify the difference between e-sports and gaming and to make a name for itself. In short, the future of e-sports communication needs to continue to be professionalized and formalized, to dare to experiment with other forms of media-derived film and television, and to use the media industry to change the public's misconceptions about e-sports, so that the public can be more accepting and tolerant of e-sports. Only then will the gaming events themselves and their derivative films and TV shows be able to move towards a larger distribution platform.

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