

PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES OF
MEDIA STARTUP COMPANIES

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	iii
Chapter	
1.INTRODUCTION.....	1
2.FIELD NOTES.....	2
3.EVALUATION.....	19
4. PHYSICAL EVIDENCE.....	22
5.ANALYSIS.....	23
REFERENCES.....	53
APPENDIX.....	56

Chapter One: Introduction

In the recent year and a half, I have learned a lot from the world's greatest journalism school. I switched my emphasis area from convergence to strategic communication because the journalism school informed me that journalism is not a narrow area. I can use my knowledge and skills for a broader purpose. In the journalism school, I have learned a lot of skills that will be helpful in my future career. Of the skills I acquired in Missouri School of Journalism, analytics is one of the most important. Today we are in the digital age. "Big data" is not only the trend; it is also the key to success. In the course of Interactive Advertising II, I learned how to use Adobe Analytics, as well as Google Analytics, to analyze data, and I will help rare.us, a nationwide news feed website, to improve their webpage design. Content marketing is another important skill for me. It is the bridge between creation and media, and it can help a brand attract a defined audience. It requires me to understand the audiences and their demands. Another important skill I have learned is media sales. It not only requires me to understand the audiences but also requires me to understand the media and the advertisers. These three skills encourage me to be data-minded, as analytics is a scientific way to understand each part of the industry.

In conclusion, analytics is the guideline of my career. I also participated in the Adobe Analytics Challenge to polish my skills. Now, I have gained the knowledge and skills of analytics. I have also been trained in school with real companies. However, I have never practiced in the field or worked with the professionals in this area face to face. So this project could provide me with a great opportunity to practice in a real world.

Chapter Two: Field Notes

Week 1:

In the first week of my graduate project, I began at CCTV America. This was my first time working in a TV station. I worked with CCTV America's digital team, which is part of the General News department.

On the first day, I learned how to use their content management systems, including the ENPS, SOBEY and Kaltura Video Platform. My basic duties were converting the on-air content to web content, editing videos, and managing their social platforms. As a well-trained journalism student, I mastered these in a single day and impressed the co-workers.

In addition, as a strategic communication student, I can contribute more than other interns. In my spare time, I helped them research their recent page view data with Google Analytics. In the process, I found a major problem for them. Their bounce rate increased sharply from 20% to 80% in 6 months, and their page views also declined sharply during that period. I then wrote a report for them. They said they really needed someone to help them optimize their strategies. One of my supervisors said I could help them analyze their website data and uncover other problems.

CCTV America is the kind of media outlet I have never worked for. It is a state-run television station. They required me to follow their handbook when creating content. It is interesting to compare how that outlet frames stories with how other media outlets frame stories.

Typically, in some politics related stories, phrases should be used carefully, and all of President Xi Jinping's activities should be reported.

Although it is a state-run TV station, I felt good in the first week. I think it is interesting to see how a real foreign media outlet works in United States and what kind role it is playing in this country. Moreover, I applied what I have learned in school to the work field. I think this experience will benefit me more than my previous internships.

Week 2:

Due to a storm, my supervisor let me stay at home this Monday. So, I only worked three days this week. But as a second week, I think I am getting adapted to the fast-paced newsroom work; I check the news grid each time I arrive at the office. Then, I can decide which stories I am going to do. I need to rewrite the stories to web-based versions, as well as edit all of the related videos and images. All of these are the "internship" part.

As a graduate student, I also need to do something initially to meet the requirements of "professional project." So, this week, I helped one of my co-workers create an infographic to introduce the Chinese zodiac year. In these two weeks, I will do another story to introduce the different Spring Festival traditions among different areas that will include infographics and a video.

In this Friday's seminar we talked about the Washington Press Corps. I think it is an interesting topic, because such scenes in House of Cards feel distant from our real life. But doing news work in Washington D.C. can make it feel down to earth. Another interesting point we have talked about is anonymous sources. I remember Dr. Davidson also talking about that in our

Communication Laws Seminar. If others attacked the source because of the press exposing the name, who should be charged? In my opinion, “background” is necessary for protecting the source.

After the seminar, we visited the Newseum. I visited the Newseum five years ago and, although this is the second time, I am still impressed. The First Amendment is engraved at the surface of the building to keep people and the president aware of freedom of speech. In the Newseum, I think the most impressive part is the gallery of killed journalists. I felt touched that these people sacrificed themselves for the truth. “You cannot kill a story by killing a journalist.” As a student of the world’s first journalism school, I really respect their spirit of pursuing the truth.

For the research part, I first reviewed my proposal. I also spent quite an amount of time reviewing previous graduate projects done by other graduated students. I found most of the projects have had very narrow scopes. I also found a professional analysis with a topic similar to mine that focused on startups’ strategies. This inspired me to refine my research questions:

RQ1: What are the most popular social network platforms media startups utilize to deliver promotional messages?

RQ2: What are most popular paid platforms media startups utilize to deliver promotional messages?

I switched my focus from “startup” to “media startup” in order to narrow down the scope. So, I will sample five to six media startups to interview the entrepreneurs. I will start with Scoop News Group, which is Yizhu Wang’s office.

Week 3:

This is my third week at CCTV America. Prof. Barbara Cochran came to our newsroom to take a look at how I am working there. We had a short conference with my co-worker, and Prof. Cochran received some information about my major duties and status in the past two weeks.

It is a really busy week. Because we are a Chinese state-run TV station, we need to prepare a lot of content for the coming Spring Festival. I had my own idea and made a story about the different spring festival habits in South and North China. I thought it would be an interesting idea; because most people from other countries only know some basic information about the Chinese New Year, few people know there are some differences. Additionally, I thought a lot of Chinese people also know little about the Spring Festival habits in other areas. So, I decided to write this article. Luckily, my supervisor encouraged me to just let me go ahead to write it. He even refrained from editing it a lot before letting me publish it. I felt grateful to have my own first story published.

This week, we also have a lot of other stories we need to do: the Iowa Presidential Caucus, Zika virus, Chinese New Year travel rush and the Taiwan earthquake. In addition, I did an analytics report for our website. I monitored the sessions, page views, bounce rate and other important indicators, trying to figure out how to optimize our website.

This Friday, we had a conference in Bloomberg Newsroom. I heard from our alumna about the experience of working with the president. I am a journalist working on the editing side, but I also think it is important to understand how the correspondents and reporters work in their fields. I think it must be interesting to work and travel with the president. These journalists are

prepared to report any breaking news about the president, and they should have a special relationship him. In addition, I think Bloomberg is a totally different media group, compared to CCTV. It has all kinds of media outlets working in a matrix, and I think it is more commercialized.

For research, I have been making the list of media startups in the DC area and sampling five agencies. I am also revising my interview questions and considering new research questions. I asked Prof. Cochran about the idea of narrowing down the topic, and she said she believes it is always good to do so.

Week 4:

The fourth week is a busy week. As it is the Spring Festival week, some of our coworkers changed their schedule, which means I had a heavier workload than usual. However, I handled it successfully. On Monday, my supervisor told me that my article published in last week was picked by the CCTV Beijing headquarters to publish on their headquarters' Twitter page. I felt a sense of achievement because I had left the content production side for years; having only returned briefly, I know now that I can still produce quality content. On Thursday, we encountered three instances of breaking news at 8:30pm—only half an hour before the end of my schedule. But as journalists, all of us stayed in the office and worked together to finish everything. From this I learned that journalists should be ready for any emergency; nothing is more important than delivering news to our audience.

I also paid attention to networking this week. I met with Mike Walter, a famous anchor and old friend of Prof. Jim Flink. We talked about our school and our newsroom, and he said he spoke with Jim about our conversation. In addition, I talked to another famous journalist, Roe

Ruttenberg. He has interviewed many of our country's leaders, as well as less-prestigious people such as prisoners, pensioners and refugees. I think he is likely to become a friend, as we have many of the same hobbies and he has visited my hometown. I believe I can learn a lot of things from him in the future. This week, I figured out that one of the most important missions of the Washington Program is networking.

This Friday, we welcomed Mark Hamrick and Sarah Spreitzer as our guest speakers. Mark's lecture was very helpful. He introduced the business model of bankrate.com, which I was interested in. In our Media Sales class, we talked a lot about how digital media make money from banner ads. Obviously, it is not enough to only run a digital media. Bankrate.com's business model is providing an unbiased rate and also has an advertising piece. The media shares the profit with banks. Sarah's lecture was also interesting. She clarified that the role of a lobbyist is to amplify a voice. Lobbying is not evil. Every group wants the government to serve them in some way. If our UM system did not have our lobbyists, how could the government hear us so far from Missouri?

For research this week, I began to contact the media startups for interviews. I have contacted cont3nt.com and The Social Media Monthly. Both of them could be considered "startups." Cont3nt.com is an eBay for breaking news and The Social Media Monthly is a magazine for content on social media.

Week 5:

This week was a busy week. On Monday, only two interns were there to edit all the news articles. I was there to take charge. It was my first time updating our grid. The grid is a sheet listing all the articles and their statuses. In addition, I needed to take care of capturing all the

news programs, as well as switching the control of Live on time. That was challenging for me because I needed to focus on both TV and the articles I was editing. Unfortunately, Monday was a super busy day. We had at least 20 pieces of articles to edit. The other intern who worked with me that day was not a journalism student, so I did most of the work that day. I do not know if that sort of situation is appropriate at a workplace, as we are expected to do the same thing. However, I thought I am doing my graduate project here; I do not need to care about whether it is fair, I just need to think about what I can learn from the situation. I actually felt great at the end of that day, having handled the tough situation. Thursday was also busy; many things happened that day. The editor who is in charge of double-checking articles was ill, so our supervisor, Rich Murphy, took over. He is a very careful person. He checked all the words, formats, AP style and titles very carefully. He called one of the interns frequently, but I did not have any major mistakes. As a student at our J-School, I checked all the articles carefully—especially the AP style. Computers were very slow as well that day, which provided an opportunity to test our teamwork. We only had one computer to use for editing videos, so we needed to work in a production line. No one was allowed to occupy the computer for more than 20 minutes. One more interesting thing happened on Thursday. Chinese President Xi Jinping visited the CCTV headquarters in Beijing and held a video chat with CCTV America. As one of the few Chinese students here, I taught our anchors and managers some greetings in Mandarin. President Xi emphasized the important role that new media is having on traditional media. It seems like the president is urging the traditional media to embrace new media, as I am doing here.

For research, I am still tracking the media startups. It feels like the Media Sales class I took last semester. It is normal to get rejected and neglected by agencies, but I still need to keep contacting. It is similar to business and job hunting. I also looked again at my literature review

and read more literature for my research. Right now, I only have “framing theory” to drive my research, but I am thinking about adding “agenda setting” to it. Delivering promotional messages is a contribution to help the startups achieve their goals, so they may need to set their agendas by delivering promotional messages. The most popular platforms should have strength to help them set agendas.

Week 6:

This week, CCTV America had a training session. The guest speaker was Prof. Judd Slivka from the Missouri School of Journalism. As we are the digital team, we had a conference with Prof. Slivka about our social and mobile strategies. We discussed a lot of options. For example, we can cut some highlights from our videos, because the users may not use too much data on a single clip. And we also talked about how to get rid of the stereotype of CCTV. Most people regard CCTV as a Chinese state-run media. Yes, it is. However, CCTV America still wants to produce unbiased news. It is difficult to let western people trust us. In Prof. Slivka’s opinion, it is really hard to change people’s mind because the prestige is already there. What we can do is produce exclusive content. Differentiating is important for us. After the conference, I talked with my colleagues. They agreed with some of Prof. Slivka’s opinions. However, in our basic strategy, page view is not the only thing we need to care about. We also cannot “retweet” too many times on Twitter, so we really need a different angle on covering stories.

On Friday, we visited the Foreign Press Center. This department helps foreign journalists get accurate and credible information. It is interesting that the department does not speak for any party, and therefore only provide unbiased information. I think it is necessary to offer help to the foreign presses. Some foreign presses may not hire domestic correspondents and may have

limited social connections in the United States. The Foreign Press Center is the only channel they have to get information, so the department should be careful to maintain accuracy and credibility. After visiting the Foreign Press Center, we met with Mr. Michael McCurry. I think he is a humble gentleman. He called himself as a “world-class political loser.” Obviously, he is a smart politics veteran. He talked a lot about the presidential debate. The first televised presidential debate was between Kennedy and Nixon. I watched this debate in the Newseum a couple of years ago. That was the first time American people saw how a president was elected on live television. The world has changed a lot. Social media gives people a more interactive way to watch the Oxford-style presidential debate.

For research this week, I contacted two Mandarin media startups. In order to maintain diversity, I think foreign language startups should be added. One of the media startups is a D.C. based official account named WeChat. Users can subscribe to them and receive articles. It is a social media-based travel and food column. The other media startup is a New York City based business BuzzFeed called ListenWallsteet.com. If all goes well, I will interview ListenWallsteet.com in the next week.

Week 7:

This week is a political week. As a U.S.-based Chinese TV station, we need to cover both American and Chinese politics. This week, the United States had Super Tuesday, and China held the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) and will start the National People's Congress (NPC) soon. I mainly took over most of the CPPCC stories. For me, it is a new world. When I was in China, I did not pay much attention to politics. So I need to read some material about the Chinese political, “Two-Sessions.” I also need to learn about how the political

agendas are set by the sessions. So, as a journalist, I have to learn everything I need to know, no matter whether it is interesting or not.

This Friday, we had Donna Leger as our guest speaker. She brought us a lot of interesting insight. She is a breaking news reporter, and her experience in Iraq was fantastic. It is very difficult to imagine three women could have such an adventure in war zone. She said, “See a bathroom, use a bathroom.” I think that is not only a survive skill, but a compromise. If a man was not kind or wanted to do something immoral, the reporters might have trouble. I also respect her behaviors facing dead bodies in Haiti. It must be hard to control emotions when a human being is faced with so many dead bodies. Additionally, it is clear she is very smart. She can communicate with people who are only able to use another language by translating to other languages. All of this serves to show that she is not only a great reporter, but also a great person. She did so many stories but is still working at the frontier.

For research, I have already begun the conversation with Ray at listenWalstreet.com online. Because I initiated the conversation over the weekend, he has not yet elaborated on my questions. But our conversation is still going, and I think I can get more information from him during the workdays of the coming week.

Week 8:

This week, CCTV America was still focused on China’s political “Two-sessions.” We made a special page for CPPCC and NPC, and wrote some articles to introduce the “Two-sessions.” Even as a Chinese citizen, I was not very familiar with China’s politics. This week, I think I have learned a lot from producing contents. Honestly, China’s political system is very complicated, and there are many people who criticize China’s political system because they feel

the system is too vague. I think in previous years, most of the Chinese mainstream did not do a good job explaining the political system. A lot of Chinese people do not even know much about CPPCC and NPC. Actually, all of the delegates of CPPCC and NPC need to be elected by voters. I voted twice when I was in China. However, most people know little about how to vote. I think the media need to play a key role in educating people, and encourage people to vote. This time, our CCTV America took a step. We made some explanatory videos to tell our audience about how the “Two-sessions” process works and what it could bring to the country.

This Friday, we had a great tour of NPR. The Vice President for Diversity Keith Woods gave us an interesting lecture. NPR stands for National Public Radio, but only “National” and “Public” still retain their original meanings. “Radio” now has an extended definition. Social media is the additional part of the definition. Because the diversity on social media is significant, NPR has to face to it. Journalism stands for fairness, truth and accuracy; if there were no diversity, all of these would no longer exist. So diversity is very important; it is not only associated with journalism’s essence, but also with our daily lives.

For research, I started to read some journals and articles about startups, in accordance with a conversation I had with Ray. He suggested that I learn more about startups, even though I had worked for some in the past. The reason for this is that different types of media startups may have differing situations and strategies. Most media startups do not have clear strategies, so I need to get more familiar with them, speak with them professionally, and even offer them some suggestions. In my research, though, I will only discuss their current situations.

Week 9:

This week, we began to use daylight saving time. However, since our channel is globally broadcasted, I have to change my schedule to work until 10pm. We had less people on duty this week, which meant that I needed to do more. I suddenly found that I could handle everything and even do all the work alone. This Friday, we had two breaking news stories: one was the capturing of the suspect in the Paris attack and the other was a plane crash in Russia. That day, we had three people working and I did almost half of the work. I finished my part, including the Paris attack story. After I finished everything, at about 10 pm, a plane crashed in Russia. I reacted immediately and cooperated with my colleagues to post the news on Twitter, Facebook and Weibo. It was a great experience to deal with the immediacy of breaking news.

This Thursday, I participated in our Hurley Symposium. I took photos for this event and uploaded them to our Box account. In this symposium, I spoke extensively with the delegation from Tokyo University. Most of them had never come to the U.S. before and did not know the topic of the symposium. I introduced our Journalism School and talked about this country. I also told them about what happened in past year. In the Hurley Symposium, all of the guests talked a lot about what happened in the past year. Some participants also interacted with our guests, and some of their questions were very aggressive. But I think we should not blame others. Opportunity is fair, and I think the most common racism is satisfying racists' prejudice and arrogance.

For research this week, I interviewed Mr. Robert Fine. He is the founder and owner of The Social Media Monthly. Now, he is launching a new magazine called The Startup Monthly. He talked a lot about his background experience and current status. His answers can help my research a lot, and he is willing to introduce me to some other media startups that could offer me more sources.

Week 10:

This week was a heavy-duty week. Brussels and President Obama's Cuba visit was featured extensively on our pages. Unfortunately, our team was getting smaller in the past week. One intern left, so we only had two people to work every day. This means that we need to boost our efficiency. Monday was the worst day. I worked with another intern and finished most of the work. That day was really packed; I took an additional hour on those packages. But finally I finished all of them, and my supervisor even allowed me to leave work for the rest of the day. That day was challenging, but also fun. I felt like I was a participant in a historic week.

This Friday, a great alumnus, Chris Hammy, spoke to us about his experience in investigative reporting and BuzzFeed. He talked about his black lung story. I actually knew the fact that lots of coal miners have "black lungs," but it is hard to imagine that it happens in West Virginia. People care about lung health, but usually in relation to air pollution and smoking. Coal Miners and their situations need to be known by the public. Chris exposed them and let people know they need to be cared about. This story actually also happens in China's Shanxi Province. Even worse, some coal miners not only got black lungs, but also are also sometimes killed in the coalmines. In some coalmines without good safety precautions, a lot of miners have been killed and buried in the mines forever. Their stories need to be well known. I think investigative reporters are respectable because they are telling the truth.

For research this week, I kept in touch with Robert Fine, the founder of the Social Media Monthly. He introduced me to Scott Brodback, the founder of the Local News. This agency is also a media startup based in the D.C. area. I am now in contact with Scott Brodback and trying

to get one or two more sources from Robert Fine. I am also starting to write the report from the beginning. Right now, I am writing about the background of the industry.

Week 11:

This week, I continued to follow the Brussels terror attacks. It is a long-term story. I did most of the work for this story because I want to fully understand it. I think it is very important for journalists to understand the whole story rather than only knowing pieces of it. I also did two other long stories this week: Chinese President Xi Jinping's visit to the Czech Republic this week, as well as his visit to Washington D.C. for the Nuclear Security Summit. Xi's Washington visit was a challenging topic. I worked with one of my colleagues to update Xi's visit in real time, and social media played a very important role. We updated Xi's arrival immediately on Facebook and Twitter. Then, we cut the video of his arrival and also reposted Xinhua's prepared report.

We also welcomed a new editor this week. He worked for RT, and I helped him adjust to the new newsroom and offered him some basic knowledge about China. It is very common for Americans to be rather unfamiliar with China. Our new editor has excellent writing skills, but he knows nothing about China. It was his first time to hear the name of the Chinese President. So it was important that I help him get his first glance at China.

For research, I interviewed Mr. Scott Brodbeck this week. He is the founder of Local News LLC. In contrast with other interviewees, Scott was a journalist at NBC and FOX. He is familiar with media and social media, and he knows how to let them work together. Because of this, I think his responses will be very helpful for my research.

Week 12:

This week, we welcomed another new editor. A larger team does not necessarily guarantee better efficiency. Our digital team is special to CCTV. We are the busiest team in the newsroom, so every newcomer needs to learn how to manage the daily workload, along with many other things. After working here for three months, I am glad to know that I have already been able to manage the work. Our daily work includes not only editing the news stories and cutting videos, but need to manually switching to live stream on time. We need to be flexible in order to deal with any problems that may arise.

This Friday, I went to work after the morning conference. I was the only person who could help the two new editors finish the work, and I did about 80 percent of it. That was a really tiring day, and we encountered a devastating situation. Our computer crashed, and we lost everything stored on it. As a result, I needed to export 6 clips from our database machine. We also had another issue with our CMS, so all of the videos needed to be uploaded manually. That was a disaster for our team. Finally, we finished everything, and we did not leave anything for the next day's editor. I was the last person to leave the newsroom that day.

In this Friday's conference, we talked about the Sunday Show. The format of this program is also familiar to me. In fact, CCTV also has a talk show called The Heat that is similar to the Sunday Show. When we discussed the types of interviews, I mentioned that I would prefer face-to-face interviews. Usually, when we have satellite interviews, the moderator may not interact enough with the guests. However, if the talk show could gather the guests in the studio, more interactions would be possible. I think more aggressive arguments could also happen in face-to-face interviews, which I believe the audience would prefer.

For research, I was focused this week on sorting the interview recordings. I finished most of the scripts. I think this part is important for me, as it is more convenient to search and collect information from the scripts than repeatedly listen to the recordings.

Week 13:

This Thursday, I had my last day at CCTV. I schedule a meeting with our deputy managing editor, Guo Chun. After three months of working as an intern for CCTV, I believed it was important to tell the chief supervisor about my experiences and thoughts. Guo is very familiar with the Missouri School of Journalism. She sent six journalists to the journalism school to attend a training session and also invited our faculty members to CCTV for lectures. She has expectations of our students. I talked about what I have learned at CCTV and offered some suggestions to the digital team. On point I made was to let interns have more opportunities to challenge themselves and optimize the team's workflow. She completely agreed with me, so I will send her a written report about this suggested strategy.

This Friday, we visited The Washington Post's new building. The big data screen was amazing. Everyone in the newsroom could read the data and understand the trend of their readership. Steven and Amy shared their amazing experiences in The Washington Post. Amy did a great job with investigative reporting. She did a story about a mob—a risky topic—and the mob even ended up suing her. Steven is a data expert. He can always find new ideas in data. Recently, he just did a story about police shootings using data. This amazing story just won a Pulitzer Prize on Monday. He said, "You can't report a story just with data. You need to hit the person—see how the person fits in." I think that is the reason why journalists need to learn statistics; other statistic professionals may not have the senses of journalists.

For this research, I have just finished writing the research section. I essentially structured the paper in four parts. The first part deals with how these companies were established, along with other related background of them. The second discusses how they use social media platforms. The third is about their usage of paid platforms. The last addresses the results and the reasoning behind them

Chapter Three: Evaluation

When I started my internship at China Central Television (CCTV) America, there was one intern with six other full-time employees. The team has a daily routine. It was my first time working in a broadcasting agency. I did not know a lot about how a broadcasting agency works. I was working with its digital team. It is the CCTV's online department. On the first day, the other co-workers showed me how the team runs and the daily workflow, and it seemed like I learned the basics more quickly than other interns typically do

In the digital team, I was trying to play a more important role than a regular intern because I was doing my graduate project. In the first month, I was very curious about our page views, "uniques," bounce rate and other related data. So, I asked to do an analytics report for the team in to help the website perform better. I think it was helpful. The team was always struggling with how to present content. Since CCTV is a Chinese state-run television station, American people may not be as interested in our content. The team was making efforts to present content in a different way. So, I thought data should be the objective tool to see if the strategy could work.

On the other hand, a lot of traditional media outlets, including CCTV, are just posting their original content to their websites. I don't think this should be how traditional media outlets embrace new technologies. I talked about this with my other co-workers, and they agreed that the team should utilize more multimedia technologies to create more of the digital team's original content. As a result, we did some projects on the Spring Festival. We used Google Maps and a Baidu map to create an interactive map of Chunyun (the huge migration of people in China back to their family homes for Spring Festival). We also embedded other interactive media in our

other articles with Thinglink. I thought this idea was good for the team and myself. I learned a lot of multimedia skills at the Missouri School of Journalism. I was delighted to polish my skills in the real newsroom.

After a month in CCTV, our team suffered a lack of human resources. One of our editors left the team, and everyone needed to do more than usual. Some weeks later, another intern left. So, my work became challenging. At the very beginning of my internship, I started to work only two to three posts everyday. But when other people left, I was doing 14 or 15 posts per day. I figured out my own workflow and became much better at multitasking. It is an important skill for me to have, no matter where I work in the future. My supervisor Rich Murphy told me that our digital team is the busiest in the whole newsroom. Indeed, we only have eight hours a day, yet we need to post all of the important news occurring in the world. I believe multitasking is the most important thing I have learned in CCTV.

Before I left CCTV, I talked with our deputy managing editor Guo Chun. I gave her some suggestions about the digital team from my perspective. The team had not yet figured out a standard for its content. Editors had their personal standards; some preferred heavy text in posts, while others did not. I told her that it is really important to set up a standard for the team. This would allow new team members to get adjusted more quickly. Our deputy managing editor totally agreed with my opinion and set up a meeting in the following week. I was very proud that my suggestion was accepted.

Since the Chinese government runs CCTV, it is inevitable to experience the so-called Chinese censorship. When I published something sensitive, the posts were to be triple-checked by the editors and the deputy managing editor. I think different people could have different opinions on this, but I did not feel uncomfortable with it. I think news agencies have their own

standpoints. When I was working at CCTV, I had to get used to the censorship. All of the people working at CCTV are talented and professional. People should know whom they are working for. Even if CCTV's content is under censorship, it is still unethical to publish lies. I did not mention anything about China in the Panama Papers story, but I kept the basic information, including how they were leaked and the general global impact. I was proud that everything in my post was the truth.

At CCTV America, most of the employees are from the U.S. and Western Europe. The newsroom runs in an American style. It did some localization as well. The censorship here is much weaker than Beijing. Generally, I think I was lucky to work with CCTV during the past three months. It was a great opportunity to experience Chinese media and American media, and I learned how to work efficiently under high pressure. It is definitely useful for my future career, whether that career be in China or the U.S.

Chapter Four: Physical Evidence

Please see the Media Folder.

Chapter Five: Analysis

Literature Review

Introduction

Since the overwhelming impact of the Internet, the term “startup” has been mentioned frequently all over the media. Neil Blumenthal, the cofounder and co-CEO of Warby Parker, defined “startup” as “a company working to solve a problem where the solution is not obvious and success is not guaranteed” (Robehmed, 2013). One vital attribute of a startup is its potential and capability to grow. Because technology is a booming area, small companies could grow quickly by doing tech-related business. Silicon Valley is a gathering place of such types of business. Paul Graham, the head of a startup accelerator company named Y Combinator, said, “A company five years old can still be a startup. Ten would start to be a stretch” (Robehmed, 2013). Expanding in a considerable period is the key goal of startups, so setting strategies to promote its brand efficiently is very important to its growth.

Why integrated marketing communication matter

Proper marketing strategies could save companies from disruption. As some motion-control technologies, such as Sony PlayStation and Microsoft Xbox, no longer allow free games within the platforms, small companies such as Just Dance need to seek new platforms to avoid disruption (Heine, 2015). In the recent market, the iPad and iPhone are the two main platforms with large potential. Small companies are making great efforts to switch their focus on these two platforms. In this process, they use TV spots to align with videos on social networks. At the same

time, they also utilize user-generated content on platforms such as Instagram and Snapchat (Heine, 2015). Utilizing different channels to promote a business is important. Entrepreneurs should not focus only on limited platforms; they should have a broad sight and be aware of the importance of marketing in an integrated way.

Taking advantage of integrated marketing communication by tech-based startup has been discussed over the recent decade. Don E. Schultz, professor of integrated marketing communications (IMC) at the Medill School of Journalism, Northwestern University, discussed it in 2000. He described the tech-based startups as “an organization with no history, no knowledge base, no recognized customers, only prospects” (Schultz, 2000). So, how can these kinds of newborn companies catch customers’ eyes and express how they can benefit customers? Schultz concluded 10 disciplines:

1. Have a disciplined focus on the core customer or who might become the core customer.
2. Possess a proprietary insight into and about the core customer.
3. Consider the brand to be a strategic asset. Assets don't take budget cuts.
4. Align all actions with the brand value proposition.
5. Distinguish themselves on the operating basics. If you aren't "best in class" today, you aren't even considered.
6. View the brand as a platform to refresh and innovate. The brand must be an elastic element—one that changes as customers change and responds as customers request.

7. Have the ability to reshape and transform their industry.
8. View themselves as advocates for their customers.
9. Create an internal culture that is passionate about doing what's right for the customer.
10. Believe in the power of communication.

With the evolution of the industry, integrated marketing communication has been defined as "an audience-driven business process of strategically managing stakeholders, content, channels, and results of brand communication programs" (Kliatchko, 2008, p. 140). This approach is widely accepted by academics and professionals.

Previous research of framing

Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman did a research study on how a difference in phrasing affected peoples' decisions and choices (1981). Two problems were designed to investigate how people respond to negative framing and positive framing:

Problem 1: Imagine that the U.S. is preparing for the outbreak of an unusual Asian disease, which is expected to kill 600 people. Two alternative programs to combat the disease have been proposed. Assume the exact scientific estimates of the consequences of the programs are as follows:

If Program A is adopted, 200 people will be saved.

If Program B is adopted, there is a 1/3 probability that 600 people will be saved and a 2/3 probability that no people will be saved.

Which of the two programs would you favor?

Problem 2:

If Program C is adopted, 400 people will die.

If Program D is adopted, there is a $1/3$ probability that nobody will die and a $2/3$ probability that 600 people will die.

Which of the two programs would you favor?

The two choices in the first problem are all positively framed and the two choices in the second problem are all negatively framed. Program A and Program C were conducting messages with the same meaning. Program B and Program D had the same situation, as well. The results showed that most of the respondents chose Program A and Program D. The experiment pointed out that people tend to choose a sure phrasing when the phrasing is positively framed, but people tend to choose a risky phrasing when the phrasing is negatively framed.

There is another recent research study focused on age differences that further discusses this topic. Ryan Best and Neil Charness did a meta-analysis on the effect age differences and framing can have on risky choices (2015). They designed two kinds of scenarios. One is related to money, which was coded as “financial,” and the other is related to health or mortality, which was coded as “mortality.” In the result, young people were found to be more likely to choose risky options in positively framed cases, especially in situations of small-amount financial and large-amount mortality-based scenarios. However, in negatively framed cases, the authors did not find overall age differences in choosing risky options.

However, the discoveries on this topic are not all the same. Five scholars from the Department of Psychology at Umeå University did a research to ask the question, “Are Younger and Older Adults Differently Susceptible to Framing Effects?” (Rönnlund et al. 2005). They sampled 192 younger adults with the average age of 23.8 years old, as well as 192 older adults with the average age of 69.1 years old. All of the subjects were assigned to one of three scenarios with different goods at stake. The three scenarios are related to human lives, paintings and money. After observing the statistics, the authors found that the majority of the participants preferred the risky options. However, they did not find any differences between younger adults’ preference of risky options and older adults’ preference of risky options. According to these two studies, the topic of age differences and the effects of framing, with respect to risky choice making, is still necessary to discuss when doing research related to framing and age.

There are other research studies related to framing that are focused on other topics. Framing theory is widely used in the area of advertising. How the advertisements are framed is always important. Atul A. Kulkarni and Hong Yuan did a research study on the relationship between ad-irrelevant distance cues and persuasiveness of message framing (2015). In the result, people feel positively framed messages are persuasive when the irrelevant cues could induce social remoteness (social distance) and spatial remoteness (physical distance). However, people feel that negatively framed messages are persuasive when the irrelevant cues could induce social proximity, spatial proximity and concrete construal. This study could be applied in the process of advertising design, as well as contribute to research on the use of framing in advertising.

In addition, Jeremy Kees did a research study on advertising framing effects and customers’ consideration of future consequences (2011). The purpose of the research is to test the effectiveness of differently-framed advertising message designed to persuade people to make

a decision related to health promotion. Two studies were conducted in this research. The first study was about unhealthy food choices, and it showed that present-oriented customers are easier to persuade with messages that refer to proximal consequences instead of distal consequences. The second study showed that present-oriented customers have higher behavioral intentions when they receive messages of promotional strategies.

The research Kees conducted on advertising framing effects was mainly focused on advertising messages relating to health. However, there are also interesting findings of advertising framing effects related to other kinds of messages. Three Taiwanese scholars did a research study on framing effect and green messages (Tu et al., 2013). “Green message” in this context referred to messages related to promoting green awareness and environmental protection. The researchers found that customers prefer positively framed advertising before receiving green messages. After receiving green messages, the customers have the same attitudes toward both positively framed and negatively framed advertising.

Indeed, framing could have different effects on different people. Three scholars studied the framing of gambling consequences in advertising (Orazi et al., 2015). In their research, they split different types of gamblers into two groups. Problem gamblers made up one group, while recreational gamblers made up the other group (Korman et al., 2008). The researchers used the advertisements framed with material consequences and social consequences. Generally, they found that social consequences are more effective than material consequences to reduce the propensity of gambling. The difference between the effect of social consequences and the effect of material consequences is more significant in the study of problem gamblers when the consequences are negative.

Is the use of framing limited to word-based language? A Romanian scholar discussed visual rhetoric and framing strategies (Grancea, 2014). The author referred to visual rhetoric as “visual literacy” in the research. The author asserted that visual elements can play the role of language. The research findings also pointed out that “the power of visuals to speak about words depends on the degree to which benefits provided by words can be visualized” (Grancea, 2014). This point supports that the concept of framing can not only be applied to word-based language, but it can also be applied to visual elements. It is an important component of advertising that needs to be analyzed.

Introduction of Paid Media

Paid media is a third party channel brands pay to leverage (Campbell, 2013). Essentially, the definition refers to traditional types of advertising, such as TV spots, radio ads, print ads and out-of-home campaigns. However, with the development of technology, the concept of paid media has been expanded. Erica Machin redefined the concept in the digital age (Machin, 2015):

“Paid media is a good way to promote content in order to drive earned media, as well as direct traffic to owned media properties. Paying to promote content can help get the ball rolling and create more exposure. Social Media sites like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn offer advertising that could potentially help boost your content as well as your website. Another way to gain more exposure for your content is to pay influencers to tweet or share your links, impacting the reach and recognition your pieces receive. Using retargeting, Pay Per Click and display ads is an effective and more direct way to drive searchers to your owned media sites like your website, to help increase traffic and/or conversions.”

In the digital age, advertisers can not only buy time on TV programs, but can also buy banners on websites or place advertisements in other interactive ways.

Among the formats of paid media, high-impact digital advertisements with multiple interactive elements are aimed to gather more response from customers (Baron et al., 2014). “High-impact digital advertising’ can be defined as any interactive, large-canvas format that accounts for significant real estate of a Web page”(Baron et al., 2014). A research study about delivering brand value through high-impact digital advertising tested three types of high-impact advertisements: “Large-canvas display formats”, “Full-screen interactive ‘takeover’ formats” and “Skin’ or wrap formats”.

- Large-canvas display formats: High-impact advertisements offering interactive functionality and large pixel size within standard advertising slots on the Web page. Formats representing large-canvas display formats were what LAB refers to as its "Rising Stars," including "Billboard," "Portrait," "Slider," and "Sidekick."

- Full-screen interactive "takeover" formats: High-impact advertisements offering interactive functionality and full-screen capabilities that cover the entire Web page or a large portion of it and can interact with the page content. The formats representing full-screen interactive takeovers were Undertone's formats, including PageGrabber.

- "Skin" or wrap formats: High-impact advertisements that surround the Web page content and remain persistent on the page during scrolling but lack interactive functionality. The formats representing skin or wrap formats were Undertone's "PageSkin" format.

The results pointed out that the size of digital advertisement is important. It could increase brand recall, advertisement recognition and brand recognition. The research also pointed out that the most highly interactive elements in digital advertisement can deliver best brand connection. Different formats of high-impact digital advertising have different advantages. Large-canvas display could bring more user engagement and consideration, and full-screen takeover could build awareness effectively.

Although digital media platforms play important roles in modern marketing activities, traditional media, such as television, radio and print, are still a large part of integrated marketing communication. However, in the digital age, can traditional media have the effectiveness and efficiency to meet marketing goals? Wildner and Modenbach did a research study about the long-term ROI (return on investment) of TV advertising (2015). They analyzed the TV advertising of 204 brands and found that 65% of the brands have positive ROIs. They also found that the average long-term ROI is 2.65, which is higher than the short-term ROI (1.15). This means that TV advertising is an efficient advertising format, especially in a long-term scope.

Is print media also an efficient advertising format? In recent years, the print industry has declined. There are a lot of challenges the print industry is facing (McKean, 2015). The traditional relationship between print media and its audience has changed. Audiences have more choices of media brands, and advertisers have other choices through which to send their messages to the audiences. Other non-media platforms have grown, and advertisers could buy ad space on their websites. The advertisers may also find ways to communicate with their audiences directly without media platforms. As a part of the entire media industry, the development of magazine is now driven by technologies along with other formats of media (McKean, 2015). The relationship between magazine and other digital platforms is getting closer. Many magazines

have launched electronic versions to reach their readers and get revenues back, and Apple has recently launched its Apple News app on iOS 9, aligned with 50 publishers (McKean, 2015). With the reinforcement from digital technologies, newspapers and magazines are no longer paper-based platforms. Now, they can provide advertisers and marketers with additional possibilities for promoting their businesses.

Introduction of Owned Media

The term “owned media” is frequently referred to in the digital age. Steven and Galak defined this term as “media activity related to a company or brand that is generated by the company or its agents in channels it controls” (2012). More specifically, Erica Machin explained digital owned media:

“Owned media is any web property that you can control and is unique to your brand. One of the most common examples is a website, although blog sites and social media channels are other examples of owned media properties too. Channels like social media and blogs are extensions of your website, and all three are extensions of your brand as a whole. The more owned media you have, the more chances you have to extend your brand presence in the digital sphere.”

According to this definition, owned media is a proper way to communicate with audiences directly, which means brands could have more possibilities to communicate with audiences. In addition, other owned media platforms such as videos, whitepapers, webinars and photo galleries are also controlled by brands themselves.

Is owned media playing a positive role in an integrated marketing campaign? Xie and Lee performed a research study on social media and brand purchase (2015). They found that a brand's owned media activities have significant and positive impacts on the audiences' purchase behavior. However, they also found that owned media activities also have no impact on offline impact with in-store promotions (Xie& Lee, 2015). Their findings pointed out that owned media could play a positive role in customers' purchase behavior, at least in online purchase behaviors. So it is important for brand company heads to realize that sending promotional messages through social networks is necessary and positive.

Why should owned media work with paid media? Harrison did a research study on the media platforms and users to answer that question (2013). He found that the customers who already bought or used a brand have higher brand recall than non-users. He also found that paid media is a better platform for reaching non-users, but owned media and earned media are better platforms for reaching existing users. So, he believes that brands should add owned media and earned media to paid media touch points (Harrison, 2013). These touch points could help the brand to be in the initial set of brands the consumers consider. Then consumers may add or subtract brands as they evaluate what they want before they select a brand at the moment of purchase. After the purchase behavior, consumers will build expectations based on experience to affect the next purchase behavior (Court, et al., 2009).

Conclusion

The existing researches have discussed the extensive uses of framing effect. This idea is not only important in news coverage, but also in the industry of advertising. It is important to

figure out how to communicate with the audience in a proper way. The framing effect also points out that messages should be framed in different ways depending on the situation.

In the digital age, marketers should realize the differences between paid media and owned media. Owned media, especially social media (except paid social), is now playing a positive role in marketing activities. The importance of owned media should not be neglected. Because the nature of owned media is different than paid media, marketers should also consider how to deliver promotional messages through different channels.

Promotional Strategies of Media Startup Companies

Social media is an important tool for media startup companies to expand. On the other hand, paid platforms may boost the process. The process of selecting an efficient platform to deliver their promotional messages is crucial for a start up's branding and marketing. So I interviewed three media entrepreneurs to answer these research questions:

RQ1: What is the most popular social media platform media startups use to deliver promotional messages?

RQ2: What is the most popular paid platform media startups use to deliver promotional messages?

In order to answer these questions, I mainly asked the entrepreneurs these questions:

- Could you briefly introduce how your company was established?
- Does your company use any social media platforms to promote its brand?
- How does it work?

- Does your company utilize any paid platforms to promote its brand? For example, paid promotion on social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, Weibo, or WeChat? Or other traditional ways, such as banner ads, TV commercials... How does your company work on these?
- Compare the promotional ways. Which one do you think is the best way to promote your brand? Why?

According to Global Entrepreneurship Monitor's recent data (2015), in the United States, 12 percent of the population between the ages of 18 and 64 are latent entrepreneurs who intend to launch a business within three years.

This number indicates that it is common to start an entrepreneurship in the United States. But how can a startup entrepreneurship take off? A good promotion strategy is the way to success.

What is the media startup companies' key factor of selecting platforms to do promotion? Different platforms have different features. Media startup companies may frame their promotional messages differently among platforms. Could their promotional strategies be related to framing theory?

The term "message framing" refers to manipulating the way a message is presented to message receivers, for the purpose of optimizing its impact on their reactions and behavior (Rothman and Salovey 1997). So, the framing can affect how the message receivers perceive the message. Different frames may lead receivers' positive and negative decisions (Gonzalez, Dana, Koshino, & Just, 2005; Levin et al., 1998).

I decided to use a qualitative research method to answer the research questions, because I want to explore why and how these entrepreneurs set up their promotion strategies. Qualitative research method is focused on meaning rather than measuring (Keegan, 2009). The key of

qualitative research is understanding why individuals think and behave as they do (Keegan, 2009).

So I interviewed three media entrepreneurs to explore their business plans and promotional strategies.

The Social Media Monthly: Bring “Digital” to Paper

I met with Robert Fine in his small office. His office is in a shared workspace with other startup companies. All of these companies have dreams of expanding. Fine’s *The Social Media Monthly* is among them.

Fine started *The Social Media Monthly* with his personal interests.

“In high school, I was really strong in English and communication,” said Fine, who graduated from The John Hopkins University with an engineering degree. “In graduate school, I minored in English, and my concentration was mechanical.”

Sometimes, it is not necessary to connect careers with academic background, but hobbies could play important roles in careers. Fine’s enthusiasm in writing helped him start the magazine without hiring an editor.

Fine became interested in social media early. He observed that Twitter played an important role in its third year after launching.

“In April, 2009, the day after my 38th birthday, I got laid off,” Fine said. “At that time I was personally getting interested in social media—Facebook and Twitter. Twitter just became really popular after Obama’s election.”

In 2008, Barack Obama battled with John McCain on Facebook and Twitter. Obama had big wins on both sides. He accumulated over two million supporters on Facebook and 112,000

followers on Twitter, while McCain only accumulated 600,000 on Facebook and 4,600 followers on Twitter (Dutta& Fraser, 2008).

Fine said, “It became a little bit more mainstream” after Obama’s 2008 election.

He noticed that social media was becoming important, so he decided to organize the first social media conference on the East Coast in Washington D.C. After that, he continued to organize 20 conferences by himself across the U.S. and Canada, as well as one in Dubai.

Before launching *The Social Media Monthly* in early 2011, he wrote a book called *The Big Book of Social Media*. It was used as a textbook in ten universities.

For Fine, the preparation gave him the inspiration and confidence to figure out a business opportunity for himself.

“There was already *Mashable*, there was already *TechCrunch*—a lot of online competition. But no one did a print magazine.”

The online competitors had been launched for years. Fine discovered a niche to start his own entrepreneurship. Publishing social media content would bring an emerging format to the old fashioned.

In May 2011, *The Social Media Monthly* had a national distribution by national bookstore chains such as Barnes & Noble three weeks after its first issue. By the end of 2011, the magazine already had a global distribution in 20 countries spanning North America, West Europe and Asia.

The company received help in these early stages from its campaign on Kickstarter, a funding platform, which brought in \$23,000. For a physical print magazine, Fine said the fund could support the company’s printing. But by May 2012, the company was still mainly supported by Fine’s own funds.

In order to help the company expand and gather more readers, Fine had to set up a strategy to promote *The Social Media Monthly*. Social media was an important tool in the strategy. Although most of the contents came from social media, these edited articles were published again on social media platforms.

Fine does all the social media work by himself. Some of the outlets he uses are Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Tumblr and Google+. Each of these platforms plays very different roles for his magazine.

“But I would say Instagram is not so much for the business right now,” said Fine. “Twitter is generating the most traffic. And then Facebook, and then LinkedIn.”

Twitter is the social media Fine started with and the platform he pays the most attention to.

“We published all our content on social media, and shared on Twitter and Facebook. We have over 200 thousand followers on twitter and 15 thousand likes on Facebook. On LinkedIn, maybe 5 or 6 thousand.”

Fine’s *The Social Media Monthly* uses Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn for its main online distribution. But at this point, these three platforms are not used for promoting the magazine. The organic use of social media platforms is a kind of electronic distribution. So for this usage, social media platforms are publication tools. These platforms can only promote the magazine’s articles. In addition to publishing articles, the company should pay more attention to promoting itself on social media platforms.

Fine also realized this point. “I manage all the social media myself,” He said, “Which isn’t good because I don't have enough time to manage and talk to people—to converse and build the community relationships.”

It is important to invest time into communicating with the audience. This provides potential opportunities to gather earned media. Earned media is not free. It requires brand loyalty and interactions. Fine did not utilize social media platforms to build a brand community. This brand community could create a forum to let the audiences of *The Social Media Monthly* provide feedback to the company and maintain an interactive atmosphere.

But Fine does not waste resources. On his social media platforms, he not only posts contents produced by the magazine, he also posts invitations to conferences and webinars held by *The Social Media Monthly*. He uses the promotional messages delivered by social media accounts to encourage interested people to attend the events and communicate with him. Although he does not have the opportunity to gather earned media on social media, he gathers his readers and potential investors at his online and offline events.

Compared to his organic management of social media platforms, Fine has a conservative opinion on paid platforms. He tends to not use any traditional paid platforms; he would prefer to invest more in social media platforms.

“I paid for some Facebook posts. We need to do more of that in the future to grow. That’s one reason I need to raise money, too.”

His company has a different financial status. The limited budget is a big issue for his marketing efforts. He only pays for boosting posts on Facebook. He believes that it is helpful to work with his organic posts.

“Everything has been very organic and very slow,” Fine said. “I started the website in late 2012. We get 60,000 ‘uniques’ a month. On average, we get 200 to 300 social shares. It gets shared very well. The email list has over 20,000 readers.”

Over the years, his strategy helped him to generate a great amount of social media activity. He thinks that it is best not to use other paid promotional platforms. He said his company is generating revenue with online marketing, including banners, emails and webinars. However, he hasn't had the budget for doing marketing on other traditional paid platforms.

Local News Now LLC.: Born Locally, Serve Locally

Scott Brodbeck created a local media company named *Local News Now*. Brodbeck was a former D.C. local TV news producer. He started his journalism career when he was a graduate student at Georgetown University. The first step of his career was a website, *ARLnow.com*, launched in January 2010. Now, he has already established four branches, including *borderstan.com*, *HillNow.com* and *RestonNow.com*. With only six full-time employees, however, the company is still small.

Local News Now produces online-only local news covering the D.C. area, including the Capitol Hill, the northwestern part of D.C., Fairfax County and Arlington County. The company has two co-working offices. Both of the offices are in shared spaces with other startup companies.

Brodbeck's company now earns around half a million dollars in revenue annually. The company mainly sells advertising and marketing solutions to local businesses. Since the company's target audience matches that of the local businesses, Brodbeck said his company can bring the advertisers' messages to engage local audiences. He also said the company had over 400,000 unique visitors in April 2015.

Social media plays an important role in gathering this large readership.

“I would say that social media definitely generates a large portion of our readership,” Brodbeck said. “It’s mostly used to promote our news stories.”

Instead of promoting events, Brodbeck tends to promote his contents. He only uses Twitter and Facebook to promote content because his company is a local news company, and the two social media platforms are more suitable for news.

“We’ve seen a bit of dichotomy between the two,” Brodbeck said. “Twitter seems to be better for immediate news. For example, if that building caught on fire right now, I would go take a photo and ‘tweet’ out the article. And everybody would ‘retweet’ that—it’s very immediate. Facebook, on the other hand, isn’t quite as immediate because of their algorithm.”

Brodbeck believes that Twitter is more suitable for posting something when it happens. The contents need to have timeliness. However, Facebook is a platform that tends to work better for stories people want to share. Brodbeck said the stories he works with on Facebook are more like something people have emotional reactions to—whether they like it, hate it, or just want to tell their friends about it.

So Brodbeck divides his contents into two parts. One part is posted on Facebook and the other is posted on Twitter. He uses eye-catching descriptions in the content to promote and drive the readers back to the websites.

For him, page views and “uniques” are the benefits social media platforms could bring to his company. That is the reason why his company only uses Twitter and Facebook.

“On Instagram, for instance, I might be able to post a photo of the building on fire, but it’s harder to post a link back to our site. So how does it benefit us? Instagram makes all the money, but we don’t, unless we’re driving people to our site.”

As a small media company, page views and “uniques” are important. Brodbeck believes that Instagram, SnapChat and Pinterest could work for larger companies. Because his company is small, it needs to be selective about how its employees use their time. In Brodbeck’s opinion, Twitter has more “die-hard” users. It is more suitable to post news on Twitter.

However, he found that more of his readers came from Facebook than Twitter. The most important reason for this is that more people are using Facebook than Twitter. There are more people on the platform, which naturally results in more traffic.

“If a lot of people start liking something, their friends will see their likes. They might like it. I think things go viral more on Facebook.”

And there are more functions on Facebook posts. People can do more on Facebook, but they can only retweet and reply on Twitter.

Similar to Fine’s company, Brodbeck’s company also pays little attention to traditional paid platforms. The reason why he does not prefer other types of ads is because he believes social media could provide more. Followers follow the account and continue to see its content. However, if the company put up a banner ad, someone would just click once, unless the viewer follows the company on Twitter or ads a bookmark. So a banner ad requires the viewers to commit to two actions. The first is clicking on the banner, and the second is following the account. This process may lose a large number of viewers.

So Brodbeck’s company invests a lot on social media platforms. He said, “My company generates about a half million dollars a year. In the past three years, we spent about 10 or 11 thousand dollars on Facebook ads.”

Paying for Facebook ads is a large portion of Brodbeck's company's costs. On the other hand, Brodbeck also pays for advertisements on Twitter. On Twitter, Brodbeck has bought many ads to promote his websites, especially when his company launches a new website.

“Our Twitter ads will try to increase our followers. And I still think that's a good method because we can assume each of the followers engaged with your brand. It is pretty valuable because there's no algorithm.”

Brodbeck believes that Twitter followers are more valuable than Facebook likes. Buying Twitter ads could increase Twitter followers directly. Twitter arranges the posts by timeline, but Facebook arranges by algorithm. He said it is the game Facebook is playing, and his company has to pay to play.

In addition to paying for Facebook ads, Brodbeck also pays Facebook for another service: “boosted posts”.

“We also try to get Facebook likes through ads. But what we are doing more of these days is boosting posts.”

Brodbeck boosts posts to gain more exposure. Additionally, advertisers sponsor some of his company's content.

“Part of our revenue is from sponsored content. All of sponsored content got a lot clicks. Most of the time, Facebook's algorithm doesn't like sponsored content and like our news articles better. In order to better serve our advertisers, I will spend between five and a hundred dollars to boost Facebook posts for our sponsored posts.”

Boosting sponsored posts could guarantee the quality of the company's advertising service. Advertisers require exposure. But boosting sponsored posts may not only benefit the advertisers;

it can also benefit Brodbeck's company. Brodbeck believes that boosting posts could help his company to get more exposure, as well. It is a mutually beneficial thing.

ListenWallstreet: Exotic Business News

ListenWallstreet is a New York City based business news platform. Instead of using English, this media uses Chinese to produce their content.

“We created a public channel on WeChat, named ‘青听华尔街(*YouthListenWallstreet*).’ We published a business news audio piece every day,” Ray Yang said. “We ran this public channel for about a year. Then, we built a website and an app. And we changed our name to ‘倾听华尔街(*ListenWallstreet*)’.

Yang started the WeChat public channel at the end of 2014. He discovered the market by observing the increasing number of Chinese students studying in the U.S.

In the 2013-14 academic year, 274,000 international students in the U.S. were from China (Svoboda, 2015). There is a large market in the U.S. for Chinese language companies.

“Our company mainly targets Chinese people who live in the U.S. and are interested in business. We also have a lot of Chinese readers, but our original strategy was targeting the Chinese speaking readers living in the United States.”

Business is a popular topic in China. According to Global Entrepreneurship Monitor's recent data, 14 percent of the Chinese population between the ages of 18 and 64 is made up of latent entrepreneurs who intend to launch a business within three years (Gao, 2015). This statistic is two percent more than that of the U.S. China is now the second largest economy in the world. The Chinese peoples' interest in business is growing with the economy. Yang realized that there might be a lot of Chinese speaking people in the U.S. who were their potential readers.

However, starting a Chinese-speaking media in a non-Chinese-speaking country was not easy. Yang's company does not have a physical working space.

“We recruit remote interns and part-time journalists. We even have interns in Beijing. At this point, we have only been launched for a few months. Manhattan is too expensive for us. Now, our first mission is raising funds. We are close to that.”

Yang's company is now facing the limitation of budget and labor. The company is not able to afford renting an office and employing more full-time employees.

However, Yang believes that they are able to expand because they have two senior consultants to oversee the quality of their content. One is Yong Ma, a Managing Director of Morgan Stanley, and the other is Dr. Yong Li, a veteran manager in Wall Street. So, Yang hopes that venturing capitalists will see their strength of quality.

The most important issue Yang's company is facing is spreading its quality content. This company was born on WeChat, and Yang still believes that social media is a cost-effective tool. Yang and his team gathered users with the public channel. They post content every day on their channel page and send the content to the subscribers directly. The content is sharable and encourages subscribers to share it. Each piece of content also has a QR code, which encourages new readers to subscribe to the public channel. Although Yang and his team are running the company in the U.S., he still believes that WeChat is an efficient platform for gathering Chinese-speaking readers.

WeChat is a Chinese social media platform owned and run by the technology tycoon Tencent. According to Statista's recent data, WeChat now has about 650 million monthly active users (2016). It has the sixth largest population of monthly active users. Most of them are Chinese-speaking users.

Yang and his team have spent years on WeChat and have already gathered a considerable readership. They are now mainly using WeChat to promote their content and brand. The most important articles are placed in the daily feed with feature images, while the less important articles are also in the daily feed but without feature images.

Though established in New York, WeChat is a global platform. Most of its users are in the mainland of China. It is difficult to deliver messages to its target audience accurately. In order to gather more American Chinese-speaking users, *ListenWallstreet* should develop a new channel.

Facebook is blocked in China; people can only use it outside of China. But people begin to use Facebook when they move out of China, and Facebook also has a Chinese version. Among Facebook's Chinese-speaking users, there are many Chinese people studying or working in the U.S. So, it is a bonanza for Yang's company.

“Although we created Facebook and Weibo accounts, we didn't put too much effort into those platforms. However, I think our next step is using Facebook to gather more readers when we have enough budget and people to do more.”

The limitation of funds and labor is an obstruction for Yang and his team to move to their next step. He realizes that Facebook is a better platform for them to build readership. However, promotion is expensive. As a small startup company, *ListenWallstreet's* strategy is driven by its resources.

“At this point, we haven't used any paid platforms.”

Yang's company is smaller and younger than the other two companies. This company tends to choose free platforms to deliver promotional messages.

Yang still believes that word-of-mouth is the most effective and efficient promotion for them. It does not require any budget or even labor.

“In our operation, we have some problems. I think our company is lacking in original content. We also need more talent to help us.”

Limitations and Breakthrough

Generally, the three startup companies are all small and lack a substantial budget. They are very cautious when selecting the platforms to use to promote their companies. All of the factors are related. Small companies need funds to hire more employees. Readership is the key to raising funds. But the limitation of labor and budget is an obstacle to gather readership. These companies are stuck in a difficult cycle. How to get out of the cycle is crucial for the companies.

The breakthrough is selecting a cost-effective platform to promote the companies. These entrepreneurs set strategies under the limitations of budget and labor. The platforms they select should be easily managed and as cheap as possible.

All of the companies tend to keep using the social media platforms they began with. For *The Social Media Monthly* and *Local News Now*, this platform was Twitter. Even now, they continue to pay a lot of attention to Twitter.

Compared to Facebook, Twitter is more suitable for publications. Twitter feeds are ordered by time. When media companies publish news on Twitter, users could receive their posts immediately and click the links to read the whole articles. Additionally, Twitter could help media companies deal with breaking news. Journalists may often not have enough time to write a long article. A short Twitter post could trigger readers' interest and lead them to follow-up stories.

Twitter offers a good atmosphere for news. “Twitter can be important in other ways,” Brodbeck said. “Even though it doesn't have the same traffic [as Facebook], other journalists use Twitter a lot.” Media companies could keep interactions with these journalists and use their resource to enrich company Twitter accounts.

In keeping with Brodbeck’s opinion, Twitter followers are more loyal to the accounts they follow. They are engaged with brands by continuing to see content, commenting and retweeting. Twitter followers are more valuable than Facebook likes. This structure would serve Fine well, as he is looking for a strategy to form a brand community.

As Fine said, Twitter is becoming mainstream. There is already a number of Twitter users using Twitter as their main source of news. Media companies could attract these users and provide the content these users are interested in.

Facebook plays a different role in promotion strategies. Because of its algorithm, the popular posts are more easily seen. Eye-catching content can go viral easily on Facebook.

Facebook’s large user base could also help promotional content be seen by more people. Reaching more readers and being more exposed are key points of promotion, other than engagement.

Sponsored content desires more exposure. Facebook is the platform that could be manipulated. Media companies can pay to boost their sponsored contents and serve their advertisers. On the other hand, better advertising services could bring media companies more revenue, and finally help the company get a breakthrough out of the limitation cycle.

The price of boosting Facebook posts is comparatively more reasonable than other types of promotion. Promoting content is a start to promoting brands.

Additionally, media companies select which main promotional platforms to use based on their actual circumstances. Although Brodbeck prefers Twitter, *Local News Now* uses Facebook because of its larger user base, and its algorithm is suitable to deliver specific types of messages. *The Social Media Monthly* uses other mainstream social media outlets because Fine wants to cover more platforms and bring more users to actual events.

ListenWallstreet is in a totally different situation. It is still mainly using WeChat to deliver promotional messages because the company was born on WeChat, and much of its target audience uses the platform. They want to move to Facebook but do not currently have the budget or manpower.

Discussion and Conclusion

Although all of these companies have reason to use Facebook to deliver their promotional messages, I still cannot assert that Facebook is the most popular social media platform media startups use for that purpose. Because each company has its own unique situation, the social media platform they use depends on their current needs.

All three companies have not paid any traditional advertising services due to their budgets and the cost performance of traditional advertising services. However, Twitter and Facebook ads are the platforms they have the most reason to purchase.

Small media startup companies should set their promotional strategies carefully. The limitations are obstacles, but also tell them how to use their resource reasonably. This process is forming a mature business model that could affect their future operations.

All of the three entrepreneurs pointed out the importance of integrated marketing communication. These companies have not followed all the 10 disciplines mentioned in literature. But, at least, they followed some key disciplines (Schultz, 2000):

- Have a disciplined focus on the core customer or who might become the core customer.
- Possess a proprietary insight into and about the core customer.
- Distinguish themselves on the operating basics. If you aren't "best in class" today, you aren't even considered.
- View the brand as a platform to refresh and innovate. The brand must be an elastic element—one that changes as customers change and responds as customers request.
- Believe in the power of communication.

For the last discipline, Yang mentioned word-of-mouth (WOM). It is a kind of communication among users. WOM is not fully controlled by companies. But it can bring a lot of benefits to companies. 92% of people tend to believe recommendations from their families and friends over all kinds of advertising (Whitler, 2014). And 64% of marketing professionals also believe that WOM is the most effective marketing tactic (Whitler, 2014). For these media startup companies, WOM requires high-quality contents and user experience. But it also requires fewer budgets. Although it could not be fully controlled, it is still worthy to be paid attention to.

The results still cannot point out the most popular social media platform and paid platform media startups use to deliver promotional messages. This question could not be answered simply by statistics. Media startups have different themes, financial conditions, target audiences and other related statuses.

Future research should focus on how media startup companies set their promotional strategies, as well as which key factors most influence their promotional strategies and tactics. Media startups companies always start with goals. There are a lot of tools media startup companies did not mention and utilize, such as email, chatbots and traditional paid advertising. There are not enough evidences to see whether they are useful or not.

The interviews with the three entrepreneurs did not point out any differences in how they frame content between those platforms. From the literature, different frames could be applied on different platforms and may result different effects. However, the three entrepreneurs did not talk about the relationship between frames and platforms. They even have not realized that frames are related to different effects.

As such, future research should also pay attention to how framing theory applies to media startups and their setting of promotional strategies. For now, these media startup companies are too small and too busy to pay attention to do some research on this. As Fine said, they are just running social media accounts. These small companies do not have the resource to compare different platforms and set up different frames for them. But it does not mean framing theory cannot apply to media startups' promotional strategies. So I think further academic researches need to pay attention to it.

Limitation

This research still has some limitations. On one hand, in this research, there are only three media startup companies. So the results may be incidental. On the other hand, all of these media startup companies are located on the East Coast. The companies on the West Coast may have

different citations. The entrepreneurial environment in Silicon Valley may be different. And the demographic background of the West Coast may also change the results.

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Appendix

Professional Project Proposal

Master's Degree Candidate: Shifeng Li

Project Committee: Fritz Cropp (chair), Brad Best, Barbara Cochran

Introduction

In the past year and a half, I have learned a lot from the world's greatest journalism school. I switched my interest from convergence to strategic communication because the journalism school informed me that journalism is not a narrow area. I can apply my knowledge and skills to a broader purpose. In the journalism school, I have learned a lot of skills that will be helpful in my future career. Of the skills I learned in Missouri School of Journalism, analytics is one of most important. Today we are in the digital age; "big data" is not only the trend, but it is also the key to success. In the course of Interactive Advertising II, I learned how to use Adobe Analytics, as well as Google Analytics, to analyze data, and will help rare.us, a nationwide news feed website, improve their webpage design. Content marketing is another important skill for me. It is the bridge between creation and media, and it can help a brand attract a defined audience. It requires me to understand the audiences and their demands. Another important skill I have learned is media sales. It not only requires me to understand the audience, but it also requires me to understand the media and the advertisers. These three skills encourage me to be data minded, as analytics is a scientific way to understand each part of the industry.

In conclusion, analytics is the guideline of my career. I also participated in the Adobe Analytics Challenge to get my skill polished. Now I have learned the knowledge and skills of analytics. I have also been trained in school with real companies. However, I have never practiced in the field or worked with the professionals in this area face to face. This project could provide me with a great opportunity to practice in the real world.

Professional Skills Component

My journalism area of emphasis is strategic communication. Although it is a comparatively broad concept, I narrowed it down to social and digital marketing. In order to pursue the project, I took some related courses, including Interactive Advertising II, Media Sales and Strategic Communication Practicum. These courses provided me with basic knowledge of social and digital marketing. These courses made me realized the power of digital techniques in advertising. Meanwhile, I also got in touch with real companies and trained by the prestigious Missouri Method.

In my plan, the beginning date of the project is around January 10th. I will finish my project around April 10th and return to Columbia to finish my degree. I am still pursuing the position of my project, but I can ideally work at least 8 hours each day (normally 9:00 am to 5:30 pm).

The ideal position I have applied for is the digital intern at CCTV America. This position requires me to be “data-minded” and familiar with social media, SEO (search engine optimization) and PPC (pay per click). If I were in this position, I could engage in its digital and social campaigns. Its digital department is in charge of its social media outlets and mobile website. This department was established in recent years and is willing to accept opinions

concerning optimization. So, my experience of optimizing rare.us could be useful in this specific area. The other responsibilities are:

- Taking in and cutting feeds;
- Using digital editing equipment;
- Updating and working on website and social media;
- Taking part in coverage discussions;
- Shadowing/helping reporters and photographers on assignment;
- Assisting the assignment desk in answering telephone calls, making follow up calls on stories, and any other duties that may be designated by an assignment editor; and
- Assisting producers, writers, and production assistants in the production of a newscast(s).

These responsibilities could polish my basic journalistic skills. I think that, as a journalistic professional, being versatile is a requirement. In these two years, I trained myself in different aspects in order to meet the market demand.

The other positions I applied for, including positions provided by Powell Tate, Discovery Communications and Information Technology Industry Council, are quite similar to this position. All of my work there could be disseminated by social media, landing page and search engines. The formats of the materials in the final project report will include a weekly report and finished works. The department of the company will provide the supervision.

Theoretical framework

Introduction

Nowadays, with the influence of technology, beginning a startup company is one of the most efficient social ladders in the United States. In the past decade, numerous startup companies have already become giants, such as Facebook, Twitter, Uber and Airbnb. Facebook, Twitter and Google are undisputed avant-gardes of this area. Uber, Airbnb and SpaceX are newborn companies, but they have already been influential. The avant-gardes and the newborn companies were different when their businesses began. Before the era of Facebook, social networking was not a common thing to people. Paid media is an important tool for them to promote their businesses. However, within the booming decade of social media, marketers have more platforms to promote their brands. These platforms fall into three different categories: paid media, owned media and earned media. Paid media is a comparatively more traditional concept. It mainly refers to all formats of paid advertising such as banner ad, Google Adwords, TV commercials and guerrilla campaigns. Owned media is where companies brand themselves. Although owned media is not a new concept, it has expanded in definition. Brochures, retail stores, company websites, webinars, whitepapers and lifehacks are the conventional ways. Social media is now another component. Furthermore, earned media is different from paid media and owned media. Companies are not able to control earned media. Fans control it. Therefore, in my research, I will mainly compare the cost efficiency of paid media and owned media for startup companies. Moreover, because of the differing natures of these platforms, marketers have to choose different frames to conduct their messages through these different vehicles. For new runners of startups, it is important to understand their forerunners' strategies on all kinds of platforms in order to set up their own strategies of integrated marketing communication.

Framing theory

To specify the strategies, figuring out how the marketers deliver messages to their audiences is an important process. Framing effect is one of the most common techniques marketers utilize to present their information.

The term “message framing” means manipulating the way a message is presented to message receivers in order to have optimized impact on their reactions and behavior (Rothman and Salovey 1997). Framing can affect how the message receivers perceive the message. Different frames may lead receivers’ positive and negative decisions (Gonzalez, Dana, Koshino, & Just, 2005; Levin et al., 1998).

Previous studies have discussed the roles of framing in advertising. Advertisers use framing effect to influence viewers’ interpretation of the information (Hanks, 2015). Framed advertising can “set a mood, create the emotion and put the audience in the right frame of mind to absorb the message” (Bradley, 2010). Framed advertising could influence customers’ purchasing behavior (Smith, 1996). Positive frames can be perceived as positive feelings. As a result, receivers will exhibit risk-taking and proactive behavior. On the other hand, negative frames can be perceived as negative feelings. As a result, receivers will exhibit risk aversion and reactive behavior (Bradley, 2010).

In advertising, framing is an important technique for delivering messages to the audience. Advertisers need to utilize positive framing to present their product and negative framing to present their competitors’ product (Bradley, 2010).

According to Levin (1998), there are three types of framing: (1) Risky choice framing, which refers to how valence affects willingness to take a risk; (2) attribute framing, which refers to the comments that will influence a particular subject or event; and (3) goal framing, which has the effect of persuasion. Advertisers have to understand their audience and potential customers before setting up their frame. The type of frame to choose is highly related to potential customers' psychological structure.

Using framing theory in comparing different types of advertising

A lot of previous studies about using framing in advertising have been done. Researchers are usually interested in how framing works for advertising under the circumstance of a specific topic. For example, Jeremy Kees (2011) pointed out that health advertising with a persuasive frame in proximal terms and promotional terms could have a positive effect on people who are not sure about the consequences of their behavior. In green advertising, a positively framed message is more persuasive and more likely to have an effective impact on an audience. A negatively framed message is not as effective as a positively framed message in green advertising (Tu et al., 2013). So, both of these researches pointed out that, in these two types of advertising, positively framed messages are more persuasive. Advertisers should realize that the effect they want the audience have is related to how they present the message. In the advertising industry, creativity is not the only thing the professionals need to care about. Understanding the audience and arranging the elements in a message associated with proper strategies are keys to achievement.

Large numbers of previous studies paid more attention to conventional advertising, which refers to TV commercial, radio advertising, brochure, print ad, out-of-home campaigns and

banner ads. However, with the boom of social media platforms, which are an important part of owned media in integrated marketing communication campaigns, advertisers and marketers have an alternative to those expensive choices. The recent data pointed out that Facebook has 1.393 billion monthly active users, and the average cost of advertising, measured by CPM (cost per a thousand impressions), is only \$1.54. Meanwhile, Twitter has 288 million active users, and the average cost of advertising, measured by CPM, is \$12.16. LinkedIn has 187 million active users, and the average cost of advertising, measured by CPM, is \$27.90 (Palmer, 2015). According to these data, social media is a platform with a significant potential to advertise. Aside from social media platforms, a brand's webpage is also an important part of owned media. How to associate the webpage, usually referred to as a "landing page," with a social media profile and paid ads is vital to achieving expected results.

Conclusion

In an advertising campaign, different frames could result in different outcomes. For example, marketers can promote a pharmaceutical product as having a 90 percent success rate. However, their competitor could claim that the product fails in one out of ten cases (Hanks, 2015). Advertisers and marketers should set up their frames before launching a campaign. On the other hand, different media platforms have their unique features. Advertisers and marketers, then, should be aware of these differences and take advantage of them. Since small companies have limited cash flow, startups should be scrupulous to set up their advertising strategies.

Method

Qualitative Research Interview

This study will use interviews to qualitatively conclude the most popular social network platforms and paid platforms startups utilize to deliver their promotional messages.

Interviewing is a proper method to get the story behind someone's experience. The interviewer can dig into a certain topic, then follow it up to further investigate the interviewees (McNamara,1999). By doing interviews, the interviewer can gather information on a factual and meaningful level (Kvale,1996). In this study, entrepreneurs currently running startups in Washington D.C. will be interviewed. It is a more adaptable research method than questionnaires because different startups may have different situations. Startups have different types of businesses and may be in different stages. It is better to interview those who run the companies, and collect their own words about their businesses, than have unified questionnaires. In this way, I believe I can collect more specific information.

Sample selection

Washington, D.C. is the capital of the United States. It is the center of politics. This area is a good place to start a company due to its public resources and social connections. Since a large amount of startups need to utilize the sufficient resources of the area, the study could select enough samples and process successfully. This research will sample 3 companies (each with less than 5 years of history) from a list of startups based in Washington, D.C. Here is a partial list of the startups based in Washington, D.C.:

ruck.us: The uber-simple political website builder;

APX Labs: Software platform for Smart Glasses;

Geostellar: Marketplace for Solar Energy;

TalkLocal: A match.com for local search-connecting customers to matching pros by phones in seconds;

LivingSocial: The online source for discovering valuable local experiences;

Spinnaker: Democratizing big data analytics;

cont3nt.com: eBay for breaking news;

Uppidy: Uppidy makes sms mms messages portable;

Spree Commerce: The Operating System for E-commerce connects any store to any service;

Disruption Corporation: Research, Investment & Advice For The Private Market;

Encore Alert: Big marketing opportunities in simple, bite-sized actionable alerts;

FiscalNote: Real-time Open Data Platform;

Fundrise: Real Estate Investment Platform;

POPVOX: Disrupting Lobbying with the Power of People;

Karoo: Your private video cloud so you control who sees that;

Speek: Simple and Smart Conference Calling - No Dial-ins, No Pins, No Downloads;

Mytonomy: Video Q&A for College and Career; and

ID.me: Single Sign ON for Identity and Group Affiliations.

Coding Procedures

Since the research will use interviews, interview questions are the vital components:

1. Does your company have social networks accounts?
2. What are the social network platforms your company uses?
3. Which social network your company uses has the most followers?
4. Does your company use social networks to deliver any promotional messages?
5. How is the feedback of using social networks to deliver promotional messages?

Did you have all the expected outcomes?

6. Which social network platform do you think has the best performance in delivering promotional messages?
7. Does your company use any paid platforms to deliver promotional messages?
8. What types of paid platforms does your company usually use? Could you specify the names?
9. What is your opinion about paid platforms? Do you think they are worth the money?
10. What is the budget for paid platforms?

Research Questions:

In order to present the current operation situation of the D.C. based startups and how they deliver their promotional messages, I have two research questions that need to be answered by the research:

RQ1: What are the most popular social network platforms media startups utilize to deliver promotional messages?

RQ2: What are the most popular paid platforms media startups utilize to deliver promotional messages?

Literature Review

Introduction

Since the overwhelming impact of the Internet, the term “startup” has been mentioned frequently all over the media. Neil Blumenthal, the cofounder and co-CEO of Warby Parker, defined “startup” as “a company working to solve a problem where the solution is not obvious and success is not guaranteed” (Robehmed, 2013). One vital attribute of a startup is its potential and capability to grow. Because technology is a booming area, small companies could grow quickly by doing tech-related business. Silicon Valley is a gathering place of such types of business. Paul Graham, the head of a startup accelerator company named Y Combinator, said, “A company five years old can still be a startup. Ten would start to be a stretch” (Robehmed, 2013). Expanding in a considerable period is the key goal of startups, so setting strategies to promote its brand efficiently is very important to its growth.

Why integrated marketing communication matter

Proper marketing strategies could save companies from disruption. As some motion-control technologies, such as Sony PlayStation and Microsoft Xbox, no longer allow free games within the platforms, small companies such as Just Dance need to seek new platforms to avoid disruption (Heine, 2015). In the recent market, the iPad and iPhone are the two main platforms with large potential. Small companies are making great efforts to switch their focus on these two platforms. In this process, they use TV spots to align with videos on social networks. At the same time, they also utilize user-generated content on platforms such as Instagram and Snapchat (Heine, 2015). Utilizing different channels to promote a business is important. Entrepreneurs should not focus only on limited platforms; they should have a broad sight and be aware of the importance of marketing in an integrated way.

Taking advantage of integrated marketing communication by tech-based startup has been discussed over the recent decade. Don E. Schultz, professor of integrated marketing communications (IMC) at the Medill School of Journalism, Northwestern University, discussed it in 2000. He described the tech-based startups as “an organization with no history, no knowledge base, no recognized customers, only prospects” (Schultz, 2000). So, how can these kinds of newborn companies catch customers’ eyes and express how they can benefit customers? Schultz concluded 10 disciplines:

1. Have a disciplined focus on the core customer or who might become the core customer.
2. Possess a proprietary insight into and about the core customer.
3. Consider the brand to be a strategic asset. Assets don't take budget cuts.

4. Align all actions with the brand value proposition.
5. Distinguish themselves on the operating basics. If you aren't "best in class" today, you aren't even considered.
6. View the brand as a platform to refresh and innovate. The brand must be an elastic element—one that changes as customers change and responds as customers request.
7. Have the ability to reshape and transform their industry.
8. View themselves as advocates for their customers.
9. Create an internal culture that is passionate about doing what's right for the customer.
10. Believe in the power of communication.

With the evolution of the industry, integrated marketing communication has been defined as "an audience-driven business process of strategically managing stakeholders, content, channels, and results of brand communication programs" (Kliatchko, 2008, p. 140). This approach is widely accepted by academics and professionals.

Previous research of framing

Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman did a research study on how a difference in phrasing affected peoples' decisions and choices (1981). Two problems were designed to investigate how people respond to negative framing and positive framing:

Problem 1: Imagine that the U.S. is preparing for the outbreak of an unusual Asian disease, which is expected to kill 600 people. Two alternative programs to combat the disease

have been proposed. Assume the exact scientific estimates of the consequences of the programs are as follows:

If Program A is adopted, 200 people will be saved.

If Program B is adopted, there is a $1/3$ probability that 600 people will be saved and a $2/3$ probability that no people will be saved.

Which of the two programs would you favor?

Problem 2:

If Program C is adopted, 400 people will die.

If Program D is adopted, there is a $1/3$ probability that nobody will die and a $2/3$ probability that 600 people will die.

Which of the two programs would you favor?

The two choices in the first problem are all positively framed and the two choices in the second problem are all negatively framed. Program A and Program C were conducting messages with the same meaning. Program B and Program D had the same situation, as well. The results showed that most of the respondents chose Program A and Program D. The experiment pointed out that people tend to choose a sure phrasing when the phrasing is positively framed, but people tend to choose a risky phrasing when the phrasing is negatively framed.

There is another recent research study focused on age differences that further discusses this topic. Ryan Best and Neil Charness did a meta-analysis on the effect age differences and framing can have on risky choices (2015). They designed two kinds of scenarios. One is related

to money, which was coded as “financial,” and the other is related to health or mortality, which was coded as “mortality.” In the result, young people were found to be more likely to choose risky options in positively framed cases, especially in situations of small-amount financial and large-amount mortality-based scenarios. However, in negatively framed cases, the authors did not find overall age differences in choosing risky options.

However, the discoveries on this topic are not all the same. Five scholars from the Department of Psychology at Umeå University did a research to ask the question, “Are Younger and Older Adults Differently Susceptible to Framing Effects?” (Rönnlund et al. 2005). They sampled 192 younger adults with the average age of 23.8 years old, as well as 192 older adults with the average age of 69.1 years old. All of the subjects were assigned to one of three scenarios with different goods at stake. The three scenarios are related to human lives, paintings and money. After observing the statistics, the authors found that the majority of the participants preferred the risky options. However, they did not find any differences between younger adults’ preference of risky options and older adults’ preference of risky options. According to these two studies, the topic of age differences and the effects of framing, with respect to risky choice making, is still necessary to discuss when doing research related to framing and age.

There are other research studies related to framing that are focused on other topics. Framing theory is widely used in the area of advertising. How the advertisements are framed is always important. Atul A. Kulkarni and Hong Yuan did a research study on the relationship between ad-irrelevant distance cues and persuasiveness of message framing (2015). In the result, people feel positively framed messages are persuasive when the irrelevant cues could induce social remoteness (social distance) and spatial remoteness (physical distance). However, people feel that negatively framed messages are persuasive when the irrelevant cues could induce social

proximity, spatial proximity and concrete construal. This study could be applied in the process of advertising design, as well as contribute to research on the use of framing in advertising.

In addition, Jeremy Kees did a research study on advertising framing effects and customers' consideration of future consequences (2011). The purpose of the research is to test the effectiveness of differently-framed advertising message designed to persuade people to make a decision related to health promotion. Two studies were conducted in this research. The first study was about unhealthy food choices, and it showed that present-oriented customers are easier to persuade with messages that refer to proximal consequences instead of distal consequences. The second study showed that present-oriented customers have higher behavioral intentions when they receive messages of promotional strategies.

The research Kees conducted on advertising framing effects was mainly focused on advertising messages relating to health. However, there are also interesting findings of advertising framing effects related to other kinds of messages. Three Taiwanese scholars did a research study on framing effect and green messages (Tu et al., 2013). "Green message" in this context referred to messages related to promoting green awareness and environmental protection. The researchers found that customers prefer positively framed advertising before receiving green messages. After receiving green messages, the customers have the same attitudes toward both positively framed and negatively framed advertising.

Indeed, framing could have different effects on different people. Three scholars studied the framing of gambling consequences in advertising (Orazi et al., 2015). In their research, they split different types of gamblers into two groups. Problem gamblers made up one group, while recreational gamblers made up the other group (Korman et al., 2008). The researchers used the

advertisements framed with material consequences and social consequences. Generally, they found that social consequences are more effective than material consequences to reduce the propensity of gambling. The difference between the effect of social consequences and the effect of material consequences is more significant in the study of problem gamblers when the consequences are negative.

Is the use of framing limited to word-based language? A Romanian scholar discussed visual rhetoric and framing strategies (Grancea, 2014). The author referred to visual rhetoric as “visual literacy” in the research. The author asserted that visual elements can play the role of language. The research findings also pointed out that “the power of visuals to speak about words depends on the degree to which benefits provided by words can be visualized” (Grancea, 2014). This point supports that the concept of framing can not only be applied to word-based language, but it can also be applied to visual elements. It is an important component of advertising that needs to be analyzed.

Introduction of Paid Media

Paid media is a third party channel brands pay to leverage (Campbell, 2013). Essentially, the definition refers to traditional types of advertising, such as TV spots, radio ads, print ads and out-of-home campaigns. However, with the development of technology, the concept of paid media has been expanded. Erica Machin redefined the concept in the digital age (Machin, 2015):

“Paid media is a good way to promote content in order to drive earned media, as well as direct traffic to owned media properties. Paying to promote content can help get the ball rolling and create more exposure. Social Media sites like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn offer advertising that could potentially help boost your content as well as your website. Another way

to gain more exposure for your content is to pay influencers to tweet or share your links, impacting the reach and recognition your pieces receive. Using retargeting, Pay Per Click and display ads is an effective and more direct way to drive searchers to your owned media sites like your website, to help increase traffic and/or conversions.”

In the digital age, advertisers can not only buy time on TV programs, but can also buy banners on websites or place advertisements in other interactive ways.

Among the formats of paid media, high-impact digital advertisements with multiple interactive elements are aimed to gather more response from customers (Baron et al., 2014). “High-impact digital advertising’ can be defined as any interactive, large-canvas format that accounts for significant real estate of a Web page”(Baron et al., 2014). A research study about delivering brand value through high-impact digital advertising tested three types of high-impact advertisements: “Large-canvas display formats”, “Full-screen interactive ‘takeover’ formats” and “Skin’ or wrap formats”.

- Large-canvas display formats: High-impact advertisements offering interactive functionality and large pixel size within standard advertising slots on the Web page. Formats representing large-canvas display formats were what LAB refers to as its "Rising Stars," including "Billboard," "Portrait," "Slider," and "Sidekick."

- Full-screen interactive "takeover" formats: High-impact advertisements offering interactive functionality and full-screen capabilities that cover the entire Web page or a large portion of it and can interact with the page content. The formats representing full-screen interactive takeovers were Undertone's formats, including PageGrabber.

- "Skin" or wrap formats: High-impact advertisements that surround the Web page content and remain persistent on the page during scrolling but lack interactive functionality.

The formats representing skin or wrap formats were Undertone's "PageSkin" format.

The results pointed out that the size of digital advertisement is important. It could increase brand recall, advertisement recognition and brand recognition. The research also pointed out that the most highly interactive elements in digital advertisement can deliver best brand connection. Different formats of high-impact digital advertising have different advantages. Large-canvas display could bring more user engagement and consideration, and full-screen takeover could build awareness effectively.

Although digital media platforms play important roles in modern marketing activities, traditional media, such as television, radio and print, are still a large part of integrated marketing communication. However, in the digital age, can traditional media have the effectiveness and efficiency to meet marketing goals? Wildner and Modenbach did a research study about the long-term ROI (return on investment) of TV advertising (2015). They analyzed the TV advertising of 204 brands and found that 65% of the brands have positive ROIs. They also found that the average long-term ROI is 2.65, which is higher than the short-term ROI (1.15). This means that TV advertising is an efficient advertising format, especially in a long-term scope.

Is print media also an efficient advertising format? In recent years, the print industry has declined. There are a lot of challenges the print industry is facing (McKean, 2015). The traditional relationship between print media and its audience has changed. Audiences have more choices of media brands, and advertisers have other choices through which to send their messages to the audiences. Other non-media platforms have grown, and advertisers could buy ad

space on their websites. The advertisers may also find ways to communicate with their audiences directly without media platforms. As a part of the entire media industry, the development of magazine is now driven by technologies along with other formats of media (McKean, 2015). The relationship between magazine and other digital platforms is getting closer. Many magazines have launched electronic versions to reach their readers and get revenues back, and Apple has recently launched its Apple News app on iOS 9, aligned with 50 publishers (McKean, 2015). With the reinforcement from digital technologies, newspapers and magazines are no longer paper-based platforms. Now, they can provide advertisers and marketers with additional possibilities for promoting their businesses.

Introduction of Owned Media

The term “owned media” is frequently referred to in the digital age. Steven and Galak defined this term as “media activity related to a company or brand that is generated by the company or its agents in channels it controls” (2012). More specifically, Erica Machin explained digital owned media:

“Owned media is any web property that you can control and is unique to your brand. One of the most common examples is a website, although blog sites and social media channels are other examples of owned media properties too. Channels like social media and blogs are extensions of your website, and all three are extensions of your brand as a whole. The more owned media you have, the more chances you have to extend your brand presence in the digital sphere.”

According to this definition, owned media is a proper way to communicate with audiences directly, which means brands could have more possibilities to communicate with

audiences. In addition, other owned media platforms such as videos, whitepapers, webinars and photo galleries are also controlled by brands themselves.

Is owned media playing a positive role in an integrated marketing campaign? Xie and Lee performed a research study on social media and brand purchase (2015). They found that a brand's owned media activities have significant and positive impacts on the audiences' purchase behavior. However, they also found that owned media activities also have no impact on offline impact with in-store promotions (Xie & Lee, 2015). Their findings pointed out that owned media could play a positive role in customers' purchase behavior, at least in online purchase behaviors. So it is important for brand company heads to realize that sending promotional messages through social networks is necessary and positive.

Why should owned media work with paid media? Harrison did a research study on the media platforms and users to answer that question (2013). He found that the customers who already bought or used a brand have higher brand recall than non-users. He also found that paid media is a better platform for reaching non-users, but owned media and earned media are better platforms for reaching existing users. So, he believes that brands should add owned media and earned media to paid media touch points (Harrison, 2013). These touch points could help the brand to be in the initial set of brands the consumers consider. Then consumers may add or subtract brands as they evaluate what they want before they select a brand at the moment of purchase. After the purchase behavior, consumers will build expectations based on experience to affect the next purchase behavior (Court, et al., 2009).

Conclusion

The existing researches have discussed the extensive uses of framing effect. This idea is not only important in news coverage, but also in the industry of advertising. It is important to figure out how to communicate with the audience in a proper way. The framing effect also points out that messages should be framed in different ways depending on the situation.

In the digital age, marketers should realize the differences between paid media and owned media. Owned media, especially social media (except paid social), is now playing a positive role in marketing activities. The importance of owned media should not be neglected. Because the nature of owned media is different than paid media, marketers should also consider how to deliver promotional messages through different channels.

As newborn companies, startups should be more sensitive to the changes of media platforms, since they are small and need to follow the trend. Because startups are small, their advertising strategies may not be clear enough, and sometimes they should keep trying. Thus, academic research of startups' advertising strategies needs to be processed to help them to promote in a proper way.