

Research on Physical Bookstore Marketing Communication Under the Internet Challenge*

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Abstract—The rapid development of the Internet and e-commerce has caused that reading and consumption habits of readers have changed dramatically, and physical bookstores have been severely impacted, rising and setting in the strong tide of closing. With the continuous deepening of the “national reading”, the physical bookstore industry has shown signs of recovery. Under such a big environment, how the physical bookstore break through the difficulties through marketing communication has become the key for them to counter attack successfully.

Keywords—physical bookstore; marketing communication

I. INTRODUCTION

With the dramatic development of the Internet and E-commerce, reading and consumption habits of readers have undergone a huge change. The development of physical bookstores absorbed vicious blows and experienced ups and downs in the surging tide of closure. With the gradual popularization of the “nationwide reading”, the physical bookstore industry has shown signs of recovery. In the big environment, it has become the key for the physical bookstores to successful reverse attacks that how to break through the dilemma through marketing communication.

II. THE EXISTING STATUS QUO OF PHYSICAL BOOKSTORES UNDER THE CHALLENGE OF THE INTERNET

A. Physical Bookstores Are Under Great Pressure to Survive

As a place for selling books, physical bookstores combine characteristics of business and culture. It is not only a carrier of cultural communication, carrying a reading experience, but also a cultural landmark of a city or region, embodying cultural connotations. With the increasingly powerful and advanced Internet and e-commerce, consumers' reading and consumption habits have undergone tremendous changes. A large number of physical bookstores that are poorly managed and unable to adapt to changing market environment have closed down. On account of single marketing model, simple and crude book-selling

environment, and indifferent service attitudes of traditional physical bookstores, they simply cannot meet the demands and expectations of the new generation of consumers for physical bookstores. At the same time, under the fierce attack of competitive price of online bookstores, it may be said that physical bookstores are directly in the face of life and death.

After a few years of closure, the physical bookstore began its search for breakthroughs and self-help. Some physical bookstores open up new development patterns, such as adding new business projects, optimizing services in physical bookstores, and diversifying the use of new media and traditional media platforms for marketing communications. In the past two years, various local governments have also begun to intensively introduce support policies for physical bookstores, covering the aspects of land, taxes, and bank discounts and so on. However, due to the high operating costs of physical bookstores, its pressure for survival is still enormous. Despite there are signs of recovery, the road to recovery is still difficult.

B. Market Environment Is Not Very Good

From a macro perspective, the market dilemmas faced by physical bookstores are in a world-wide similarity and they have become a global phenomenon. The rapid development of the Internet and e-commerce has caused physical bookstores all over the world to suffer from “winter”. The brand-new retail model and consumption model they provide has accelerated the reading rhythm of consumers, and has also drastically reduced consumers' interest in reading printing books. The macro market environment of physical bookstores has suffered tremendously from changes in reading technology and reading conditions. From the perspective of the micro market environment of physical bookstores, rising rents, high manpower costs, shortage of funds, and other factors have all become obstacles to the development of physical bookstores. It has become the normal environment for purchases in physical bookstores that people just look around and buy the books they see at a cheaper price from online bookstores. Even in the current situation where physical bookstores are actively seeking transformation, the phenomenon that the visitors flow rate is greater than the purchase rate is still widespread.

*This paper is the research achievement of the “New Media Pr Communication” -- the Discipline Construction Project of Public Relations in Shanghai Polytechnic University (subject number: XXXPY 1610).

C. Competitors Are Strong

Online bookstores, online reading and electronic book products are the major competitors of physical bookstores. Online bookstores can take advantage of discounted prices because there is no pressure on the rental and manpower costs. Whether it is Dangdang.com well-known for "the business of selling books is good", or domestic mainstream e-commerce platforms such as Tmall and Jingdong, the scale and speed of book sales are very noticeable. The convenience of smart phone mobile terminals and the full coverage of the Internet have made "fragmented" reading the main form of reading. Direct online reading on websites has also become the preferred reading method for many consumers. The convenience, richness, and low cost of online reading make the original business value of physical bookstores insignificant. In addition to the current market environment where knowledge is paid, consumers prefer to purchase more intuitive content at a lower price directly. Even if it's needed to seek a systematic and integrated knowledge, people don't need to go to a physical bookstore to buy books because they can be replaced by E-book products easily. Seeing from the perspective of e-book product development trends, the e-book products in the future will have larger capacity, and its features such as easy portability, rich content, and being environmentally friendly meet all the rigid demands of paper books and make the existence of paper books and physical bookstores become negligible.

III. ANALYSIS OF MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS IN PHYSICAL BOOKSTORES

The dilemma faced by physical bookstores is obvious to all, but the idea of exploring the development of physical bookstores has been stuck on the marketing thought on how to make a profit. As mentioned above, physical bookstores are not only the commercial organizations that sell books, but communication institutions of cultural carrier. Compared with other commodities, the cultural properties of books are more prominent, and the cultural echoes of physical bookstores are also stronger. Therefore, if the transformation idea of the physical bookstore can jump out of the pure limited marketing thinking, expand into the thinking space of marketing communication, it will provide another path choice for the physical bookstore transformation.

A. Analysis on Marketing Communication Audience

1) *Young artists*: Young artists are the main consumers of physical bookstores. Most young artists love literature and pay attention to the reading experience of paper books and physical bookstores. Therefore, for them, the number of visits to physical bookstores is many times greater than that of the average consumers. The books read by young artists contain the books of literature, history, and philosophies more, while online bookstores stock based on the sales volume of books. The general categories of books mainly are best-selling books. There are relatively few books on literature, history, philosophy, and serious literature. Therefore, physical bookstores can form a relatively strong

attraction for the young artists, and also make them the prior target audiences for marketing communications.

2) *Group of students*: Most students are keen to purchase related learning and training books in physical bookstores. Most primary, middle and high school students buy extracurricular tutoring books, and college students pay attention to relevant training books such as College English Test (CET), civil service exams, various qualification exams, and postgraduate exams. Due to abundant learning and training books in variety and of variable quality, it's more secured and reliable purchasing after field visits and comparison. In addition to the purchase of books, students also like to buy jigsaws, hand books, bookmarks and other stationery supplies in the stationery area of physical bookstores. Therefore, students are spreading audience with sustainable communication value and they cannot be ignored in marketing communication of physical bookstore.

3) *Middle-aged and old people*: Most middle-aged and elderly people are not very familiar with the use of the Internet. Shopping and reading on online are also not dominate in the life of middle-aged and elderly people. Many middle-aged and old people are still keen to read newspapers and read newspapers. Their reading methods and habits also follow traditional methods. Therefore, buying books at physical bookstores is still the main channel for middle-aged and older people. Besides, the middle-aged and elderly people like to spend their time in reading newspapers and getting rid of loneliness at physical bookstores in their spare time. Although the middle-aged and old-aged groups are not the main consumer groups of the physical bookstores, they are relatively stable as actual audience of marketing communication.

B. Methods Analysis on Marketing Communication

1) *Cultural marketing communication*: Cultural marketing communication is a kind of communication activity of marketing products and services based on culture as a selling point or means. It is essentially the interactive effect of "culture set up the stage for economy showing". Culture is an effective weapon for the implementation of marketing communication, and products and services have therefore become an effective carrier of cultural communication. The cultural property of physical bookstores themselves is obvious, and the products also have distinct cultural attributes together with the integration of the cultural elements such as material culture, behavior culture, and spiritual culture created by the physical bookstores themselves. With the features above, physical bookstores can be integrated into an all-dimensional, three-dimensional cultural field. For example: Mao Mi Cafe is a nationwide chain bookstores with branches in each city in China. Chain stores of Mao Mi Cafe in Shanghai are more fashionable, being consistent with the city tone of fashion and young. Suzhou has more than 4,000 years of history since the recorded history. It is one of the first 24 historical and cultural cities in China, so it is located on the quaint Pingjiang Road in Suzhou. Mao Mi Cafe is also accompanied by the environmental tone of Suzhou, being simple quiet, unassuming but elevated. Its space is filled

with books, postcards, ceramic cups, and other "miscellaneous" items, making people feel warm and comfortable. The store is also decorated with antique calligraphy and paintings. On the second floor, there are also musical instruments such as Chinese lute and GuZhen in the ancient Chinese reading area. Readers can feel strong humanistic care as soon as they enter.

Physical bookstores are filled with features of culture and humanistic geography. The artistic experience and sensory atmosphere it brings to readers are not available in an imaginary online bookstore. They are also what online reading and e-book browsers cannot do.

2) *Event Marketing Communication*: Event marketing communication is that an organization attracts public attention by organizing a series of communication activities and media or interpersonal communication so as to raise the profile of the organization and attract more attention. In the network era, an event or an activity can be widespread more easily. But in the offline world, it is necessary to form activities through events or topics and deepen the penetration of communication through a series of activities. For example, when a coloring book for adults "The Secret Garden" swept the world, a large number of consumers went to buy a drawing book and published their creative works on their own Weibo homepage and WeChat Moments. The picture book also introduced a series of extended versions correspondingly. They have always been the hot search of microblog continuously. At that time, the Xinhua branch of Xinhua Bookstore in Ningbo saw the business opportunity, planned and hosted the coloring fun contest based on "Secret Garden" and other series. The activity was organized in "female books" of Ningbo book mall and attracted a large number of readers. The readers participating in the event were of different ages. The youngest reader was only 14 years old and the oldest was 42 years old. The participating readers only need to buy a coloring book in the physical bookstore. They select the coloring book they want to paint for creation, and complete it within the stipulated time. Voting by the readers on the site, and then voted by the public on-site, the final top three were selected and they could obtain 50% discount coupon of some books. Finally, the award winning works will be posted on the walls of the physical bookstore. The activity was a very successful event marketing. In the current month, the numbers of customers in the bookstore increased significantly. The sales volume of the "Secret Garden" and similar series of coloring books soared. In addition, media coverage also made the physical bookstores receive more attention and the number of customers increased greatly.

3) *The spread of celebrity effects*: The spread of celebrity effects refers to the celebrities help companies or brands expand their products or their visibility and influence through their own influence, thereby attracting more consumers' attention and the desires to purchase. This is one of the fastest and most effective ways of marketing communication. In our lives, the star effects are very common and various. So now when many businesses open new stores or launch new products, they will choose to seek

celebrities to come to the platform or invite celebrities to endorse and recommend their products.

Sephora store of Sisyphe Park Books understand this well, so they invited Kevin Tsai, who had appeared for the first time as a director, to the physical bookstore, met with the public in Sisyphe Park Books to introduce the new film and share his own opinions and feelings of movies and books. It was the time when Cai Kangyong's program was going off the air and film promotion, having a strong heat of topic and audience basis. In the store, Kevin Tsai said that he graduated from the directing department, so he loved movies very much and also was a best-selling book writer. The connection between literature and film is endless. The film expresses the content and core idea of the book in the form of films and plays. There are many successful literary adaptations of films, allowing people to feel the charm of books more intuitively. At this event, Kevin Tsai recommended some of his favorite books and signed book for the fans who bought his books in the store. At the end of the event, Kevin Tsai also called for people participating in the activity to read more. The bookstore sales were increased by 20% on that day. At the same time, the media reported a great deal because of the star status of Kevin Tsai, and later it attracted many readers to purchase the books recommended by Cai Kangyong at the event.

C. *Analysis on Marketing Communication Channel*

Traditional offline stores have carried out marketing and publicity through offline forms before such as newspapers, leaflets, magazines, and so on. With the advent of the Internet era, in addition to offline advertising, some online marketing methods are also being widely used to promote the publicity and marketing of bookstores.

1) *Traditional media communication*

a) *Periodicals and newspapers*: Newspapers and periodicals are spreading through interspersing promotional content in the form of words into the corresponding types of newspapers and magazines. China has a large population and there are still a large number of people reading newspapers and magazines. Therefore, there are still many newspapers and magazines readers. When placing advertisements, it is needed to choose different types of magazines, periodicals, and newspapers according to different consumers' demands for consumption. The buyers of the newspapers themselves are consumers of paper readings. For example, although the appearance of mobile phones has caused the reading volume of the newspapers to drop sharply, it makes no difference on some elderly people who are not good at using mobile phones. Therefore, the success rate of marketing communications on paper readings to physical bookstores is even greater. However, the disadvantage is that due to the advent of the Internet era and new media, the newspapers and journals market has shrunk dramatically, so there's not a lot of audience.

b) *Shopping Mall Billboard*: In recent years, consumption levels of the public have increased gradually, more and more shopping malls have been established, and people are willing to go to the mall to spend time in their

own time and pick their favorite goods. Many clever owners of physical bookstores found this, and more and more physical bookstores have chosen to settle in large shopping malls. For example: Yan You Ji bookstores, Sisyphus Park Books and so on. Therefore, the communication marketing effect of establishing advertising billboards in shopping malls is still very significant. Advertising in this way allows consumers to pay attention to the content of the advertisement without realizing it. When they walk to the door of the bookstore, they will be implied by previous advertisements, and the probability of entering the bookstore and buying will also increase greatly. As a result, the physical bookstore reached its goal of publicity and attracted the attention of consumers successfully. For example, Sisyphus Park Books in Shanghai Joy City has put up the trademarks and advertising information of the bookstore in Joy City during its opening period.

c) *Leaflets*: It is a common form that physical bookstores conduct marketing communication through clerks distributing leaflets. The face-to-face direct publicity is more easily accepted by consumers, and the publicity effect is even more obvious and direct. It is feasible to attract some consumers around by distributing leaflets as a main propaganda when certain activities are carried out in bookstores.

Handing out leaflets is more flexible. People can face up directly with the audience and feel the opinions of the audience on the physical bookstore. Explaining in detail what kind of activities bookstores will launch in the coming time, or what books and peripheral products will be available in the bookstore. Various information about the bookstore will be handed to consumers through leaflets. Moreover, because of the face-to-face communication, the acceptance rate of information will increase relatively.

2) *New media communication*

a) *The website "douban.com"*: Douban is a community site. The main feature of Douban is literature and art, including many contents such as movies, reading, music, FM, drama and so on. In addition, Douban also set up a number of sub-linked sites, for example: Douban group, Douban activities in the same city. The former who like literature and art can form related interest groups such as: Tolstoy Book Club, Bukowski Poetry Club and so forth, while the latter will publish some local activities such as book fairs, book clubs, arts exhibitions, exhibition of paintings, etc. It has a large number of loyal users who love literature and art. Most users of Douban are literary youth who love to read or related cultural activities. A large number of readers who love books are gathered by Douban and they get the information they need through it. Physical bookstores can publish some of their activity information through city-wide Douban, such as bookstore discounts, bookstore exhibition activities, reading clubs, signing sessions and so on to attract more consumers to physical bookstores. Advertising their own physical bookstores through the Douban reading group attract more young artists who love books to consume in the stores. And this kind of communication goes both ways. Users of Douban can publish their feelings for the physical bookstore through

Douban Friends, and in this way, establish a good reputation for the physical bookstore in his online social circle.

b) *Official WeChat official account, Sina Weibo*: Almost all merchants now conduct marketing through WeChat and Weibo, and they are the most commonly used media platforms. They can advertise the latest activities of the physical stores through the article pushing of public Wechat. And now many bookstores will make some lucky draws on their official Weibo and WeChat to increase the number of retweets and comments to increase the popularity of their bookstores. Not to mention that Shanghai Zhongshuge has placed its focus of publicity on the public Wechat and Sina weibo of the bookstore since 2015. At present, the number of subscription volume and followers has reached a million. Moreover, it has cooperated with some bloggers good at recommendation based on Weibo and WeChat to often send some propaganda content for Shanghai Zhongshuge, such as the ten most beautiful bookstores in Shanghai that must go, the place that young artists must go and so on. When new books are published, Zhongshuge will also carry out some voting or lottery activities to attract more users to re-post and give likes so as to attract the attention of more potential consumers. The activities have brought more attention to Shanghai Zhongshuge and enhanced the popularity of the bookstore.

c) *Subway Advertising*: Subway advertising refers to placing video advertisements, putting up posters, or dynamic advertisements presented on LED digital screens in the carriages of subway trains and subway stations. There are a lot of advantages of advertising in the subway. For example, there are many people in the subway every day and a large number of people come and go so subway advertisements are more likely to be noticed than advertisements placed in other places. Advertising effects are the best especially placing advertisements on subways with large flow of people. Among them, subway advertising is also divided into subway LED digital media, available to playing dynamic screen and broadcasting advertising content only; car TV belongs to accompanying media. Because people are in a relatively small space in the subway, and they will pay more attention to the advertisements, so the advertisement effect is more obvious. Aiming at target consumers, physical bookstores can play video ads in the subway during commuting and school hours to attract target consumers.

D. *Effect Analysis of Marketing Communication*

With the strong support of the state, physical bookstores, through their own reflections and comparisons with competitors, have changed the traditional marketing communication model through learning and drawing lessons, and conducted the promotion and marketing of physical bookstores by combining some online media platforms with offline marketing methods, which accelerated their recovery. In 2017, the sampling survey on residents from 7 to 70-year-old in Beijing was conducted by "Beijing Reading Quarter", and it can be found from the data: 64.77% of residents had purchased books in physical bookstores in 2017, which was an increase of 2.91% compared with 2016. At the same time,

many comprehensive cultural malls are also emerging in endlessly. According to statistics, there are about 80 new bookstores opened in 2017 in China, and they are scattered all over the city, providing "habitat" for more readers who love reading printed books.

1) *Inspiring the enthusiasm of consumers to enter physical bookstores:* In the recent few years, China has attached more importance to "culture soft power" and "nationwide reading" is even more important. President Xi Jinping loves to read all kinds of books. He once said that "reading has become a way of life for me." "Reading keep people mentally active, help people be inspired by wisdom, and nourish people by the spirit of fearlessness." On the eve of 2014 World Reading Day, Premier Li Keqiang gave a letter to Beijing Sanlian Taofen Bookstore and praised him for not closing in 24 hours. He thought that "The Late Night Study" was a very good innovation and that "nationwide reading" was a kind of behavior worth promoting, he also believed that reading was not only improving one's own cultural quality but the cultural connotation of the whole nation, and it would continue to affect the civilization of the whole country and improve the country's cultural heritage. In modern society, people are living and working faster and faster, and they should learn to settle and calm down.

Therefore, in response to the country's call, the number of advertisements for physical bookstores has also increased significantly. However, physical bookstores should first cater to the characteristics of the times, and then select what kind of advertisement forms will be accepted more easily by current readers and consumers. Current advertising can no longer just call on customers to buy products promoted by advertisements. Straightforward advertising will give customers a feeling that you are forcing them to spend. Now more popular advertising content pays more attention to spiritual and cultural connotations. Consumers' demands for advertisements are constantly increasing, and advertisements should also be more euphemistic about their own content. This kind of soft advertisement is accepted by readers easier. In this regard, Sisyph Park Books do a very successful job. In the advertisements taken in the Sisyph Park Books, the advertisement was not a blunt call for consumers to make purchases, but a transition from product and consumer-oriented to the humanistic spirit without publicity about the environment and decoration of the Sisyph Park Books, the comprehensive range of books, or just getting readers to come and buy books. On the contrary, Sisyph Park Books changed a more euphemistic way to tell people that they buying books is a kind of sticking to values and ideals. Sisyph Park Books adhere to their consistent connotation of enterprise culture, respect and put themselves in the readers' shoes to bring readers with quality services and adhere to humanistic spirit.

2) *Increased attention on Double micro platform:* Most of the WeChat Official accounts and official Weibo of physical bookstores have chosen to focus on publicity oriented to book information and latest activities in stores during their marketing communications. When the official Weibo and WeChat official accounts push information about books and in-store activities, their main purpose is to

attract as many consumers and potential consumers as possible, so that the information spread more widely.

However, Yan You Ji bookstore did not select high-cost television advertisements or paper advertisements such as newspapers and magazines when it chose methods of marketing communications. Besides, it also used online advertisements of lower prices. The bookstore marketed its books through WeChat official accounts and official Weibo and published some activities on them to attract more people to take part in. This type of marketing communication is more suitable for the age of the Internet. More and more people tend to acquire information by watching mobile phones and computers instead of television. The popularity of the network has led to a gradual decline in the television viewing rate. Publicity through the WeChat official account and official Weibo will not only save expenses, but achieve the effect of publicity. Moreover, TV advertising is just unilaterally sending messages to the audience, while the dual micro-platforms can know what consumers really think through some interactive methods such as questionnaire surveys, private message feedback and so on.

In order to make dual micro-platforms get more attention from consumers, Yan You Ji Bookstore also carries out some innovative and attractive activities on the micro-platform to attract potential customers, such as activities of winning book discount coupons by MIND QUIZ and getting free books by raffle. Using activities such as discounts and raffle can attract potential consumers to pay attention to the bookstore public accounts and Weibo. Through this type of active marketing, the number of followers can be increased in a short time, thereby attracting more consumers and potential consumers to visit the store and increase passenger volume.

3) *Sales volume of books are increased in physical bookstores:* If the effect of marketing communication is good, the bookstore traffic will definitely increase, and the turnover of physical bookstores will naturally increase. Nowadays, the development momentum of the Internet is getting stronger and stronger, and more physical bookstores change their own marketing communication direction from the offline media to the online correspondingly. Most successful stories have also proved that the transformation of physical bookstore has been in the right direction and their sales have increased significantly.

For example, the Chinese translation of Haruki Murakami's new book has been completed, and Sisyph Park Books have seized the opportunity to begin marketing communications before other online bookstores and physical bookstores. Before the pre-sale was started, Sisyph Park Books began to push information on Murakami Haruki's new book on the dual micro-platform, and reviews about other works of Haruki Murakami were published. At the time of the pre-sale, Sisyph Park Books conducted a lucky draw on their Sina Weibo, and expanded the popularity of the physical bookstore brand through the discussion and retweets of users. In a tweet on the WeChat official account, Sisyph Park Books selected one of the readers who received the most "likes" and offer him a new book for free. In the tweet, it was

stated that during the pre-sale period, if customers made reservations, when they took books from physical bookstores, he could obtain a complete book of Murakami's new book, and a collector's edition of "Norwegian Wood." The marketing approach has successfully attracted a large number of readers, and it has enabled readers to focus on the Sisyphus Park Books. It has enabled a large number of consumers to come to bookstores to purchase, increase the passenger flow, and improve overall sales of the bookstore.

IV. SUGGESTIONS ON THE FUTURE MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS OF PHYSICAL BOOKSTORES

Although the physical bookstore market has finally begun to pick up due to changes made by physical bookstores, the recovery of physical bookstores in different cities varies. For example, in nearly two years, Hangzhou has added 40 physical bookstores with licenses to sell publications. In 2016, the total number of physical bookstores in Chengdu reached 770, and the sales volume of publications has reached 582 million yuan. Chengdu has become one of the areas where physical bookstores developed well in China. However, the Internet has not stopped the crackdown on the physical bookstore industry and the situation has intensified. Therefore, there is still a long way for physical bookstores to go in the future. They must advance with the times constantly, optimize services constantly, and make innovations in order to get a firm foothold in the market.

A. *Differing Books Based on the Interests of Different Target Consumers*

Luo Wenxin wrote in the article "Transforming to the Book Service—Building A New Pattern of Physical Bookstores"¹: In order to comply with the development of the times, we must change the business model of physical bookstores, start with subdividing the customer needs, and implement differential management of e-commerce to create new physical bookstores. Physical bookstores should innovate marketing methods based on the concept of "private customization", customize special services to customers according to their needs, and provide more targeted services to customers, for examples: accepting feedback and complaints from consumers through the backstage of the WeChat Official account of the physical bookstore, checking out the private letter feedback sent by consumers to get some of the consumer's valuable suggestions, and striving to optimize in order to eliminate consumer dissatisfaction. Consequently, they can promote themselves to satisfy the customers. They also can publish questionnaires on the WeChat platform to make two-way interaction instead of unilaterally disseminating bookstore information to the public. It's more effective to conduct marketing communication on the books suitable for most consumers by voting on the WeChat and Weibo platforms.

Si Fang Zhai Bookstore in Fuzhou is a successful example. Originally, the shop only sold humanities ancient

books, but the sales effect were poor and even cannot make ends meet, being hard to survive. Then Wu Boxiong, the owner of the bookstore, investigated the types of potential consumers around the market and conducted a market survey later. He found that the best type of books sold now is the children's book. So he bought a number of children's books by a low price. Because the books are second-hand, he sold them at a discount. As a result, the sell was well-reviewed and the books were sold out in a short period. So he opened a children's book column in 2013, and now in the bookstore, the sales of children's books occupy most of the bookstore's turnover. "As long as the bookstore is famous, it is not the bookstore that is looking for readers, but the readers coming to the bookstore." Wu Boxiong said. He also believed that it was necessary to understand the psychology of consumers constantly and make changes according to the market in order to maintain the sales volume of bookstores. Wu Boxiong thought that as long as physical bookstores kept changing with the development of the times, and did not lag behind it, they will still stand instead of being overwhelmed by the waves of the times.

B. *Traditional Bookstores Transform into Cultural Malls to Improve Consumer Experience*

Without change, it will only stagnate, or even be overwhelmed by the waves of the times. More and more physical bookstores are constantly changing with the environment in the aspects of services, marketing, and communications. The trend in recent years is that traditional physical bookstores transform into cultural malls. The state also strongly supports the transformation. One is the social contact of literature and art. Lectures on literature and art and small art exhibitions can be conducted in physical bookstores, and book clubs can be held to invite readers to attend. Some literary and artistic activities, such as small theater performances about movie adaptation based on books, book signing sales and so on, also can be organized. The second is parent-child social contact. Many young parents will choose to take their children out on weekends. If there are some activities related to parent-child interactive reading and games in the physical bookstore, many consumers will definitely be attracted. Previously there was a parent-child recitation contest in Momi Cafe that attracted a large number of parents and children to attend; Shanghai Book City has also conducted a parent-child painting contest, which provided an interesting experience for the coming readers, and meanwhile increased the traffic in the bookstore because of the activity. The third is learning socialization. Some salon activities can be organized in physical bookstores to bring consumers with common learning needs together to form a cultural space for learning and communication. For example, opening a language salon for minority language learners with common interests, for there are fewer minority language learners, and it is impossible to be in a minority language environment in peacetime. A language salon can bring these minority language lovers together, and offer them a space to communicate and learn from each other. A physical bookstore should not be just a place for selling books. It should become a space for arts and culture exchanges so that everyone can communicate with each

¹ Luo Wenxin, Transition to book service to Create a New Type of Physical Bookstore —"A Vast View on Publishing" - 2013

other and light up the flame of thinking to provide a study place for more literary and artistic consumers.

C. Providing Digital Information Services Combined with the Internet

In the network era, people or institutions who do not keep pace with the times can only be eliminated. Some physical bookstores are also beginning to make changes, not just conduct marketing communications in the traditional media. Not only focusing on selling and publicity offline, they are transforming into promoting and marketing integrated with some emerging new media platforms online, for example: WeChat, Weibo, Douban reading, etc. publish information and interact with readers to help readers obtain information more conveniently and give valuable suggestions on bookstore services and other aspects through online messages, so that the bookstore can change constantly to satisfy the readers.

For example, at Yan You Ji Bookstore, readers can follow the WeChat official number of the physical bookstore through scanning the QR code in the store. Members who join the bookstore can enjoy the discount of rebating 100 yuan when purchasing 599 yuan books, and the new member can enjoy a cup of free coffee for any consumption in any coffee bars of the bookstore. Readers can also know some of the recent best-selling books, discounted books, and exhibitions in advance by reading the articles posted in WeChat. And in the quick service of its WeChat official account, it is possible that book numbers can be found just by inputting the book titles, which make it easier for customers to find the books they want. Stores online and offline cooperated with each other can changing and improving the convenience of customers' purchases.

For example: the Guangzhou Book-selling Center has announced the activities of calligraphy competition through WeChat official account and winners can obtain corresponding awards. Besides, by posting all the contestants' calligraphy works to the WeChat official account, launching a voting activity and retweeting them to the circle of friends, voters who get the most likes can also receive rewards. The event gained a lot of attention. It not only spread the popularity of the Guangzhou Book Center successfully, but increased the passenger traffic volume of the center by 20% on the day of the calligraphy competition.

D. More Use of New Media Platforms for Propagation Enhanced Publicity Effects

1) *Live-broadcasting platform:* In recent years, as a new emerging media platform, network broadcast has emerged and suddenly attracted people's attention. At the very beginning, there were only one or two, very few, network broadcast platform. However, in less than two years, the number increased suddenly. According to the data in the report, we can see that the online platform is developing rapidly. In the Research report on China's online live broadcasting market in the first half of 2016, it was written that the growth rate of users on Network broadcast platforms has risen violently, and this growth momentum is

going to last. According to statistics and predictions of relevant data, it is estimated that the registered users of the network platform will reach 460 million by 2018. These data and reports directly show the popularity of the network broadcast platform. The live broadcast is a product of the contemporary public demand. Physical bookstores should grasp this opportunity.

The network broadcast platform is quite popular, and physical bookstores can use this emerging new media platform to conduct marketing communications. The interaction and integration with the official WeChat and Weibo through the new communication forms of live broadcast platform connect the readers with North Book City closer. Through the instant interaction of the live broadcast, the viewers are easier to identify with the information they received and the aim of attracting more customers to come to the physical bookstore can be achieved. On the first day of the opening of the Northern Book City, the store carried out broadcasts on the live broadcast platform. It made the audience in front of the mobile phone and computers directly see the performance activities and discounts in the physical bookstore on the first business day. The form is more direct than the purely word-based communication, and it can also attract more potential consumers come to the store. Through the live broadcast, more than 8,000 consumers were attracted to shop and browse in Northern Book City on the opening day. This figure directly proved that the marketing communication effect of live broadcast platform was much better than that of the traditional media spreading by words.

2) *We-Media channel:* Since the advent of the Internet age, the propagation effect of We-media has become better and better. Jiangsu popular bookstore has launched a column of "Public Recommendation Books" in its own self-media channel. Each issue will recommend and explain some books for viewers through video as well as introduce the contents of some books to increase viewers' interest in the books. According to the relevant persons in charge of the physical bookstore, after the books were recommended for reading on the we-media channel of Jiangsu Popular Books, they received a lot of attention from the audience, and the video page view were more than 20,000. The book sales volume of the physical bookstore and its online store were increased by 20%, and passenger flow volume of the bookstore increased by 17% after the broadcast.

Another successful example is the "Ear Study" owned by the Xinhua Bookstore in Zhengzhou. The responsible person of the store stated that the store had its WeChat official account and has also cooperated with many familiar reading and listening software, such as lazy reading, Tencent news and so on. In addition to pushing information about discounted bookstores, new books and etc. on the WeChat official platform, the store also entered the reading platforms of the new media to carry out marketing communications through wonderful video and text content to attract more viewers, so as to raise the profile of the bookstore and increase the traffic volume of the physical bookstore.

3) *Diverse use of WeChat function:* Basically, all physical bookstores now have their WeChat official account,

but the vast majority of physical bookstores use the WeChat official account as a kind of marketing account for the followers to publish information of the bookstore. However, the functions of WeChat have not yet been discovered fully, and the propaganda-oriented WeChat official account is often used as a convenient information publishing tool. However, the situation is only outputting to followers unilaterally without receiving feedback or opinions. Followers are just having a look at a lot of information and the bookstores are completely unable to understand the suggestions and opinions of the followers after they receiving the information. The operators of the official accounts can interact with the followers in two ways and push some questionnaire surveys to understand the readers' ideas so that they can better understand the needs of the consumers and thus "cure the disease" according to their needs, or interact more with readers in the comments section to improve the relationship with readers.

Physical bookstores can also add the function of "membership application" to the official account; adopting points-based system that members accumulate points by buying books, and the points can be used as cashes to buy books, so as to win more regular customers as well as loyal customers.

The physical bookstore can also use WeChat's small programs to develop some intellectual quiz games related to books or culture, promote the small games through the pushing function of the WeChat official account, and adopt the incentive system of discount on books to attract customers to buy books in the bookstore.

V. CONCLUSION

Although physical bookstores have shown signs of recovery after experiencing struggles and breakthrough in "severe winter" years, the future of physical bookstores is still indistinct and difficult facing the challenges of living reality. If physical bookstores do not undergo a transformation in thinking, but only remain in the commercialization idea of marketing communication, physical bookstores will still be unable to escape the destiny completely replaced with the changes of the times and technological innovations. Therefore, for the survival and development of physical bookstores, we must strengthen and deepen their cultural attributes and marketing communication concepts, make physical bookstores develop in the direction of a kind of cultural space, disseminate as a kind of cultural information, to make breakthrough in the physical bookstore marketing in the thought of cultural communication and discover a marketing communication road that suits themselves.

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