

Analysis on Vlog Story-telling Techniques and Advertisement

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to analyze the success of vlogs from its story-telling perspective, and to see what can be applied to the future advertising. A case study of vlog advertising is analyzed in this article, and the author finds that great content, story-telling aesthetics, and influencer choice all contribute to the success of vlog advertising. From this case study, this study makes several predictions of the future advertising trends, which includes the transformation in shooting patterns, advertising perspectives, and distribution platforms. And it will keep developing the brand's own unique aesthetic image and making use of the celebrity effect as a way of marketing strategy.

Keywords: *Vlog, advertising trends, storytelling techniques, brand marketing*

insights and practical ideas for the marketers in terms of advertising strategy.

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's internet era, people can no longer clearly distinguish advertising from other forms of media. But this is not a bad thing, because it shows a sign of the growth and transformation of the advertising industry: the ads can be entertaining and enjoyable to watch too. With the development of technology and the revolution of mass media, the way people get information and communicate has shifted from traditional text to a more modernized form of video, and short video apps like TikTok have become one of the most popular domestic consumption around the world. Therefore many companies and brands notice the prosperous development of the short video industry, and started to implant advertisements and promote their products in these short videos as their marketing strategy, which is a huge transformation from traditional advertising. Among all the new types of video advertising, vlog is the most promising form that has the potential to be the main advertising stream, and it offers many techniques that brands can apply to the future advertising. However, existing research on vlog in general focused on why vlog gets popular and issues of the relationship between the brands, influencers and the audiences, while vlog itself has more to offer other than just entertainment. In fact, marketers can learn and benefit from the success of vlog, and apply to the future advertising. So, this article will essentially focus on analyzing the storytelling techniques of vlog that make it popular, which can be applied to future advertising. And through a case study, this article will show how vlog's characteristics contribute to make it a successful advertising form, especially when compared to other forms of advertising. Vlog as a new rising form of video will definitely bring more

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Vlog, short for video blog, is a rising form of digital video that caught up people's attention in recent years. People vlog as a way to record and share their lives with others, and the contents range from daily life vlog to travel vlog to beauty vlog and so on. While there are earlier accounts, vlog was first known by people around 2004, and with the launch of YouTube, the world's biggest UGC (user-generated content) video sharing platform, vlog started to show an explosive growth in its popularity. Also the popularization of mobile phones and the advanced technology of phone cameras made vlogging easier for people and accelerated the development of the vlog industry. Till 2012, vlog became one of the most popular types of digital video in western countries, and gained attention from the people in china during 2016. According to iiMedia Research, the number of vlog users in China reached 249 million in 2019, and the market size of the vlog industry will maintain a steady growth trend in the future. Vlog is praised to be the next "window" in the short video era, and it is no longer limited as a way to keep people's life stories, but a big business. Vlog's popularity and its power to draw in audiences make it an attractive option for marketers to use it as an advertising. Not only does vlogging represent one of the most popular types of video content, but top vloggers offer unique advertising opportunities as brands continue to see influencer marketing as a way to break through the ad clutter [1].

3. ANALYSIS

3.1. Vlog' Story-telling Techniques

Vlog, different from other forms of digital video, offers a new dimension in viewing experience for the audience. When analyzing all the successful vlogs, it is easy to discover that they all share something in common in terms of the story-telling techniques:

3.1.1. Point-of-View shot

Point-of-view shot is a film angle that is commonly used in vlog shooting. It offers an unique first-person experience for the audience to experience what the vloggers see and feel. As Marshall McLuhan once said the medium is "any extension of ourselves"[2], in this case, people extend their sensory experience as the vloggers go through their journey. From the lenses of the camera, the audience can almost smell and taste the food the vlogger is eating, they can hear and know what is going on around the vlogger. The advantage point-of-view shot brings is to make the audience feel they are experiencing the vlogger's life in person. And through point-of-view shots, the audience can directly enter the visual world of the vlogger rather than being subjugated to being mere spectators.

3.1.2. Creating an immersive experience

Creating an immersive experience is always a way to make people lose track of time enjoying their experiences. Media is naturally invasive and immersive, so is the vlog. vloggers achieve that by including very detailed and minor things in the video. For example, there would be scenes like the alarm clock ringing, or the turning on the coffee maker. It is very naturally done, because the inchoate purpose of vlogging is to record everyday life. And usually the vlogs show a complete day or event since there is no time length limit, which also helps to immerse the audience into the video and helps them follow the lives of vloggers. Therefore, it creates a sense of authenticity that is really rare in today's video age, which attracts many audiences who seek this kind of genuine video.

3.1.3. Content

The internet is a voyeuristic environment, and people like to stalk others on the internet. Vlog then becomes a way to fulfill people's curiosity about others' lives and experiences. For instance, John Fish's vlog on A Day In The Life Of A Harvard Computer Science Student has gained over 11 million views and 300 thousand likes on YouTube. From the title only, it can be expected that it will attract many people's attention: people who are curious about college life, people who are interested in

applying for a computer science major in the future, or people who are wondering what kind of student the vlogger is who can study at a prestigious university. The content of vlog offers an opportunity to explore the world through vlogger's camera, but at the same time it can also serve as a way of communication and companionship among the same group of people.

3.1.4. Interaction

The interaction between the vloggers and the audiences may not be synchronous, but it is still a really effective way for building closer relationships with the audience. The forms of interaction are not only limited in chatting and answering questions from the audience, but have evolved into many interesting new modes. Nana OuYang's vlog on Instagram Followers Control My Day is a good example. Throughout the day she filmed the vlog, she would post questions on Instagram like which restaurants to eat or where to shop, and let her followers make the decisions for her depending on the votes. This kind of interaction is a great way to fulfill the audience's requests and increase user engagement. The combination of interactive vlogs and normal vlogs also fits into the audience's demands in both hot (low in participation) and cold (high in participation) media, they have the choices to decide which kind of vlogs they want to watch.

To sum up all these story-telling techniques listed above, the essence of vlog is that the vloggers sharing their lifestyles and life philosophies through these videos, and using these techniques to establish a closer relationship with the audience and immerse them into the video and let them feel they are engaging in vlogger's life, which are vital for a vlog to become popular.

3.2. Research Methodology of Vlog Advertisement

This research use case study to take a closer, in-depth, and detailed examination on a particular case, Casey Neistat's vlog on The \$21,000 First Class Airplane Seat, which has more than 73 million views and 1 million likes on YouTube. Its exploding made this vlog go viral on the internet, many famous news agencies reported and shared it. However, most people who watched the vlog did not know this is a marketing collaboration between Casey Neistat and Emirates Airlines. So this case study will focus on analyzing the content, the shots, and Casey Neistat as an influencer to show how brands use vlog as an advertising to promote their images and products and why it is successful compared to other forms of advertising.

First, people can all reach a consensus that not many people have the experience of taking the first class airplane seat before, and people are curious about and want to know what this experience is like. Especially when Casey Neistat put \$21,000 on his vlog title, many people are shocked by how expensive this first class seat cost and will

be even more excited to watch it, which achieves the first two steps of the AISAS model. The AISAS model is a model for carrying out the latest marketing communication strategies consisting of Attention, Interest, Search, Action, and Share [3]. Once it attracts the audience, they will likely to do more research and show purchase intention, for example watching other Emirates Airline videos or checking plane tickets online in this case. Although many people cannot afford the first class seat, the purpose of this vlog is to advertise and propagandize Emirate Airline and Casey definitely did an amazing job at that.

Secondly, Casey used various shots throughout the vlogs, including first-person point-of-view shots[4], third-person limited point-of-view shots [5], and selfie mode [6], that created different dimensions and viewing aesthetics for the audience. From these different kinds of shots, Casey

provides a big and complete image on how comfortable the seat is, how cool the equipment they have, and how nice the Emirates' services are for the audience. As one study shows, children recalled products and brands that were shown in vlogs, which were mostly food and beverages and considered themselves and others affected by endorsements in vlogs [7]. And people can possibly apply this finding to all ranges of people, since people now are spending a big portion of time watching these vlogs, they are unconsciously influenced by what is shown in the videos and remember the brands. With keep coming out with scenes about Emirates and Casey's detailed explanation and casual chatting interaction to the camera, Emirates leaves a strong impression in the audience's minds.



Figure 1: point-of-view shot[4]

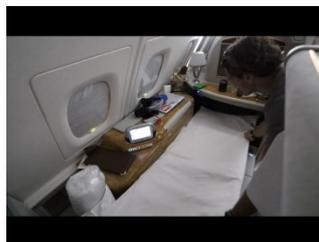


Figure 2: Third-person limited POV shot[5]



Figure 3: Selfie mode[6]

Last but not least, choosing Casey Neistat to be the vlogger of this video is a wise decision. According to one study, vloggers' physical and social attractiveness and the audience's viewing motives (entertainment motive and relationship-building motive) and behavior (time spent on the media) increased the audience's evaluations of the brands endorsed by the vloggers (perceived brand quality, brand affect and brand preference)[8]. Casey is one of the pioneers in this vlog industry and is also very experienced in directing and starring in TV commercials. He is perceived as a very humorous and sometimes professional person in front of the camera, and his charisma is really attractive to the audiences. He did over 30 plane vlogs and other kinds of travel or tech-related vlogs, which helps him accumulate a huge fan base. Just as the top comment under this video said "upgrading him was the best marketing decision Emirates has ever made".

This Emirates Airplane advertising vlog with Casey Neistat is a big success without any doubt, but imaging doing the same content advertising video on TikTok or Instagram, it might not be as successful as the vlog advertising. Because different social media platforms have different focuses, most TikTok videos are primarily focusing on showing off people's talents and skills, and it has a limit of time for each video. In a short amount of time, it is less informative and interactive compared to vlogs. Especially for those advertising that emphasize on the user's experience, vlog advertising is a better choice. Also, another advantage of vlog advertising is that it turns the audiences from passive to active, which TikTok's operating system does not support.

3.3. Prediction of Vlog Advertisement's Developing Trend

Vlog has the potential to be the main advertising stream in the future, and its story-telling techniques and characteristics can also bring insights for the marketers. Therefore, several predictions can be made for the future trends of advertising from the success of vlog.

3.3.1. Shooting pattern

The shift in shooting pattern from third party views to first-person shots will be more popular in the future. This is a significant difference from the traditional advertising, which brings a more direct virtual experience to the audience. By focusing on creating more interactions, the brands can establish a more intimate relationship with the audience to reduce their resistance to the ads.

3.3.2. Advertising perspectives

The shift in advertising perspectives from the brands to the users. When companies and brands exaggerate their products' looks and qualities in the ads, it could instead let the people be more vigilant about the products because people do not want to feel the brands are selling things to them. However, if advertisements can reveal the true and genuine feelings and experiences to the audience in a

casual way just like vlog does, it can increase the credibility and authenticity of the products.

3.3.3. Advertising platform

Traditionally, the ads are usually TV commercials or placed in news articles or magazines. But now with new emerging social media apps, there are various platforms for the brands placements such as TikTok, Instagram, or WeChat. Different platforms have different modes and time lengths that allow marketers to better target different groups of consumers, and marketers can utilize its function to think of new ways of advertising, for example, starting a challenge on TikTok. It is important to understand user behaviors and their expectations on each platform, so that the marketers can design different kinds of ads that people are interested in and turn the users from passive audiences to active audiences who enjoy watching the ads.

3.3.4. Keep establishing brand awareness

Different vlogs represent different aesthetics, the story-telling techniques, and the background music choices can all bring bright spots for a vlog. For the brands, they can have even more professional production when compared to normal vloggers. Brands can build a unique image through using certain story-telling techniques and forming its own style. At the same time, it attracts a group of audiences that have the same aesthetics that can become the loyal customers ultimately. Plant the solid brand image in the audience's mind so that they will think of the brand when they see a similar style is the key to build up brand awareness through advertising.

3.3.5. Keep taking advantage of celebrity effects

Celebrities still have a huge influence and impact on the decisions making of the consumers. Celebrity endorsement helps the spreading of the brand and product in a relatively short time since they have large fan bases, so do the influencers too. Under the condition that there will be diverse development of future advertising, the celebrities and influencers will have more ways to show their real personalities other than what they show in front of the previous camera, which is what the audience are seeking for and will increase their fan bases. Also the brands can use that as an approach to acquire traffic in today's world, and that is a win-win.

4. CONCLUSION

From the analysis on vlog's story-telling, the elements of using point-of-view shots, creating immersive experience and engaging content, and having interaction with the audience all contributed to the success of a vlog. And the

case study in this paper shows that it is applicable to turn a vlog into an advertisement, and there are earlier studies that support and explain why vlog advertising can be a really powerful form of advertising. From the potential of vlog advertising, several predictions of future advertising in general can be made based on the insights of vlogs, and the story-telling techniques and characteristics of vlogs can also be applied to other forms of advertising other than video. It is vital for marketers to trace the audience's interests, user habits, and their motives to make changes in advertising and make it entertaining and enjoyable for people.

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