

# ***Marketing Strategies for Online Self-Produced Variety Shows: A Case Study of Marketing Strategies for King of Comedy: Monologue Season***

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**Abstract:** With the rapid pace of modern life and rising work pressures, audiences increasingly seek variety shows that offer relaxation and entertainment, driving significant growth in the online variety show market. This paper addresses how, amid competition, an online show can capture viewer attention and achieves sustained success. Using the show *King of Comedy: Monologue Season* by iQIYI as a case study, this research examines the marketing strategies that contributed to its popularity. Specifically, this paper applies a case analysis approach to explore the unique elements of the program's marketing from five core dimensions: interactivity, penetration, resonance, gender balance, and celebrity lineup. The research results show that the combination of innovative marketing strategies and high-quality content production is the key to the success of self-made variety shows. These strategies not only increase audience engagement and interactivity, but also contribute to the long-term sustainable development of the comedy industry.

**Keywords:** Online Self-Produced Variety Shows, Stand-Up Comedy, *King of Comedy: Monologue Season*, Marketing Strategies

## **1. Introduction**

As people's work and life pressures increase, lighthearted and humorous content has become an important way for audiences to relieve stress, which is driving the rise of online self-produced content, especially talk shows. Online self-produced variety shows are independently planned and produced by online video platforms, specifically designed for broadcast on their own network platforms, and have shown a rapid development trend in recent years. Compared to traditional TV variety shows, online self-produced variety shows have a broader range of content coverage, enjoy greater freedom in post-production, and have a stronger degree of audience participation and interactivity. As a kind of comedy performance with deep history, stand-up comedy has gradually become an important category of contemporary popular comedy with its sharp and humorous satire and insight into real life [1]. *King of Comedy: Monologue Season* is an original stand-up comedy competition program produced by iQIYI [2]. Through the combination of self-made form and talk show content, it breaks through the framework and limitations of traditional variety shows and has a high degree of freedom in content planning and interaction. The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of the marketing strategy used in the *King of Comedy Monologue Season*, and to explore its effectiveness in

enhancing program awareness, increasing audience engagement and building program brand image. Through this study, we can have a deeper understanding of how variety shows in the digital age maximize their influence and commercial value through marketing strategies.

## 2. Program Profile: *King of Comedy: Monologue Season* and its Industry Impact

In today's fierce competition in the network variety show market, how to stand out through unique marketing strategies has become the key for self-produced network variety show to maintain attention and achieve success. The purpose of this study is to find out the future development path of network self-created variety show by analyzing the successful marketing strategy of *The King of Comedy: Monologue Season*. *King of Comedy Monologue Season* is initiated by Stephen Chow, featuring several seasoned comedians and atmosphere team leaders who introduce 44 talented stand-up comedians across the country to the audience. Through fierce competition, the program crowns an annual "stand-up comedy king" [2]. The show is an example of a successful combination of stand-up comedy and online variety formats. Iqiyi has partnered with numerous comedy clubs to create an opportunity to interact and learn from each other, breaking down barriers in the online and offline comedy industry. The show showcases top comedians and emerging talent from major comedy brands, creating a platform that not only highlights individual performances, but also encourages the offline comedy industry to flourish by tapping into the popularity of online events. This cross-industry synergy has played an important role in the continued success of the show.

In addition, the *King of Comedy Monologue Season* is not only a breakthrough for comedy shows, it also plays a pivotal role in supporting behind-the-scenes comedians and promoting the overall growth of the industry as a whole [3]. Through the discovery and promotion of new stars, it stimulates the internal momentum and creates a positive and stable direction for the development of the industry.

## 3. Analysis of Marketing Strategies for *King of Comedy: Monologue Season*

### 3.1. Audience Interactivity

In the era of new media, audience interaction has become a decisive feature of the success of network variety show [4]. The *King of Comedy: Monologue Season* integrates multiple online platforms to provide diverse ways for viewers to participate. While watching, viewers can express their opinions about the show in real time through bullet comments, creating a sense of community while interacting with the ideas and feedback of others. The production team cleverly used the bullet comment feature to engage viewers in real-time interactions, such as rating performances or voting for their favorite stand-up comedians. The program also uses Weibo as an interactive channel, and the public account provides registration links for fans to participate as live audience judges, further enhancing the program's interactivity and participation.

The synergy of these multi-channel interactive strategies has greatly contributed to the success of the *King of Comedy Monologue Season*. While enhancing the audience experience, they also provide valuable feedback to the production team, helping the content dynamically adjust to the audience's preferences, thereby maintaining the show's competitive edge in the highly competitive entertainment market in the new media era.

### 3.2. Advertising Penetration

The "south wind" rule in marketing, also known as the "warmth" rule, emphasizes that brand building is a gradual process that requires constant interaction to gradually reach the hearts of audiences and win their love and acceptance [5]. The *King of Comedy: Monologue Season* follows this principle with a subtle but effective brand integration.

Each episode features fixed opening advertisements that prominently showcase Kyoto Nian Ci An in a humorous, yet memorable, manner. "Protecting the voice strength, laughing more freely, thanking the happy support, Kyoto Nian Ci An exclusive title broadcast," to highlight the brand characteristics of Kyoto Nian Ci An in a simple and vivid way. This subtle and profound brand image shaping effectively enhances brand awareness and reflects the harmonious integration of the exhibition and sponsors. By keeping the AD content fresh and engaging, such as "What to do when your throat is upset; Fortunately, we have our old friends Kyoto Nienichi," "With Kyoto Nienichi, you can laugh for days" and so on, the program avoids advertising fatigue while ensuring high recall and communication value.

In addition, the integration of advertisements into stand-up comedy shows, where comedians humorously incorporate brand messages into their acts, adds another layer of entertainment. This clever blend of commercial content and comedy increases audience acceptance of the ads, ensuring that the commercial message complements the tone and overall appeal of the show.

This strategy is consistent with the overall marketing goal, providing entertainment value while commercial promotion, effectively promoting the success of the show, and achieving a win-win situation for the brand and the show.

### 3.3. Resonance

Randel Collins emphasizes in his work "Interaction Ritual Chains" that the exchange and sharing of emotional energy is the most central concept of interaction ritual chains. This emotional exchange enables individuals to participate more actively in interactions after sensing each other's emotional energy. This theory is vividly reflected in the *King of Comedy Monologue Season* [6].

The program, with the slogan "From Little People to Comedy King," encourages everyone to take to the stand-up comedy stage and vividly showcases the trajectory of comedic talents growing from ordinary beginnings. Through a diverse cast of actors, the audience can see reflections of their own lives in the stories told, experiencing deep emotional resonance. This phenomenon is the practice and manifestation of the core concept that "interaction ritual chains."

Hei Deng, from the perspective of a juvenile macular degeneration patient, talks about the unreasonable disability assistance designs in life. He uses stand-up comedy to convey disease awareness and disability care to bring more attention to the needs of the visually impaired. As a member of the grassroots service hall, Liang Yan shared humorous anecdotes from work that resonated with everyone's small setbacks in their career.

In addition, there are delivery man Pumpkin and other characters; We-media blogger door strong; And Yan Hexiang, a crosstalk performer. They bring their life experiences and professional backgrounds to the stage of the *King of Comedy Monologue Season* to express and poke fun at themselves from their own point of view. They gradually explore and demonstrate their comedic talents, and together interpret the infinite possibilities from humble beginnings to the pinnacle of comedy.

The emotional resonance brought about by these real stories more effectively connects the audience with the show, enhances the appeal of the show and complements the promotion strategy.

### 3.4. Balancing Gender Perspectives

In today's society, women still face many unfair treatments and stereotypes. In a society where men are the privileged class, men have a more dominant aesthetic standard, and they can unilaterally define women's beauty [7]. However, in "*King of Comedy Monologue Season*," female comedians have courageously challenged this traditional authority.

Qi Qi said, "From today on, I will strive for the freedom to eat full, and I refuse to be a modern woman plagued by 'food shame.' My predecessors strove for the right to eat at the table, and I want to strive to eat full at the table!" She encourages new-era women to face social prejudices and calls for "no anxiety about body shape," expressing women's demands for changing unfair social requirements; Tang Xiangyu's routines are called "hell-level jokes in the marriage market." "I only know that marrying out is an outsider; how can not marrying out also be an outsider? Where am I, not an insider or outsider?" "Their meaning is that the house at home should be given to my brother, and in the future, I may not have my own room when I go back. My brother was anxious when he heard it; Why, isn't it said to buy me a new house?" Through her humorous routines, Tang Xiangyu uncovers customs that favor males over females and the urgency of being pressured to marry, allowing audiences to perceive the predicaments and challenges faced by women amidst laughter. Yang Li, the only female comedy veteran in the *King of Comedy Monologue Season*, has repeatedly commented on men and women's topics from a female perspective. With her sharp style and the courage to speak the truth, she has opened up a new path in the field of stand-up comedy. "I don't want to be on the program. I just want to be at the table." She is well aware of the difficulties for women in this industry, so as one of the scriptwriters for the show, she actively encourages and supports other female stand-up comedians to bravely articulate their voices, providing strong support for them.

On the comedy stage, the active performance of female stand-up comedians not only breaks gender boundaries but also demonstrates the rise and influence of women in this field. It reflects the societal shift in perceptions of women's roles and status. The *King of Comedy Stand-Up Season* showcases the power and diversity of women, embracing and elevating the status of female comedians, thereby attracting more female viewers, resonating with its marketing strategies, and securing a unique competitive advantage in the market.

### 3.5. Celebrity Lineup

*King of Comedy: Monologue Season* boasts a strong and diverse celebrity lineup, encompassing comedic talents from various fields and styles. The program can enhance its visibility by inviting celebrity guests, who bring new vitality and topics through their personal charm and influence [8].

The atmosphere team includes Yang Tianzhen, Wu Zhenyu, Guo Qilin, and guest stars from each episode. As the leader of the atmosphere group, Yang Tianzhen adds highlights and attractions to the program with her unique perspective and humorous language; Wu Zhenyu, who has participated in the Cantonese "Dongdu Laugh" program, is adept at capturing the comedic elements in the performers' acts and can pointedly identify the strengths and weaknesses in their performances; Guo Qilin, with his profound foundation in the language arts, uses humor and high EQ to ease the tense and awkward atmosphere of the program, allowing it to proceed smoothly. The *King of Comedy: Monologue Season* features a strong and diverse lineup of celebrities, covering comedy talent from different fields and styles. The show can increase its visibility by inviting celebrity guests, who bring new energy and topics through their charisma and influence [8].

The atmosphere team includes Yang Tianzhen, Wu Zhenyu, Guo Qilin, and guest actors in each episode. As the leader of the atmosphere group, Yang Tianzhen adds highlights and points of view to the program with her unique perspective and humorous language. Wu Zhenyu, who participated in the Guangdong "Dongdu Laugh" program, is good at capturing the comedy elements in the performers' performances, and can find out the advantages and disadvantages of the performers' performances. With his profound skills in language art, Guo Qilin used humor and high emotional intelligence to resolve the tense and awkward atmosphere of the program and made the program proceed smoothly. Guests such as Xu Zheng, Luo Yonghao and Yu Shuxin will each bring their unique perspectives and viewpoints to add freshness to each episode and further expand the influence of the program.

In addition, Pang Bo, Zhou Qimo, Yang Li, Wang Jianguo and other "comedy veterans" participated in the program. As early comedians participating in online stand-up comedy conferences, audiences have witnessed their growth. This kind of long-term companionship has formed a unique tacit understanding and identity between them and the audience. So when they participate in the *King of Comedy Monologue Season* as veteran comedians, they not only bring a sense of familiarity and warmth to the audience, but they also encourage more of their already established fan base to tune in to the show.

To sum up, from the analysis of these five dimensions, it can be seen that the success of the program comes from its multi-faceted resonance with the audience. By engaging the audience in real-time interaction, seamlessly integrating the brand into the content of the show, meeting the emotional needs of the audience, challenging gender stereotypes, and showcasing a wide variety of comedic talent, these factors together enhance the audience experience, elevate the show's visibility, and occupy a unique position in the entertainment market. The success of variety shows is the combination of fine content, high-quality production and excellent marketing means, which effectively realizes the win-win situation of the program itself, the audience and the market [9].

## **4. The Future Development Path of Online Self-Produced Variety Shows**

### **4.1. Integrated Marketing Strategy**

Integrated marketing communication (IMC) is an essential strategy for optimizing resource allocation and ensuring consistent messaging across all channels [8].

For online self-produced variety shows, the online program planning team can leverage big data analysis to understand audience preferences, enabling targeted promotions and personalized recommendations. Strengthening interactions with fans through live Q&A sessions and bullet comment interactions can enhance audience engagement and loyalty. Offline, for stand-up comedy shows, organizing comedy tours and personal performances by comedians can extend the show's reach across the country, allowing more people to experience the charm of stand-up comedy live and bringing the show closer to its audience.

Additionally, cross-industry collaboration is a vital component of the integrated marketing strategy. By partnering with other brands, IPs, or artists, the show can attract a broader audience, increasing its visibility and influence.

### **4.2. Realizing the Concept of User First**

The success of a variety show is closely related to the audience. Ratings are crucial to the reputation of a program and directly affect its marketing and development. The network self-created variety show should adhere to the concept of user first, and use a variety of technical means to improve audience participation and stickiness.

First of all, item word review technology plays an important role in improving user engagement [10]. Online programming provides a platform for real-time communication where viewers can instantly comment, share opinions, and interact with other viewers. Bullet commentary technology fosters a sense of virtual community and deepens the emotional connection between viewers and the show.

Producers can collect and analyze information through bullet comments to adjust the program content and format in a timely manner. For example, in the *King of Comedy: Monologue Season*, viewers use bullet comments to express their own views. This immediate feedback and interaction enhance viewer satisfaction, and the production team can collect and analyze this feedback to adjust the show to meet audience expectations and needs.

Secondly, the show can regularly post exciting content on social media platforms such as Weibo. By responding to comments, likes and sharing viewer content, shows can increase audience engagement and deepen their love and loyalty to the show. When viewers share their love and recommendations for the show on social media, these positive reviews spread quickly, attracting the attention of more potential viewers and forming word-of-mouth promotion.

## 5. Conclusion

Indeed, as mentioned above, the popularity of variety shows is by no means accidental; It is inseparable from a comprehensive marketing strategy and the support of the audience.

The *King of Comedy: Monologue Season* uses a comprehensive marketing strategy to keep pace with The Times, bridge the gap between traditional variety shows and audiences, and rejuvenate on the online platform. The program's marketing tactics, which incorporate insights from psychology and sociology—such as the "South Wind" principle and a balanced gender perspective mentioned in this paper—have enabled it to successfully break through in a vast sea of online self-produced variety shows. In addition, the show's core message of taking viewers on a journey from "the common man to the king of comedy" has attracted a wider audience. By reflecting the joys and sorrows of ordinary people in contemporary society and their unrelenting pursuit, the program resonates with the audience in laughter and tears, thus narrowing the emotional gap between the program and the audience. These attractive marketing strategies not only bring positive effects to the program, but also provide valuable experience for the mass communication of the variety show created by the minority network.

The Internet has entered a new stage, and big data and new technologies have accelerated the development of the entire media industry. Driven by national policy support and the internal dynamics of platforms, the environment for innovative online variety show creation will become more standardized. Society will cultivate more innovative talents, leading to the establishment of a harmonious and sustainable online variety show ecosystem.

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