

# *An Analysis of the Problems and Countermeasures of Rapid Transport Advertising Communication in China's New Media Era*

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**Abstract:** By analysing the current communication process and existing problems of rapid transport advertising under the background of New Media, it can be shown that it's an inevitable choice for rapid transport advertising to change under the New Media environment. By following the general trends of creativity development to integrate the innovations of New Media into rapid transport advertising, the two-way communication between advertisers and their audience can be achieved through interactive advertisement experience, thus reaching their full effect. Therefore, in the New Media environment, rapid transport advertising must establish effective interactive mechanisms, accurately position their products, focus on content development, understand and grasp the needs of their audience, which is not only the best way to bring the brand closer to their audience, but also the countermeasures against the current problems.

## **1. Introduction**

As the most widely used mode of transportation in China, rapid transport systems possesses the unique traits of large enclosure, maximum exposure, high foot traffic, as well as a relatively obvious audience. As such, comparing to other forms of outdoor advertisement, rapid transport advertising possesses a unique communicative media function. And together, these factors also improve the media value of rapid transport advertising, which can reach more audiences in a short time period. Due to these advantages, rapid transport advertising has attracted more and more attention from people of various industries. According to the *2021-2025 China Metro Advertising Market Analysis and Development Prospect Research Report*, its market size accounts for nearly 30% of the total outdoor advertising market, and its development continues to improve.

## **2. Influence of New Media and Relevant Technologies on Rapid Transport Advertising**

Influenced by the Internet, New Media, and other related technologies, the contents of rapid transport advertising has become increasingly diverse and creative, combining both aesthetic and function. It is no longer a simple display of information, but has become a bridge between audiences and brands through various media and means.

Especially in China's 1st-tier cities, the level of creativity in rapid transport advertising is showing in an upward trend in high-speed development. There has been some remarkable cases of rapid transport advertising that have benefited from the use of New Media technologies. Through the utilization of contextual, emotional, digital means to enhance the interactive experience of advertisements, the development of rapid transport advertising has shown a new form and a new direction. For example, inside the Wuzhong Rd. Metro Station in Shanghai, both sides of the arcade were incorporate into the interactive design of an over 70-metre long scroll, embellished by LED lights, making the hall appearing as a mysterious tunnel through time, see Figure 1. Another example is the 0-pressure Space Station in the Hangzhou Metro Line 6, co-branded by APP [Soul] and AMBROSIAL, which had created an advanced and futuristic 0-pressure train for the city's young people, see Figure 2. Many such examples have reflected the impact of New Media and new technologies on rapid transport advertising. Rapid transport advertising has become the most important part of the audience and their lives through a variety of media and means. Rapid transport advertising has become a bridge between audiences and brands through various media and means.



Figure 1 The Wuzhong Rd. Metro Station in Shanghai



Figure 2 The 0-pressure Space Station in the Hangzhou Metro Line 6

However, the problems of dissemination of underground advertising has also become increasingly prominent each day.

### **3. The Problems of Rapid Transport Advertising Communication in the Context of New Media**

#### **3.1 Difficulty in assessing the impact of advertising dissemination**

The realization of advertising effect is the process during which an unfamiliar user, from noticing the advertisement, to being interested, to being encouraged to desire, thus generating the purchasing behaviour, which is a transformation process, and at the same time, also a measuring process of advertising effect.

At present, most of the rapid transport advertisements are still simple displays of content, ignoring the analysis of their target audience, lacking systematic thinking and scientific planning. As a result, most actual rapid transport advertising can only reach the step of attracting the audience's attention.[1].Moreover, unlike online advertising, it is difficult to quantify the relationship between advertising and brand awareness and sales through online search and information surveys, and there are many links between the reception of advertising information and consumption behaviour, with many uncertainties, making it difficult to assess the effectiveness of its advertising communication.

### **3.2 Unmemorable isolated advertising contents**

Most of the rapid transport advertisements in China still continue the traditional advertising form, with a single expression, limited content, no highlights, lack of creativity and minimal effect. In addition, these traditional forms of advertising communication are mainly one-way information dissemination, difficult to attract consumers, even if there is a short attention, will not create a long-term memory. Another point, the rapid transport advertising usually lacks connectivity, one billboard contains one advertisement, another billboard around the corner shows another brand's advertisement, so these isolating contents will result in putting a new advertisement in the audiences' face before the previous one being processed into their memory systems, thus preventing the formation of any lasting impression.

### **3.3 Immature and unvaried advertising communication methods**

Though the New Media technology continues to mature, the media methods increasingly diversify, especially in the application of rapid transport advertising, no mature system has formed, only a small number of marketing events have formed a deep impression and caused widespread dissemination among their target audience. Thus, in both performance and implementation, Creative ideas should not only be people-oriented, consumer-centric, designed around the needs of consumers, focusing on consumer experience, and strive to achieve two-way communication between two sides, but also, at the same time, should pay attention to the introduction and application of new materials, new technologies, to keep up with the rhythm of consumer life, to utilize vivid, imaginative, and comprehensive ways to achieve interactivity with consumers.[2]

In short, some advertising creative design practitioners lack a systematic understanding of the "interactive creative mechanism" of rapid transport media, and rely solely on the past experience of traditional advertising implementation and copy other successful examples to formulate their strategies, which can easily lead to inaccurate positioning, placement failure, and regrettable results.

### **3.4 Unclear target of advertising communication**

The key to the recognition of any product or advertisement is putting the consumer first. Only by fully understanding the psychology and needs of the audience, and basing the communication process and content on the audience as much as possible, can the needs of the audience be met and the expected effect of rapid transit advertising be achieved. Therefore, in the interactive creation of outdoor advertising forms, we need to find certain general rules in consumer psychology from the differences in consumer behaviour, to better meet the psychological needs of the audience. However, in some cases, certain advertisements failed adapt to the local conditions and audiences. For instance, an advertisement for the game World of Warcraft that appeared on Line 3 of the Xi'an Metro had made some children cry and caused discontent among the public, which had shown that the ad company had failed to position their content correctly among the rapid transport audience and choose the right image when placing the advertisement. These unsuccessful advertisements sometimes not only fail to help the brand build a positive image, but had the opposite effect.

## **4. Countermeasures to the Communication Problems of Rapid Transport Advertising in the Background New Media**

### **4.1 Accurate positioning of the content of advertising products in regards to their targeted audience**

For any products or brands that want recognition and success in this era, they must first be

consumer-centric, accurately position themselves, and understand what people really need, in order to launch a focused advertisement campaign. And the performance and implementation of any specific creative designs also need to be people-oriented, consumer-centric, around the needs of consumers advertising creative design, focused on the consumer experience, and strive to resonate with the audience, to achieve two-way communication between them and the advertisement.

We can analyse the data of rapid transport passengers to make a simple group portrait, such as what type of people often use rapid transport as their first choice for urban transport; what are the characteristics of passengers travelling in the morning and evening rush hours; the potentially different consumption preferences of passengers getting off at different stations, and so on.[3] By carefully studying the audience, we can target which or what type of brands, products, contents and delivery methods and locations can offer advertisers the most cost-effective options. Therefore, we need to conduct in-depth investigation and research before placing advertisement, conduct product and consumer analysis before choosing the content and forms suitable for placement in rapid transport advertisement, and choose forms of creative expression more enjoyable for the audience. Because advertising is a channel for dialogue between consumers and products, so our research of both audience and content is essential. Nowadays, the application of big data provides us with steadily more powerful support, so that a growing number of advertisements can be placed with increasing accuracy. Of course, we also need to continuously improve the quality of advertising content. Only when the advertising content has a high enough credibility, interaction and effectiveness, can consumers experience fresh sensation and perception, thus improving the advertising effect, realizing the intended outcome.

#### **4.2 Continuous innovation of the forms of expression**

Under the trend of continuous development of New Media, information is often expressed through integrated means of audio, text, images, and other forms. Through the innovative combination of advertising and New Media, the traditional flat ads turn into moving three-dimensional ads, stimulating the audience via visual, auditory, tactile, and other perceptive methods. These multi-faceted changes reflect the continuous progress of China's advertising industry. Advertising is no longer limited to a single aspect, a single means of communication. The form of expression began to realize the change from 2-dimensional to 3-dimensional, from static to dynamic, to achieve the multi-dimensional dissemination diffusion of information, and stronger impact on the audience. [4]

Interactive advertising is also a future direction of advertising development. The reception of information will change from passive to active. The public began to take the initiative to find information, access information, and even participate in the creation of information. Immersive advertising and marketing can bring the audience into close contact with the product through the consumer's personal experience, and can also enhance the audience's goodwill towards the brand, to bring them closer to each other, to achieve maximal dissemination of advertising information.

The well-known home furnishing brand IKEA once devised a subway line in Japan with the theme "Party Train" to promote the first IKEA store in Japan. The franchiser moved the party directly into the subway train, decorating the entire train with IKEA products, making sure the curtains, handrails, small tables, cushions, and other accessories inside are all from IKEA, so as to fully integrate the subway and creative advertising. What's special is that there are also promoters acting the role of shop assistants to serve passengers on the train. This way, consumers can not only experience IKEA's products first hand, but also enjoy interesting activities and exclusive food from IKEA's restaurants, so that they would arrive at the IKEA store in a good mood and have a unique shopping experience.

### 4.3 Audience insight and the important role of opinion leaders in guidance and dissemination

Opinion leaders in the New Media era mainly refer to people who are active users of major social media platforms, have a large fan base, and certain appeal, people who can personally influence major events, adored by their fans, and possess the attributes of anonymity, diversity, influence and persuasiveness, and so on. They are happy to act as a bridge between users and media messages, so that more and more advertisers will choose to work directly with these opinion leaders to promote their products.

The placement of rapid transport advertisements can usually only be set in a fixed station in fixed city. But these people are able to attract a far large number of people of different occupations and preferences from different countries and cities to a common platform. Therefore, BTL advertisements can become ATL through opinion leaders, so that more people would notice the content of the advertisements, and ideally, forming a hot topic, which would have an even greater influence to promote the brand. Therefore, audience insight, accurate positioning, and making full use of the opinion leader's ability to guide, can expand and extend rapid transit advertising through time and space without limit, and continuously increase audience recognition and participation, so as to achieve the desired advertising effect.

## 5. Conclusion

The rapid development of the New Media era has constructed a new ecosystem for advertising media. And many traditional creative advertising methods have been gradually eliminated in the wave of technological renew. For China's rapid transport advertising, a major components of outdoor advertising, change is an inevitable choice in an ever-developing society. Through integration with the creativity of New Media, and following the current trends of creative development, rapid transport advertising can achieve two-way communication with the audience, and realize advertising effect through interactive experience.

However, the core of interactive advertising is still the demand of the audience. Therefore, in changing the forms of rapid transport advertising, we should not only pursue the application of technology, which are only empty forms, but should also focus on the development of content based on the establishment of an effective interactive mechanism.

By focusing on content development, understanding and grasping the needs of the audience, and accurately assessing the degree of rapport the product and the audience, advertisements can be precisely placed to disseminate effectively, brands can gain true recognition from the audience, and achieve the series of behaviour from attention to purchase, and ultimately play out the unique advertising value of rapid transport media.

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