

Adaptability and Transformation Strategies for Cross-Genre Hosting in Television Programs

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ABSTRACT

In the era of media convergence, exploring the adaptability and transformation strategies of hosts across different program types has important practical value. Through theoretical analysis, this paper constructs a theoretical foundation of dynamic role positioning, convergence needs, and diverse competencies. Taking Sa Beining as an example, it analyzes his transformation from legal programs to cultural and variety programs, revealing the logic behind the adaptation of his hosting style. Propose a strategic framework encompassing the integration of multidisciplinary knowledge, the fusion of host characteristics with program content, platform collaboration, and feedback optimization. Summarize the insights gained from the transformation process regarding extending career lifespans, enhancing brand value, and clarifying the direction in the era of integration. Research indicates that cross-genre hosting is an inevitable response to media transformation, with success dependent on the systematic synergy of capabilities, style, resources, and feedback.

KEYWORDS

Cross-program hosting; Adaptability; Transformation strategy; Media convergence; Host branding

1 Introduction

Driven by the dual forces of media technology iteration and the restructuring of the communication ecosystem, television programming formats have become increasingly diverse. The traditional single-genre hosting model is no longer sufficient to meet industry demands, making cross-genre hosting a crucial pathway for presenters to break through career bottlenecks and enhance core competitiveness. This paper, grounded in the context of omni-media communication, first analyzes the underlying drivers behind the rise of cross-genre hosting in television programs. It then uses representative case studies to illustrate practical insights for extending career lifecycles and building brand value. Finally, it constructs a systematic transformation strategy encompassing capability enhancement, style development, resource integration, and audience feedback. This framework provides theoretical support and practical guidance for the career development of hosts and talent.

2 Reasons for the emergence of cross-genre television program hosting

The rise of cross-genre hosting in television programs is not accidental, but rather an inevitable result driven by the transformation of the television media ecosystem, the evolution of program formats, and the demands of professional roles.

2.1 Dynamism: the role of the host

The dynamic nature of the host's role is a core attribute, determined by the continuous iteration of the media ecosystem and the essence of communication activities. In the chain of information dissemination, the host serves as a key bridge connecting content and audience, and must keep pace with technological innovation and continuously adapt to diverse communication scenarios. The current multimedia communication landscape has taken shape, placing more complex demands on broadcasters and presenters. They must be able to handle the relaxed atmosphere of arts and entertainment programs while accurately conveying the core information of news events. They must demonstrate their ability to think on their feet during live broadcasts while contributing creative ideas behind the scenes. They must also use their unique perspectives to become opinion leaders who guide public opinion on emerging platforms such as client applications and social media.

In the era of traditional media, the authority of news anchors and the affability of entertainment hosts were typical examples of role and scene matching. However, the essence of communication is the "dynamic negotiation of meaning." With the increasing refinement of audience segmentation and the growing demand for scenario-based consumption, the boundaries of the host's role are being constantly broken down. This ability to adapt dynamically is the foundation of a career in broadcasting. Social issues change rapidly, and public opinion shifts quickly, requiring hosts to switch flexibly between being rigorous and friendly, and between deep reflection and immediate response. They must be deeply immersed in the specific context of different programs, while maintaining the trust of their audience through the consistency of their core characteristics. Take Isaac Beining as an example. In Today's Law, he demonstrates the rigor and

authority of a legal professional, while in *Celebrity Detective*, he reveals a humorous and lively side. However, the core trait of “clear logic” remains consistent throughout, which precisely demonstrates that the unity of role dynamism and trait stability is the key to a host's success across different genres. Once this adaptability is lost, the connection between content and audience breaks down, and the host's role as a bridge becomes ineffective.

2.2 Necessity: the need for media convergence transformation

Media convergence technology is profoundly reshaping the communication ecosystem, making it an irreversible trend for hosts to take on cross-type hosting roles. The core driving force behind this transformation lies in the pursuit of intensive content production and maximized communication efficiency. In today's media environment, hosts who are only capable of presenting a single type of program are no longer able to meet the demands of multi-platform content distribution. Traditional, single-type training models are also gradually becoming a bottleneck that hinders the development of the industry. As a result, cross-type hosting capabilities have become a key indicator of a host's core competitiveness.

Technological empowerment has fundamentally broken down the inherent boundaries between different programs. Algorithm-based recommendation mechanisms have broken down barriers to content distribution, allowing the same user to receive serious news and light entertainment content simultaneously within a short period of time. The application of interactive technology has transformed live news broadcasts from a one-way information output into a real-time interactive experience, bringing the audience closer to the action. At the same time, entertainment programs have also begun to use data visualization and other technical means to present professional knowledge in a more vivid way. The integration of communication channels has further accelerated the blurring of boundaries between program types. Satellite TV stations' flagship programs are being adapted into condensed versions suitable for short video platforms, while in-depth reports are being broken down into bite-sized pieces of interesting information for fragmented dissemination. Social media has become an important arena for the secondary creation of content, with serious news material often being interpreted and disseminated in an entertaining manner. This comprehensive cross-border integration places new and higher demands on hosts, who must possess both the rigor required for news broadcasting and the ability to control the atmosphere required for entertainment programs. Otherwise, they will become obstacles to media integration and will find it difficult to establish themselves in the new communication ecosystem. (Li, 2019)

2.3 Type characteristics: internal drivers of differentiation in television programs

The core functions and presentation logic of different types of television programs vary significantly, driving the cultivation of hosts' cross-type capabilities: news and information programs (such as “News Broadcast” and “Focus Interview”) focus on conveying authoritative information and require hosts to be politically sensitive, logically rigorous, concise and precise in their language, and adept at efficiently delivering content within a limited time frame. Cultural variety shows (such as “The Reader” and “Poetry Competition”) focus on emotional resonance and value transmission. They require hosts to have both humanistic literacy and the ability to control the atmosphere, and to be able to connect the audience with cultural symbols through narrative expression. Competitive entertainment programs (such as “Star Avenue” and “Extreme Challenge”) focus on interactive experiences and entertainment effects. Hosts are required to have the ability to respond quickly to situations, control the pace of the program, be skilled at stirring up the atmosphere, and balance the performances of the guests. Interview and dialogue programs (such as Yang Lan Interview and Let's Talk) focus on in-depth exploration and intellectual exchange. Hosts are required to have empathy and the ability to guide the conversation, and to be able to capture key information in open exchanges.

Sa Beining's career transition is a typical example of this difference in adaptation: in the legal program *Today's Interpretation*, he needs to demonstrate his solid legal knowledge and use precise language to interpret cases (in line with the “rigorous communication” requirements of news programs). In the cultural program “Let's Talk,” he used open-ended questions to guide guests into deep conversations (in line with the “in-depth exploration” function of interview programs). In the variety show “*Celebrity Detective*,” he used role-playing and improvisational interaction to liven up the atmosphere (meeting the “interactive experience” requirement for entertainment programs). The distinctive characteristics of different types of television programs determine that hosts need to develop the appropriate skills for each type, and cross-type hosting is an active response to these distinctive needs.

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3 Insights from the transition to cross-program hosting

3.1 Extending the career lifecycle

Transitioning between different types of programs provides an effective path for extending the career lifespan of hosts, breaking the limitations of traditional single-program types on career development. The core mechanism lies in activating

the dynamic evolution of professional abilities through type switching. Under the traditional model, the ability modules of hosts gradually solidify due to the demands of single programs, forming a “path dependency.” Once the program ecosystem changes, they fall into an adaptive crisis. Cross-type transformation drives the restructuring of capability systems—the logical thinking honed in news programs, the on-the-spot reactions in variety shows, and the empathy skills cultivated in interview programs are transferred and integrated across genres through transformation, thereby constructing a more flexible capability network. This restructuring not only delays the aging of abilities, but also creates new professional advantages, maintaining control over familiar areas while gaining the ability to explore new areas, forming a “compounding effect” of abilities, thereby continuing to break through bottlenecks after reaching professional maturity and extending the life cycle. As an active and vibrant communicator in the program, the host occupies a prominent position in the communication process, exerting significant influence and guidance. Therefore, they must continuously learn new knowledge and master new professional skills to remain competitive in the new media environment.

Sa Beining's career trajectory clearly illustrates this point: when he first hosted *Today's Law*, his abilities were focused on legal interpretation and logical analysis (a single, fixed type of skill); after transitioning to cultural programs, he developed skills in cultural interpretation and in-depth dialogue; and after entering the variety show field, he developed skills in humorous expression and on-site control. This restructuring of capabilities—logical thinking honed through legal programs, humanistic literacy cultivated through cultural programs, and interactive skills strengthened through variety shows—enables cross-border migration and integration through transformation, building a more flexible network of capabilities. This restructuring not only delays the aging of abilities, but also creates new professional advantages, maintaining control over familiar areas while gaining the ability to explore new areas, forming a “compounding effect” of abilities, thereby continuing to break through bottlenecks after reaching professional maturity and extending the life cycle.

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3.2 Building the brand value of hosts

Transitioning between different types of programs is an important way to build the brand value of hosts. The core of this is to reconstruct the brand value system through “characteristic anchoring + scenario extension,” which includes a unique identity layer, a connotation layer, and an extended value layer.

Enhancing brand value: First, strengthen the brand identity by repeating core characteristics across different programs to create memorable points, such as transforming the rigorous logic of news anchors into the ability to refine opinions in cultural programs. Second, expand the brand's connotation by leveraging the practical skills of lifestyle service programs and the atmosphere control capabilities of variety shows to enrich the brand image of “professionalism + diversity.” Third, extend the brand's value by covering multiple audience segments to promote the brand's upgrade from “awareness” to ‘reputation’ and “dependence.”

Dong Qing has achieved remarkable results in building the brand value of hosts, achieving in-depth brand shaping and widespread dissemination through multi-dimensional efforts. In terms of brand identity reinforcement, Dong Qing has leveraged iconic moments such as her “golden three minutes” on the Spring Festival Gala stage and her effortless recitation of classical poetry and literary allusions on “China Poetry Conference.” These performances have solidified her reputation for “deep cultural heritage and exceptional professional expertise,” leaving a lasting impression on audiences. In terms of expanding her professional scope, Dong Qing has transitioned from hosting various variety shows in her early career to becoming both the host and producer of **The Reader**. She actively participates in selecting and planning program topics, invites cultural luminaries, and delves deeply into the program's content, moving from simply hosting shows to becoming a core contributor to content creation. This has significantly enriched the depth and breadth of her personal brand, elevating her from an “outstanding host” to a “pioneer in cultural dissemination.” In terms of value extension, Dong Qing's edited book, *The Reader I*, has sold over 2 million copies and generated royalties of over 10 million yuan. Through channels such as *The Reader* series of books and offline events, she has expanded her brand value from the screen to the fields of publishing and cultural activities, attracting audiences of different ages and interests. She has successfully extended her value from a “national host” to a “comprehensive cultural IP,” becoming a highly influential host brand.

For the media, a successful transformation of a host's brand can attract resources, with the host's personal IP anchoring the program's tone. The program provides a backdrop for the host's personal IP, creating a mutually reinforcing loop of “personality-content-reputation.” Leveraging the host's cross-industry appeal to quickly consolidate attention and social resources will be a crucial step in the brand-building of media marketing. (Li, 2014)

3.3 The direction of transformation for hosts in the era of media convergence

The transformation of hosts across program types reveals the direction of transformation for hosts in the era of media convergence and provides clear guidance for adapting to changes in the media ecosystem. Media convergence has completely broken down the barriers between traditional and emerging media, giving rise to a diverse and intertwined communication landscape and a rich variety of program formats. In this context, hosts can no longer be limited to a single program type or communication platform. They must transition from being single-skilled to multi-skilled, with the ability to switch flexibly between different platforms and program types. This is the inevitable direction of career development in the context of the major trend of media convergence.

Future transformations will place greater emphasis on the systematic cultivation of all-round capabilities. This includes cross-media operational capabilities, i.e., proficiency in understanding the communication characteristics of different platforms such as television, short videos, and live streaming, and adjusting the presentation of content according to the tone of the platform. With multiple content production capabilities, they have expanded from simply stringing together programs to participating in the entire chain of content planning, script writing, and even post-production editing, becoming core participants in content production. Comprehensive interactive capabilities enable real-time, in-depth communication with audiences through diverse formats such as bullet screens, comment sections, and live streaming, fostering close emotional connections. At the same time, it is also important to focus on creating a personalized and differentiated personal brand during the transformation process. In today's era of information overload, audiences are faced with a vast array of content choices. Only hosts with unique personalities and differentiated advantages can be accurately identified and remembered among the multitude of voices. The transition to cross-genre hosting provides a rich practical environment, enabling hosts to explore and strengthen their core characteristics across different program formats. This process helps them develop a unique brand identity, ultimately securing a competitive edge in the highly competitive industry.

4 Strategy development for hosts transitioning across program genres

4.1 Competency enhancement strategy: pathways to building a multidisciplinary knowledge structure

The core of a host's cross-program transformation lies in building a multifaceted knowledge structure, achieved through systematic expansion and integration of their knowledge base. Strengthening the host's foundational professional skills is the primary step; regardless of the transformation path chosen, they must deepen expertise in their original field to cultivate a unique competitive edge. Maintain sensitivity to industry developments through consistent daily learning sessions (e.g., policy analysis in news programs, case studies in entertainment content), deepening understanding through practical application. Interdisciplinary knowledge expansion is key to transformation and must be strategically tailored to target programming objectives. For instance, transitioning from journalism to cultural studies requires studying historical and literary classics and engaging in art appreciation. This forms a diverse knowledge base through a "needs list + targeted learning" approach. The ultimate goal is to translate theoretical knowledge into practical skills. By participating in planning, module design, and simulated hosting, individuals transform theory into on-site management capabilities. Following a "learning-practice-review" closed-loop process, they systematically address their weaknesses. Lifelong learning mechanisms serve as safeguards, requiring attention to industry trends, participation in exchanges, mastery of new technologies, and cross-sector collaboration. A dynamic updating mechanism must be established to adapt to the demands of media convergence. (Zhai, 2021)

4.2 Style shaping strategy: upholding core traits while integrating program characteristics

The stylistic evolution of hosts transitioning across program genres must achieve a unified balance between preserving core attributes and integrating program-specific characteristics. Core traits can be identified through audience feedback and self-reflection—for instance, "authenticity" manifests as attentive questioning during interviews, while "insightfulness" is demonstrated through logical deconstruction of controversial topics. These behavioral markers serve as anchors connecting with audiences and must remain consistent throughout the transition. Integrating with program characteristics requires adapting the medium: in news programs, "approachability" translates to plain-language reporting; in entertainment shows, it manifests as interactive banter. Centered on the program's essence, adjust language density and physical gestures to match its rhythm, allowing its unique qualities to emerge naturally. The style should be dynamically calibrated based on audience feedback, achieving a balance between individuality and universality through iterative refinement of behavioral details. This approach enhances the program's appeal and distinctiveness while improving its communication effectiveness. (Yin, 2018)

4.3 Resource integration strategy: synergistic empowerment of media platforms and hosts

Hosts transitioning across program genres require the establishment of a collaborative empowerment mechanism between media platforms and hosts, achieving mutual benefit through deep resource integration. Platforms must fully

leverage their resource support capabilities: first, precisely match hosts with suitable program genres based on their core strengths; then provide targeted technical support, scenario-building solutions, and format innovation recommendations to lay the foundational groundwork for successful transitions. Leveraging its own omnichannel communication resources, the company conducts multidimensional promotion of transformed content to amplify its reach. It also establishes a robust audience feedback mechanism, providing timely and detailed data support to inform strategic adjustments.

Hosts should proactively develop their personal resources, systematically map out their professional skill sets, and transform their existing expertise in specific fields into unique perspectives for cross-genre programming after transitioning. Actively leverage professional networks to foster cross-industry collaborations, inviting guests from diverse fields to enrich program content; conduct in-depth analysis of audience overlap across different programs, achieving effective conversion of audience resources through differentiated content delivery. Both parties must establish collaborative mechanisms to jointly formulate transformation objectives and evaluation criteria, conducting regular assessments of transformation outcomes. The platform dynamically adjusts resource allocation based on data feedback, while hosts optimize content presentation according to evaluation results. This creates a virtuous cycle of "resource supply—capability conversion—outcome iteration," driving continuous deepening of cross-program-type transformation.

4.4 Audience feedback mechanism: transformation and optimization based on data and word-of-mouth

Establishing a scientific and comprehensive audience feedback mechanism requires collaborative participation from media platforms and hosts. Platforms should assume the role of technical support and data integration, building a multidimensional data collection system (including viewership, social media, and interactive data modules) and utilizing algorithmic tools for quantitative analysis. The host is responsible for proactively gathering word-of-mouth information, obtaining qualitative feedback through surveys, interviews, and direct interactions, and sharing the results with the platform. Both parties jointly engage in comprehensive analysis of data and audience feedback, translating insights into concrete optimization measures. This establishes a collaborative mechanism integrating "platform technology empowerment with on-the-ground host feedback," driving precise adjustments to cross-program transformation strategies. Feedback results must be applied through a coordinated mechanism, transforming conclusions into optimization measures, disseminating best practices, and conducting follow-up evaluations to establish a closed-loop system of "feedback-adjustment-evaluation."

5 Conclusion

The adaptability and transformation of hosts across program genres represent a critical issue for professional development in the era of media convergence. This holds significant importance for enhancing competitiveness, extending career lifecycles, and building brand value. Through theoretical analysis, case studies, and strategy development, this paper concludes that cross-genre hosting by presenters has solid theoretical support. The dynamic nature of roles, demands for media convergence, and diversity of competencies provide the foundational basis. Sai Beining's practice stands as a successful model, demonstrating the critical importance of integrating core characteristics with program attributes. A scientifically grounded transformation strategy serves as the safeguard, encompassing capability enhancement, style refinement, resource integration, and audience feedback optimization. Its significance lies in extending career lifecycles, enhancing brand value, and charting a course for transformation, requiring concerted efforts to foster healthy professional development. In essence, cross-program hosting is a systematic endeavor demanding theoretical, practical, and strategic support. Refining mechanisms and methodologies will cultivate outstanding hosts and propel innovative industry growth.

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