

Analysis of the New Mode of Movie Marketing Communication

—The Example of the "TikTok-style Movie"

Shuyang Lin^{1,a,*}

¹*College of Foreign Languages, Zhejiang University, Hangzhou 310058, China*

a. 3210101307@zju.edu.cn

**corresponding author*

Abstract: This paper introduces the concept of "TikTok-style Movie" and illustrates a new marketing and communication model jointly constructed by movie producers, new media organizations or KOLs, and the general public under the influence of the short-video communication method of the platform "TikTok". By analyzing the impact of TikTok marketing on the content, shooting, and editing of the film production itself through the context of practical case studies to peek into the direction of the development of film production; exploring the advantages and disadvantages of the movie market brought by the emergence and expansion of "TikTok-style Movie". At the same time, analyze the path to success of the advantages and how to overcome the shortcomings, improve the TikTok marketing and improve the quality of the films. This paper will also explore the future of the "TikTok-style Movie" and the development direction of Chinese movies in terms of movie content, marketing methods, platform cooperation, and other aspects.

Keywords: TikTok-style Movie, movie marketing, TikTok platform

1. Introduction

With the advancement of algorithms, multimedia, and other technologies, and the proliferation of MCN organizations, KOLs, and self-media, the era of short videos has arrived. As the leading brand of short video communication and socialization in China, TikTok is reshaping the form of information dissemination and people's consumption habits. Movies, as a major field of entertainment, also present a new type of narrative, shooting, and dissemination mode under the support of short video media platforms, which called "TikTok-style Movie", taking TikTok as the main marketing position, exploring social hotspots as movie content, reserving or digging out short-length, visually striking dramatic conflict scenes in the production process to serve the subsequent marketing of TikTok. At the same time, various short video media resources are used to launch a comprehensive and three-dimensional creative campaign to maximize audience interest, which is then converted into box office through e-commerce or other channels.

A few days ago, China's 2023 movie summer schedule came to an end. It can be called the strongest summer schedule in history harvested four 2 billion +, two 3 billion + box office. This is not only because of the rebound of the desire for recreational consumption after the epidemic, but

also because the rise of the short video industry has highly linked the social entertainment network and opened the era of universal interaction. At the same time, the user profile of TikTok shows the characteristics of high usage frequency, social activity, and intensive consumption, and it is highly overlapped with movie users [1]. While movie publicity has more explosive points to attract the audience, it is constantly moving towards the sinking market and broadening the volume of the movie market. This summer movie pays special attention to the TikTok public opinion field and carries on the momentum and layout, becoming the leading brand of "TikTok-style Movies". According to media reports, the short video marketing budget accounts for half or more of the movie's publicity and development, and the publicity of a single movie on the TikTok channel can reach up to 10 million.

2. "TikTok-style Movie" Marketing Approach

Traditional marketing mostly starts from the movie and actor side, including the attraction of famous IP, directors, and actors to the audience, which has led to the problems of insufficient market increment and low conversion rate of publicity and distribution [1]. The forms of publicity are usually theater roadshows, poster publicity in relevant places, video website advertisements, and variety show appearances. However, after the rise of short-video publicity dominated by TikTok, the available participants and presentable forms of publicity have become more diverse. It presents a marketing logic that combines the leading role of the movie producer, the promotion of MCN organizations or KOLs, and the participation of all the people.

2.1. Movie Producers Take the Lead

To better determine the direction of the film publicity stage, the film side will often let the film and television publicity company intervene in the early stage, and synchronize with the film into the group to collect the footage and short video material as soon as the film starts shooting; the producer will also arrange for the actors to shoot short videos when the film is shot and the publicity roadshow is held. Short videos usually have a shorter retention time and require a faster update speed and marketing rhythm to achieve customer retention [2]. Therefore, the operation of official TikTok is an essential part of the "TikTok-style Movie", and the content usually covers various contents such as highlights, storylines, artists, behind-the-scenes, deleted clips, audience reactions, box office records, and so on. Through the rich and in-depth material and topic guidance, the construction of the film's initial traffic pool is realized, laying the foundation for the subsequent admission of various organizations and audiences. At the same time, the movie producer also dominates the short video production to maintain the original image style and narrative tone [3], to capture the audience more realistically and accurately.

2.2. Promotion by MCN Organizations and KOLs

The success of "TikTok-style Movie" cannot be separated from the entertainment and topicality of the commercial package. Movies often cooperate with MCN companies and KOLs, so that they can gain a certain scale of momentum on the TikTok platform through their professional operation and their traffic and better find hot terriers for publicity. Take "No More Bets" as an example, there are head kol imitating the characters in the drama, there are netizens are sharing their own or their family's experience of being swindled, there are bloggers are introducing the swindling methods of the north of Myanmar, and there are also official media cooperating with the movie to carry out Anti-fraud propaganda, with a series of explosive topics and video challenges successfully relying on the traffic to get out of the circle, and it was a hit at the early stage of the movie release.

2.3. Mass Participation

A high degree of audience participation is the key to the fission spread and realization of "TikTok-style Movie". This includes playing the role of the movie characters, interpreting the movie stems, giving reactions to the movie content, analyzing the characters or social phenomena, etc. This will produce communication templates that can be imitated and efficiently copied by everyone. This will produce communication templates that can be imitated and copied efficiently by everyone, such as the famous scene "worship of Buddha" in "No More Bets", which triggered imitation by 100 head professionals and countless ordinary audiences, breaking the record of movie-type challenge play, and the total number of likes of the hot video was more than 23 million; and it will also produce profound reflections on the hot spots of the society, which will lead to a large number of viewings and discussions, such as the "Lost in the Stars". It also generates profound reflections on social hotspots, attracting a large number of views and discussions, such as the discussion on women's value and the concept of choosing a spouse and marriage in "Lost in the Stars".

The "universal challenge" is a special feature of the TikTok platform, which not only generates more interaction between users and the movie, but also expands the influence of the movie to a wider social network through secondary dissemination by users. "TikTok-style Movie" generates a wealth of second creation materials and various kinds of unique linkages through the challenge + explosive stems application mode in the part of universal participation. Meanwhile, based on TikTok's powerful algorithms: collaborative recommendation based on user information, precise recommendation based on social relationships, and superimposed recommendation based on traffic pool [4], it brings a constant flow of tap water for the movie.

3. The Impact of "TikTok-style Movie" on Movie Production

As "TikTok-style Movie" is becoming more and more popular, movie producers in the Chinese market set up a separate TikTok department, which is operated by a specialized film company. The change and influence of the TikTok marketing idea on the movie itself is mainly reflected in three aspects: content design, camera conception, and editing arrangement.

3.1. Content Design

As a national-level social platform, TikTok has a deep observation of all angles of the current social situation, as well as a wealth of ideas. The movie producer's attention to TikTok is essentially a deep dive into social sentiment and social hotspots. Considering the public's promotion and thus adjusting the content in the movie production is, to a certain extent, also adding more cultural content that is popular among the people to the movie. As critics say, "The key to breakthrough is to grasp the public mood".

The core starting point of "TikTok-style Movie" is the movie content with high social concern and discussion, so that the movie itself fits the short video temperament, and thus the social mood. Taking the summer 2023 "TikTok-style Movies", "Lost in the Stars" and "No More Bets" as an example, their official accounts on TikTok have received more than 100 million likes and have dozens of top3 topics. "Lost in the Stars" is based on the theme of women, which has been on the rise in recent years, and tells the story of a husband who brutally kills his wife for her property and disguises her as missing, while her girlfriends and friends set up a trap to find out the truth and bring the scum to justice. The publicity of the movie not only interviewed the source of inspiration for the movie - the wife who was pushed off a cliff by her husband, but also opened up more topics about marriage, gender relations, and women's self-growth. "No More Bets" captures the hot topic of Internet fraud, with the plot of a brave computer expert and a misguided beauty dealer planning

to escape from a fraud syndicate as the main theme. The promotion of the movie was related to the recent hot Southeast Asia travel malignant events, journalists visiting foreign fraud gangs, Chinese citizens suffering from overseas fraud group personal restrictions, and other events, while publicizing all kinds of network fraud means, harm, attracted more middle-aged and elderly groups, young people and their parents, and because of its very public education significance, successfully penetrated the sinking market.

3.2. Lens Conceptualization

In the era of the eyeball economy, how to get the attention of the audience is the subject of every movie. The "TikTok-style Movie" is committed to creating eye-catching short-time images. This kind of clip is conducive to the dissemination of short videos, that is, to give people the greatest visual impact in a limited time, thus greatly increasing people's interest in watching movies.

For example, "No More Bets" filmed the brainwashing of the fraudulent company, the network operation behind the fraud, and other clips, which gives people a curious experience. And even in an excerpt from the scene where the crime bosses brutalize the employees and worship the Buddha, the actor's superb acting skills to make the flip plot more eye-catching effect. In the short video distribution, this clip has also gained high airplay and popular imitation as expected. "Lost in the Stars", on the other hand, chose a casino scene in which the hero is addicted to casinos and a role-playing clip of a revenge team, etc. It also carries out the principles of "eye-catching", "flipping", and "cutting", leaving viewers with a strong impression of the short video distribution. These short videos have left a deep impression on viewers, and have been used in various commentaries and acting parodies. These short and efficient communications have brought good heat and box office results to the movie while entertaining the audience.

3.3. Editing Arrangement

The filming content and the final edited version of the movie are usually adjusted and deleted, but the "TikTok-style Movie" gives those deleted clips a new place to go - as promotional materials to be broadcast on short video platforms. Balancing the visual topic images with the narrative logic of the movie, reduces the waste of filmed footage and improves economic efficiency. Take "No More Bets" as an example, the main body of the movie is written about how the main character gets rid of his demons and escapes from the fraud predicament, and the over-presentation of fragments of fraudulent means in the movie is not conducive to the unfolding of the main plot. Choosing to present more fraudulent tactics and fraudulent factory footage through TikTok, this trade-off not only makes the movie layout more reasonable, but also effectively attracts the audience's eyeballs. At the same time, because of the high correlation between the movie audience and the users of TikTok, the presentation and pacing of its promotional clips and part of the movie clips will also be more short-videoized [2].

4. Advantages and Disadvantages of "TikTok-style Movie"

4.1. Advantages

4.1.1. Increase in Movie Audience and Expansion of the Movie Market

Through the three-step strategy of basic crowd promotion, big data targeting interest groups, and searching for explosive stems to break the circle of the whole nation, "TikTok-style Movie" maximizes the audience of the movie. Take the movie "Chang An" as an example, initially targeting young people and family audiences for promotion, and then further finding people interested in

Chinese comics for related publicity, and finally through the explosive terrain of "My skiff has travelled a thousand miles" to fully break the circle, with a large number of internet celebrities and ordinary people carrying out the second creation to express the relief after facing hardships, with an extremely wide range of applications.

This year's summer box office is good, more importantly, the movie market is not only limited to the competition among each other, but through the TikTok mode to develop the sinking market to realize the cake. TikTok is a national social application with more than 800 million users, and at present, the number of TikTok users is large, widely covered, and diversified, and all kinds of movies can find the target consumer group. According to the "2023 TikTok Movie Summer Report" people have watched movie-related videos on TikTok 123.8 billion times, posted 2.87 million videos, and liked 1.7 billion times, with TikTok's movie topic playback up 163% year-on-year, submissions up 68% year-on-year, and the number of likes up 95% year-on-year. The range of users on the TikTok platform is much larger than the first- and second-tier cities where the box office used to be located, and through the social and creative functions of TikTok itself, it has continuously raised the heat for the works, and has well converted the people in the third- and fourth-tier towns and cities and the following cities and towns into the movie-viewing crowd of the movie [5]. The TikTok platform also cooperates with ticketing websites in the promotion and distribution of the movie to achieve the precise conversion from "wanting to watch" to "purchasing tickets" [6].

4.1.2. Prolonged Distribution Cycle and Increased Outbreak Window

With the benefit of the TikTok mode, the cycle of movie promotion and distribution has been extended to a greater extent. The publicity timeline is lengthened, and the window for generating hotspots is subsequently increased, which means that the probability of the movie being successful is greater, and the risk factor of the movie production is smaller. For example, the fraud prevention topic of "No More Bets" instantly captured the social hotspot, coupled with the hunting footage of a realistic fraud factory, it caught fire before it was aired on TikTok, and subsequently achieved a new box office record for Chinese film history on demand. "Creation of the Gods I: Kingdom of Storms", and "Chang An" pre-publicity harvested less resonance, and did not get too good response, but the box office of these two films is not as traditional prediction model that with the mediocre performance of the first week of release box office down but the second half of the power, two films in time to respond to the hot terrain of the TikTok, timely adjustment of the direction of the publicity, and the output of the explosive terrain, the counter-trend to harvest a wave of attention, for the box office to save the day.

4.2. Disadvantages

4.2.1. Excitement in Advance, Movie-going Experience Declines

In the current publicity of "TikTok-style Movies", the highlights and core plot of the movie are often disclosed excessively on the TikTok platform, which makes the people who have raised expectations in this way fall short after entering the movie theater, and some viewers even think that "the essence of the movie is all in the TikTok clip!". Taking "Lost in the Stars" as an example, it was originally a suspenseful subject, but due to the discussion based on the hot topic of gender marriage, women's mutual support, and the concept of choosing a spouse etc, the murderer character of the husband took a clear card in the beginning. So the audience who had not yet entered the theater had a general understanding of the ins and outs of the story, and in the exciting segments of the show, there was a sense of unhappiness at the spoilers. TikTok marketing needs to be unified

with the movie under the guidance of the creation of an intrinsically linked text that pushes each other [7].

4.2.2. Emphasis on Fragmentary Dramatic Effects, Poor Internal Logic

To present more visual conflict points in the TikTok promotion, "TikTok-style Movies" tend to shoot some "big scenes", while movies tend to be short videos, presenting more flipping plots, highlights, etc. within a limited time to satisfy the audience's "feeling of coolness". However, too much plot buildup and characters' conflicts will deplete the depth of emotion and content of the movie itself. Take "No More Bets" as an example. It has many characters and distinctive personality traits, but too much ink is put into describing how vicious the network fraud, how the main character's situation is above the twists and turns, while ignoring the character's psychology of the various periods of the composition, so that the character's behavior and choice of support is lost, and the character portrayal is a little flat. Although in the era of fragmentation, people are more inclined to accept short, varied content [8], smooth logic and aptly laid out narrative is still an indispensable part of the film to convey the main emotions.

5. Future of "TikTok-style Movies"

Through the 2023 summer trial, "TikTok-style Movies" has been proven to be a feasible mode for movie marketing, and it is expected that the marketing of "TikTok-style Movies" will be normalized and become a must-contest place for Chinese movies; short videos, live broadcasts, and other forms will carry most of the movie promotional contents; MCN agencies and Daren will become important partners and tend to be processed and standardized partners.

5.1. Traffic Is Prevalent, Quality Is King

Fundamentally movie belongs to the creative industry, which needs a rich cultural heritage and lively ideas as support [9]. Short video marketing can bring heat, but only the quality of the movie can support the lasting development of the movie box office. With the popularity of "TikTok-style Movies", the audience has become familiar with the movie marketing routine, and it is very easy for the publicity to be more important than the content itself, which will lead to resentment and word-of-mouth collapse. Especially on social platforms such as TikTok, where users are the main creators, people want to browse content that is real, interesting, imaginative, and has social space, not the overwhelming investment of capital output, and not the publicity of misrepresented goods and false expectations. First of all, the original rhythm of the movie should be ensured, so as not to destroy the delicate emotion and plot advancement of the movie by shaping "highlights" and "conflict of plot". Secondly, it is not advisable to overexpose plot twists and key lines in publicity, as this will deprive the audience of the emotional and other details of the movie, as well as undermine the sense of immersion. Excessive publicity and praise will bring the movie to a "high start but low finish" [10]. The advent of "TikTok-style Movies" also means that all kinds of audience feedback about movies will rise sharply, and people can receive all kinds of comments about the quality of movies more quickly and accurately. Even the best publicity for a low-quality movie can't cover up its crotch-pulling nature, rather the over-publicized movie will suffer from traffic backlash, making its poor reputation known to all. That's why the quality of the work is always the core indicator of the audience's admission.

5.2. A large number of "TikTok-style Movies" Emerge, Differentiated Competition to Break the Game

If the two movies "Lost in the Stars" and "No More Bets" are based on the sensitive sense of TikTok marketing and the large amount of investment in the TikTok plate, and seize the opportunity of the open space, then under the guidance of this good, there will be more "TikTok-style Movies". So the "TikTok-style Movies" not only need to open up the TikTok marketing method, but also need to stand out in a large number of movies.

The difference between "TikTok-style Movies" and traditional movies in the publicity and distribution is that the original information has been changed into interactive information. Most of the "TikTok-style Movies" will give three to five publicity directions and dozens of publicity hotspots, and observe the interactive data of media platforms after the initial placement to make timely adjustments. Publicity hotspots. Unlike the established publicity direction of traditional movies, the publicity strategy of "TikTok-style Movies" can be dynamically adjusted in the process, which is more flexible and changeable, and has more space to attract the audience. Therefore, the movie publicity how to change from the development of strategy thinking to "Publicity Sustainable" thinking is the key point. First of all, the preliminary insight can not be less, or even more abundant, pay attention to the new publicity methods and content. Secondly, people should have a long-term layout of vision and stamina, through the massive placement data and interactive information to obtain insightful publicity points, but also to achieve the basic tone of the movie publicity consistently. The most important thing is to combine the innovative creation of the movie under the basic paradigm of the tendency of process-oriented TikTok publicity, for example, the selection of the Buddha worship scene of "No More Bets" has ushered in many high-quality imitations, and the hot terrain of "My skiff has travelled a thousand miles" of "Chang An" has been applied in diversified scenarios. Finding the breaking point of the movie itself is the key to the success of TikTok movie marketing.

5.3. Prospects for Cooperation and Competition with the TikTok Platform

TikTok, as Chinese largest short video platform has entered the film and television industry, and currently carries out an original variety of projects and classic film restoration, among other segments, intending to have a greater presence in self-owned projects. TikTok's traffic may be more favorable to self-owned projects, resulting in the exposure of individual films not being able to be tied purely to the quality of the film and its marketing skills. In the future, the promotion of foreign projects on TikTok may consider cooperating with TikTok, or building new traffic pools and traffic entrances, such as developing a private traffic ecosystem on the TikTok side, where users can enter a special section about the project after expressing interest in the project, and in which audience growth can be realized through various kinds of promotions, live broadcasts, and other activities, thus ensuring the relative fairness of the distribution of traffic.

6. Conclusion

"TikTok-style Movie" is a product of new media and new communication methods, which is experiencing prosperity and perfection, and has unlimited potential. As the degree of pan-entertainment deepens, "TikTok-style Movies" will open up a larger movie market, and the forms of interaction between the audience and movies will become more diversified and rich. Movies will also continue to look for new ways to improve their quality in a variety of communication methods, bringing audiences a better entertainment experience. It is expected that in the future, movies and new-age social media platforms such as TikTok will establish a sustainable cooperative relationship to further improve the marketing path of movies, and it is also expected

that under the trend of continuous development of media platforms, "TikTok-style Movie" can flexibly adjust its content and marketing methods to further bring excellent cultural and entertainment works to the public.

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