

Management for Professionals

Jianlin Zhang · Kezhen Ying ·
Kanliang Wang · Zhigang Fan ·
Ziyi Zhao *Editors*

Innovation of Digital Economy

Cases from China



西安交通大学出版社
XI'AN JIAOTONG UNIVERSITY PRESS



Springer

Management for Professionals

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Editors

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ISSN 2192-8096

ISSN 2192-810X (electronic)

Management for Professionals

ISBN 978-981-99-1740-2

ISBN 978-981-99-1741-9 (eBook)

<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-99-1741-9>

Jointly published with Xi'an Jiaotong University Press

The print edition is not for sale in China (Mainland). Customers from China (Mainland) please order the print book from: Xi'an Jiaotong University Press.

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This Springer imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd.

The registered company address is: 152 Beach Road, #21-01/04 Gateway East, Singapore 189721, Singapore

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Foreword

The fast development of digital economy and the continuous integration of modern business have given rise to the new mode, idea, and path of enterprise development, e-commerce and digital economy have become the key industries of the global economy in new development era with the largest scale, the fastest growth speed, the widest coverage, and the most active innovation and entrepreneurship. New phenomena in the domestic e-commerce industry still continue to emerge, the domestic industry has become the pioneer of digital economy development. For the practical circle, new phenomena and industry modes force enterprises to consider the orientation and the importance of digitalization and the approaches to reconstruct value creation and value acquisition. Carrying out the teaching and research of e-commerce and digital economy in colleges and universities, finding out the theoretical logic behind the front edge, echoing and implementing the overall deployment of the Ministry of Education for new humanities and social sciences (HSS), promoting the development of e-commerce majors, and cultivating a new generation of e-commerce and digital economy talent are of great importance.

In order to further enhance the discipline competitiveness of e-commerce and strengthen the quality of talent cultivation, targeting at the demand of building a digital economic power and industrial transformation and upgrading, the Center for E-commerce and Digital Economy Cases in Higher Education launched “The First Collection Activity of Excellent Cases of E-commerce and Digital Economy for Colleges and Universities” around the country, aiming to promote the growth of new business and advance the comprehensive literacy of e-commerce and digital economy talent under the guidance of the Nationwide E-commerce Teaching Steering Committee of Schools and Universities of the Ministry of Education.

E-commerce theories can draw inspiration from innovative enterprise cases, containing the application of artificial intelligence and big data in the operation and marketing of enterprises, the exploration of the network consumer behavior theory, and the innovative researches of business models and management mechanisms of e-commerce enterprises. These theories are considered to be of far-reaching significance for enterprises in deepening their reforms and improving self-competitiveness in the digital economy. The theories from China embrace the opportunities to expand them to the overseas market, helping global enterprises to

respond to the challenges of business change and strategic focus, thus advancing the upgrading of theories and practices by taking this book as a carrier.

Enterprise cases on the basis of practices meet the requirements and orientation of cultivating e-commerce and digital economy talent. New positions and the demand for intelligent talent keep emerging, the shortage of high-level innovative talent has become an increasingly prominent issue under the background of digital economy advancing the accelerated growth of e-commerce. Case teaching has the dual functions of imparting professional knowledge and improving practical training and expertise. Case collection in this book will conduct standardized sorting of knowledge and skills related to transferring them into good teaching resources to carry out professional training of knowledge and practice, thus meeting the development needs of e-commerce and digital economy.

Focusing on the key areas and issues in the development of e-commerce and digital economy, *Innovation of Digital Economy: Cases from China* provides a new platform for refining local characteristics and broadening theoretical research horizons, and also contributes to the cultivation of the next generation of digital economy talent and the exploration of close cooperation between universities and enterprises.

July 2022

Liu Jun
Director of E-commerce Teaching Steering
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Preface

The revolution of digital technology has fundamentally changed the operation mode of human society. The economic development environment of the digital economy is characterized by dynamic changes, high degree of uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity, and data information is listed as a key production factor in this era. Facing the surging wave of digital economy, global enterprises are facing the opportunities and challenges brought by digitalization. Effectively obtain, arrange, and use data information is a necessary mean for enterprises to gain insight into the external environment. Reduce uncertainty and complexity, obtain necessary complementary resources, and then enhance the core competitiveness of enterprises through digital transformation are key issues for enterprise development.

In the past 5 years, China's digital economy has developed rapidly. It has built the world's largest 5G network and becomes the largest digital economy in the world. The digital economy is in the second place in the world and represents fertile ground for highly active digital innovation and entrepreneurship. Under the guidance of the innovation-driven development strategy, Chinese enterprises are actively exploring new business forms, methods, and models that integrate real industries and digital technologies.

In this context, this book compiles representative examples of enterprises to demonstrate the best practices and lessons learned by Chinese enterprises in seeking innovation development in the digital economy era. Around the international new trend in the digital economic development, themes of the cases include digital marketing, Industrial Internet of Things, cross-border e-commerce, and digital transformation of traditional enterprises, depicting how the vertical industry leaders, unicorn companies, and regional benchmark enterprises explore new ways of development and growth combined with the digital technologies. The best practices of the case enterprises will provide valuable first-hand guidance to practitioners in the global digital economy; meanwhile, each case is written in a structured and academic manner, which can provide field cases for research and teaching in e-commerce and digital economy-related disciplines.

The book has three characteristics: first, the selected cases focus on the emerging new phenomena in the field of digital economy, covering the new knowledge

of digital economy and e-commerce, which can match the academic courses of e-commerce and other majors in colleges and universities; second, all cases are developed based on primary data, introducing and analyzing the management practices of representative enterprises, which are original and innovative; third, the book provides complete supporting materials. The cases are attached with teaching notes, videos, and relevant supplementary materials, which will help to promote teaching, research, and learning.

This book is a compilation of the case results of the “First Collection Activity of Excellent Cases” of the Center for E-commerce and Digital Economy Cases in Higher Education under the guidance of the Teaching Guiding Committee of E-commerce Majors of the Ministry of Education. My thanks go to the Teaching Guiding Committee of E-commerce Majors of the Ministry of Education, all the case authors and case review experts, the Case Construction Guiding Committee of the Case Center, the Case Construction Working Committee, and the Beijing Bodao Qiancheng Information Technology Co., Ltd. for their guidance and contributions to this round of case collection and the construction of the Case Center.

July 2022

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Rooted in Medical Skills, Came Out of Benevolent Hearts: The User Growth Strategy of DingXiang Doctor Platform

Ziyi Zhao, Zhijing Niu, and Yulu Yan

1 Introduction

“Now, let’s welcome Mr. Li, the founder of the leading company of Internet Medical Care, DingXiangYuan (DXY), and Dingxiang Doctor!” Accompanied by the moderator’s loud voice, Li Tiantian, dressed in a crimson purple suit, appeared on the stage in vigorous steps. Li attended the “Digital Medical 2020” Development Forum and gave a speech on the topic of Internet medical care and platform development.

Internet medical care comes from the cross-border integration of the concept of “Internet+” and the medical field. With the buoyant growth of science and technology, the deep application of medical big data and the continuous upgrading of information means, the integration of Internet and traditional medical industry is deepening. Internet medical care enterprises harness information technologies such as 5G, big data, cloud computing and Internet of Things to digitize traditional medical resources and provide medical services through digital platforms.

There has been more than a decade since the birth of Internet medical care. These years have witnessed the ups and downs of the rapid development under the strategic layout of “Internet+” and the policy of “mass entrepreneurship and innovation”, and the rock bottom caused by poor regulation and technical restrictions. The sudden hit of the COVID-19 pandemic swept the world in 2020. When medical staff was struggling in the front line, Internet Medical Care, known as the “second battlefield”, also played its part to fight against the pandemic, providing services such as dispelling rumors and science popularizing, online consultation, medical e-commerce and statistical analysis of data. These have played a positive

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role in avoiding the crowd gathering, relieving people's panic and balancing medical resources. With "Healthy China 2030" becoming a national strategy and China comprehensively entering into the "post-pandemic era" of regular pandemic prevention and control, people's awareness of health management has obviously been improved, and the demands for health products and services have increased dramatically. The value and advantages of this industry that cannot be ignored have gradually showed up in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. The Internet medical care industry, which has been silent for a long time, has finally ushered in its own highlight moment after the COVID-19 pandemic.

At present, there are several giants working on Internet medical care platforms, such as Chunyu Doctor, Ping An Good Doctor, Ali Health and Dingxiang Doctor. The positioning of and products and services provided by these platforms are overlapping yet different, and they have played different roles in fighting against the COVID-19 pandemic. Baidu cooperated with many medical experts to write entries of novel coronavirus, provided relevant search data, and launched an intelligent self-testing tool for COVID-19. Ping An Good Doctor, WeDoctor, Dingxiang Doctor, and haodf.com have launched free online consultation channels. At the early stage of the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, Dingxiang Doctor launched the "Pandemic Map" (i.e., "Real-time Dynamic of COVID-19") to provide statistical analysis of data, and integrated online free clinic, expert rumor dispelling, authoritative science popularization and other functions. With 2 billion page views in less than one month, it became the top new media health platform in China.

Why can Dingxiang Doctor stand out from all Internet medical care giants and rocket to the top? Dingxiang Doctor, a brand of DingXiangYuan (DXY), specializes in health consultation and popular science information services for the general public at C-terminal, and its success cannot leave the support of DingXiangYuan (DXY).

The success of Dingxiang Doctor has aroused great repercussions in the industry. At this "Digital Medical 2020" forum, the guests praised Dingxiang Doctor and expressed their desire to learn from Li Tiantian. They wondered how DingXiangYuan (DXY) survived the influence and hit of the crisis and realized the growth of Dingxiang Doctor. Hearing the question, with a microphone in his hand, Li looked at the audience, and his thoughts were brought back to 2014.

2 From Targeting a Niche Market to Creating Value for the Public

DXY was founded in 2000. Due to the inaccessibility to relevant medical literature, Li Tiantian, a medical student, set up the website of DXY to provide literature retrieval services for medical students. Based on this literature retrieval service, Li started "DXY Forum", which serves as a platform and space of professional communication for users in the medical field. The forum sections gradually increased in number and covered all medical disciplines, bringing together many medical students and occupational physicians. In 2005, Li went to Hangzhou and

formed an entrepreneurial team with Zhang Jin and Zhou Shuzhong. They incorporated Hangzhou Lianke Meixun Biological Medicine Technology Co., Ltd. and continuously expand the “territory” of Internet medical care. After that, in 2007, “DX Talent Online” was introduced to build bridges between hospitals, biomedical industry and fresh medical graduates. In 2008, the information platform “Biomart” for scientific research institutions and instrument manufacturing enterprises was launched; and in 2011, DXY released “Drug Assistant”, a tool to provide authoritative drug information inquiry for doctors. In 2012, Dingxiang Doctor was officially launched, which inherits the advantages of medication data and convenient interaction of “Drug Assistant” and has functions such as targeted medicine prescribing, medication safety warning, family medical kit, medicine/health food information inquiry and nearby pharmacies searching. In September 2014, the WeChat official account of Dingxiang Doctor was officially put into operation. By December 2021, the number of followers has exceeded 10 million, ranking first in the monthly list of the new health category.

With the development of Internet medical care industry and the expansion of the company, DXY needs to explore new business segments to realize the vision of long-term sustainable development. In 2014, Li Tiantian received Series-C financing from Tencent, and how to manifest the value of Internet medical care became one of his important issues. The day in 2005 when his son was born occurred to him. “My son was born prematurely with respiratory distress syndrome, and he was taken to ICU ward at birth and rescued for 15 consecutive days.....” (Li, 2017). Li was heartbroken outside the ward, and this experience helped him understand the role of “patient”. He thought: “how does DXY ignite patients’ hope, and serve patients and the mass medical market?”

2.1 The Arrival of “Imperial Doctor”

Tian Jishun is a well-known doctor from Women’s Hospital School of Medicine Zhejiang University. Before Zhihu was open for registration, Tian was invited to provide quality answers on questions frequently. By the time the registration was available, he had accumulated thousands of followers on Zhihu. Chu Yang, a former orthopedist, served as the director of medical communication in DXY later. In 2014, Chu invited Tian to a podcast program “The arrival of Imperial Doctor” on Zhihu in order to provide the audience with medical knowledge from the doctors’ point of view. The view counts of “Imperial Doctors are coming” was quite amazing, and followers who like them called them “Imperial Doctor Tian” and “Imperial Doctor Chu” respectively.

Chu’s successful attempt in the new media such as Zhihu made Li Tiantian realize the needs of the huge mass consumer group. With the rising awareness of health, the public is eager to learn medical knowledge. This is not an area that can be covered by “folk science” such as health preservation or traditional medicine communication. Li held a meeting with two online celebrity “imperial doctors” and two other founders from the traditional medicine field of DingXiangYuan (DXY).

At this meeting, Li's opinion on the mass consumer business was questioned by others. After all, in the past, DXY aimed to meet various needs of doctors, and never involved ordinary users. **How can DingXiangYuan (DXY), not well-known among ordinary users, get close to mass market users and provide valuable contents that meet their needs?** Even Chu was skeptical about that: "when doctors take off their gowns and communicate with patients, how can we guarantee the authority of communication contents? And how to build a trust relationship with our consumers?" (Chu, 2021) Moreover, there are unknown risks because of no perfected example of Internet medical care business model for mass consumers. What kind of strategies does DXY need to take to stand out from the complicated markets of C-terminal Internet medical care?

2.2 The Potential Energy of Professionalism

Li Tiantian and Chu Yang decided to start with creating a WeChat official account. The number of WeChat official accounts at that year has reached 5 million, but the accounts related to the healthcare field still kept booming. In terms of the number of subscribers, views, reposts and comments, head WeChat official accounts in the healthcare field were quite different from the popular official accounts in other categories. In September 2014, the WeChat official account of Dingxiang Doctor went into operation officially, to which Chu was appointed to be fully responsible for the management and operation. As the first C-terminal product of DXY, the success or failure of Dingxiang Doctor was related to future C-terminal businesses of DXY. The strategy of it has become "D+C Dual-core Drive", in which, "D" refers to doctor, and "C" refers to consumer.

To enhance the authoritativeness of Dingxiang Doctor, "cooperating with doctors" was deemed as the core advantage by Chu Yang, because 70% of professional doctors around the country can be covered by DXY. Therefore, "Dingxiang Doctor has never been a person, but so many behind-the-scenes doctors in China." (Chriss, 2020) DXY's advantage of originating from professional doctors was called as "professional potential energy" by Chu, which can create professional influence and native inspiration for the health-related contents of Dingxiang Doctor.

On the one hand, by building a professional content production team with medical and communication background, contracting with a number of doctors and inviting science popularization authors in the medical area, Dingxiang Doctor has developed a peer review system similar to the paper contribution. As soon as the contribution is received, the system will submit it to "peer review committee" for examination, and check whether there are any nonstandard and unscientific contents in accordance with FABE principle (feature, advantage, benefit and evidence) to ensure the accuracy and professionalism of contents. After confirming that there are no faults, the contents will be released, and there is a "gatekeeper" at the end of each post.

On the other hand, Dingxiang Doctor insists on imparting professional knowledge with user-friendly and plain expressions. Most popular science articles in

the medical field are obscure, which has become a wall between doctors and the public. However, Chu Yang found the key to solve this problem, i.e. choosing “dispelling rumors” as the first topic selection. At that time, health-oriented WeChat official accounts were still in rebellious period, and complex contents always made people puzzled and could not distinguish between true and false. In combination with different scenarios, Dingxiang Doctor uses comics and cases aptly to dispel rumors and help readers understand, thus making articles more simple and understandable and widely disseminated.

Driven by professional influence and native inspiration, the WeChat official account of Dingxiang Doctor gained a sudden popularity. As of April 2015, Dingxiang Doctor, which was established for only 5 months, has become the main official account in the field of healthcare with 2 million subscribers.

2.3 The Escalation of Products

In the development of Dingxiang Doctor, the innovation of products not only enhance the user growth of the platform, but also continuously creates a variety of new value points.

With the increasing growth of users of the official account of Dingxiang Doctor, many followers began to ask questions about the prevention of infectious diseases and the treatment of common cold. Li Tiantian has sensitively recognized their demands, and he thought that a new product should be developed to solve the questions asked by followers of “Dingxiang Doctor”. Later, this idea evolved into a new product, “Ask the Doctor”. “Ask the Doctor” is an online consultation product launched by Dingxiang Doctor for followers. Followers with the demand for consultation can immediately meet doctors from Grade A Class 3 hospitals in China face to face with only CNY10. By creating professional and friendly online consultation products, “Ask the Doctor” provides professional and personalized medical services for users of Dingxiang Doctor, helping it to upgrade to a higher value dimension.

After receiving the “positive feedback” from “Ask the Doctor” that it has operated smoothly and achieved profits, Li Tiantian turned his attention to the “immobile” offline scenarios. He found that there was a lack of a sound clinic system in China, and the professionalism of grass-root clinics has been questioned because of no professional department structure. Clinics are usually regarded as “prescription institutions” by many people, therefore, even if patients catch a cold, they will register in a Grade A Class 3 hospital. Li believes that offline clinics are a “blue ocean market”. Relying on mature online consultation experience and professional brand essence of Dingxiang Doctor, more users can enjoy professional medical services and better medical experience by establishing clinics with general-practice medical system, so that people are willing to come to clinics for the medical treatment and physical examination. DXClinics carried out pilot projects in Hangzhou and Fuzhou first, attracting many patients who came

Table 1 List of series of products of Dingxiang Doctor

| Name | Characteristics |
|---|---|
| WeChat official account of Dingxiang Doctor | Popularizing health-related contents to the public |
| Ask the Doctor | Providing professional and friendly online mobile consultation |
| DXClinics | Creating the offline consultation community with a general-practice medical system |
| Dingxiang Mama | Science popularization of mother and infant-related contents and pregnancy services |

Source Sorted by authors

here for the brand. The goal of Li is to promote this offline general-practice consultation system across the country, so that it can cover more areas and provide services for more people. From online consultation to offline clinics, Dingxiang Doctor has smoothed the development and promotion of new products based on the experience and reputation of existing products, and achieved omnichannel and whole-area coverage on its consultation services.

Li Tiantian also noticed that maternal product users have strong demands and potentials for the scientific parenting knowledge. Therefore, he decided to work deeply in this market segment and launched “Dingxiang Mama” to better meet the needs of this group. However, facing the rapid speed of user iteration, short life cycle of consumption and high demands of users’ emotional value, how does Dingxiang Doctor deal with these new challenges? Li discussed with obstetrician, Dr. Tian Jishun. On the one hand, Dingxiang Doctor should continuously popularize authoritative content on the basis of its rich medical resources, and on the other hand, it can cooperate with famous maternal and infant brands, focus on digging vertical areas of the market and effectively reach a new generation of young parents, thus stimulating their emotional resonance to accumulate more followers. The success of Dingxiang Mama provides experience for Dingxiang Doctor to explore more market segments and launch products serving specific groups (see Table 1).

3 From Market Segment to Creating Value with Consumers

3.1 Segmentation

The prosperous development of WeChat official accounts requires that efforts shall be made to classify users into different categories and solve the demands of segmented populations. Chu Yang often receives user feedbacks claiming that they want to deepen their knowledge on certain diseases, which are far from the contents and subjects of Dingxiang Doctor. At the same time, the mommies and

daddies-to-be in the company also gave feedback to Chu that whether maternal and child-related contents could be posted, some colleagues wanting to lose weight desired to know how to eat more healthily and what kinds of living habits can make them have a healthy life. With the emergence of such demands, Chu began to have an idea of creating other accounts. He planned to register special official accounts of corresponding diseases for science popularizing and disease prevention, so as to meet the specific needs of users. He also initiated an idea to register official accounts to share contents about healthy eating and living habits. Under the same standards of Dingxiang Doctor, the contents uploaded on these official accounts are tagged with the identification of Dingxiang Doctor. As a result, official accounts about gout, hypertension, diabetes, hyperthyroidism and mental illness, Dingxiang Shitang, and Health Headlines were registered. All of these are praised by users and boost the rapid quantity increase of users of Dingxiang Doctor.

A matrix of WeChat official accounts has been formally established, with Dingxiang Doctor as the main body and including Dingxiang Mama and a number of official accounts about diseases, health and lifestyle. These accounts are subject to the same professional endorsement and complete review mechanism and edited in a warm, friendly and reliable writing style, just as Dingxiang Doctor does. But they deliver different contents precisely for different target groups. The aggregation effect of WeChat official accounts matrix has played an important role in shaping the brand awareness. The Dingxiang-series WeChat official accounts quickly occupies the top ten among health-related accounts, and the brand gains fame as an Internet medical care knowledge platform (see Fig. 1).

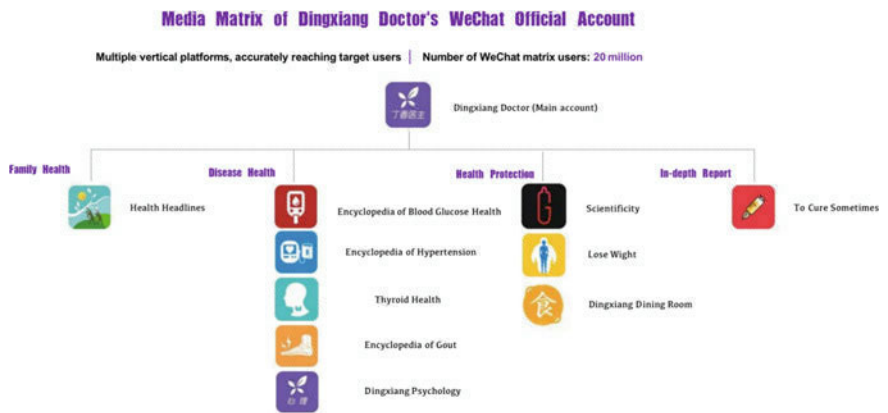


Fig. 1 Media matrix of Dingxiang Doctor's WeChat official account. *Source* Official website of DingXiangYuan (DXY)

3.2 Breaking Through

In 2017, the number of users of Dingxiang Doctor's WeChat official account suffered dismal growth. The user traffic is the key to the profit growth of Dingxiang Doctor. Though it comes to the top in the "inner matrix", it is still a "hidden champion" in vertical field. Dingxiang Doctor still has to break through the wall urgently. Chu Yang believes that high frequency in forwarding refers to the times that an article is forwarded; and high following refers to the user retention from sharing. Articles that cannot assist in building the brand awareness or retain users make little sense even if they are characterized by good contents. **So how to improve the brand awareness of "Dingxiang" from the perspective of users, and how to "break through" and attract more users?**

Chu Yang and his team focused on other public traffic platforms other than WeChat, such as Tiktok, Zhihu and Weibo, and developed a new media pattern of "external matrix". There are a smaller quantity of accounts in the external matrix, but they are in better quality, with "Dingxiang Doctor" and "Dingxiang Mama" as the main. Social media platform, Weibo, question-and-answer platform, Zhihu, and short video platform, Tiktok, occupy the main positions of the new media.

Returning to Weibo in 2017, Dingxiang Doctor captures the public opinions and takes measures quickly within 1 to 2 h, striving to respond with high-quality contents and obtaining the wave of traffic dividend at the first time. "The reason to choose Weibo mainly depends on trends of the rising traffic and social topics on it, and Dingxiang Doctor has advantages of high-quality contents." (How Does the New Media Matrix of Millions ..., 2019) In addition to focusing on public opinions, Dingxiang Doctor makes topics actively relying on conflicts caused by information asymmetry. In 2018, an article published by Dingxiang Doctor, *Ten-billion Health Product Empire of Quanjian, and Haunted Chinese Families*, directly led to the collapse of Quanjian and triggered a strong resonance among readers. Dingxiang Doctor "broke through" successfully.

In April 2018, Dingxiang Doctor created a Tiktok official account. Chu Yang found that compared with users of WeChat official accounts, active users on video platforms are mostly the young in their early twenties, who prefer unconstrained styles and contents, other than speeches by teachers who are serious or talk slowly, and they are more willing to accept funny short videos with a lot of information and plots. Thus, Chu and his new media team tried to control the short videos within 2 min, and those on short video platforms were even less than one minute. Just as the saying goes, "A sparrow may be small but it has all the vital organs." Each video is a reflection of a short story, which caters to hot topics that young people are interested in. For example, it talked about if it was healthy to "make tea with goji berry and keep it warm in a thermos" as the lyrics of *Calorie*. Under the relaxing and humorous interpretation of popular doctor Tian Jishun, the videos produced by Dingxiang Doctor were launched one after another. By the end of 2018, Dingxiang Doctor had 6 million followers and more than 700 million views on Tiktok.

Table 2 New media “External Matrix” of Dingxiang Doctor

| Attribute | Social communication | Question and answer | Videos | Videos | Media | Portal websites |
|---|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| Principal platforms | Weibo | Zhihu | Bilibili | Tiktok | TOPBuzz | Baidu, Sohu, Netease, etc |
| Target groups (the number of followers) | Dingxiang Doctor (5.804 million) | Dingxiang Doctor (3.13 million) | Dingxiang Doctor (813,000) | Dingxiang Doctor (7.71 million) | Dingxiang Doctor (2.035 million) Dingxiang Shitang (10,000) Dingxiang Health (115,000) | Dingxiang Doctor Dingxiang Shitang |
| | Dingxiang Mama (114,000) | Dingxiang Mama (206,000) | | Dingxiang Mama (673,000) | Dingxiang Mama (151,000) Weight Loss (52,000) | Dingxiang Mama Weight Loss |

Source Sorted by the authors in December 2021

With the rapid growth of followers on the new media platforms, Dingxiang Doctor teams increased the frequency of internal meetings to make content and operation teams of different platforms can access the publication, traffic information and existing problems of others. Therefore, high standardized contents can be quickly reused on other platforms.

By the end of December 2021, the total number of followers of the new media “external matrix” of Dingxiang Doctor exceeded 20 million, being the “top” in the field of Internet healthcare field (see Table 2).

3.3 Co-creation

How does Dingxiang Doctor connect a series of “breaking-through” products and millions of loyal users **through the resource integration to achieve the multiple growth of the number of platform users and value?**

Chu Yang realized that the users of Dingxiang Doctor were relatively isolated from each other on different platforms, and there was no information exchange between them, which led to their strong platform dependence. “Taking a family of three people as an example. They all follow accounts of Dingxiang Doctor, but the father may follow the WeChat official account, the mother may be a follower of Weibo and Zhihu, and the son may be a loyal user of Tiktok.” Chu thought

that the user growth “fission” could be realized with existing resources if users on different platforms could be connected.

Dingxiang Doctor made new attempts to achieve the user flow on different platforms. In June 2018, Dingxiang Doctor released a video on Tiktok, “Correcting ‘arched shoulder’ with 10 s”, and also posted the text version on its official account. Followers noticed that QR code of its Tiktok was attached to the end of the article. And, the top comment on Tiktok was accompanied by a link to the article on the official account. From the backend data, Chu Yang was pleasantly surprised to find that the article published on WeChat official account and the video on Tiktok all received far more readings and likes than usual. After reviewing and analyzing, he found that, in addition to the selection of topic in line with users’ concerns about health issues, the action of “user attraction” played an important role. Some new users replied on Tiktok that they gained information from the official account. Users from different platforms were connected for the first time. Chu also released articles to respond some concerned questions about health issues on Zhihu, enabling users from different platforms to have a deeper understanding and communicate with each other. “A family of three people finally subscribes to the same channel.” Users gradually get rid of their dependence on the original platform. If the WeChat official account of Dingxiang Doctor doesn’t update on time today, they will turn to Tiktok to watch short videos uploaded and then participate in the discussion in Zhihu.

In addition, in the development process of accounts of Dingxiang Doctor, Chu Yang has always put users first and tried to create contents that conform to the users’ value. “Altruism is self-interest,” Chu firmly believes this. He posted the slogan “Earning more money is to serve more users” at the entrance of the company to indoctrinate his employees. Among the numerous users of Dingxiang Doctor, people with medical backgrounds and engaging in the healthcare account for a certain proportion. They are active in different platforms and can write wonderful comments on message boards to spark discussions. Chu defines them as “core users” and actively invites them to take part in the content creation. By doing so, their articles can be more in line with users’ preferences, thus making these articles more popular among users, and the number of users will naturally increase steadily. With the development of e-commerce platforms and the trend of “selling goods”, Dingxiang Doctor also engaged in such trend. Different from other platforms, Dingxiang Doctor invites some users to be “co-experience officers”, who can use the goods first for free. The “product experience reports” from these officers will be published on the official account, becoming “advertisements without the natures of traditional advertisements”. This “product promotion mechanism” is based on users’ experience and it has achieved “win-win-win” results for consumers, platforms and manufacturers.

4 Value Expansion: Platform Empowerment

4.1 Nurturing New Opportunities in Crisis: Dingxiang Doctor's Responses to the COVID-19 Pandemic

At the beginning of 2020, the sudden outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic affected the normal life of every Chinese, and “home quarantine” disrupted people’s pace of life. During that special period, people suddenly had more time to spend, and those people who didn’t care about health care before began to pay attention to this field, especially the real-time information related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Knowledge popularization of COVID-19, the processes of self-prevention and control, and channels to purchase standard and affordable medical supplies, all such information have become hot topics for each account on the Internet. Just as the saying goes, “misfortune may be a blessing in disguise”. For Li Tiantian and Dingxiang Doctor’s team, this is an opportunity more than a challenge.

How did Li Tiantian cope with it? First of all, Li believed that among all information, the real-time information about COVID-19 cases is undoubtedly the content that users care about most. Authoritative and timely information could provide the public with the changes of the COVID-19 pandemic quickly. Dingxiang Doctor’s team quickly summoned all its members, and it took only one day to officially launch the pandemic map in the early morning of January 21, 2020, which was quicker than its peers and major media. At the same time, it was launched in internal and external media matrix and mobile applications, integrating the information about the COVID-19 pandemic into a “Real-time Dynamic Link of COVID-19 in China”. The pandemic map was created by combing and summarizing to the case data released by the National Health Commission of the People’s Republic of China, the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention and the medical and health institutions in most provincial administrative regions of China, and was then visually presented to users in the form of the map of China. With the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic worldwide, Dingxiang Doctor quickly switched from the map of China to a global pandemic map, thus making its audience expand to global users. As of March 16, 2021, the pandemic map products launched by Dingxiang Doctor have accumulated more than 4.5 billion page views, which has played an important role in transmitting information about the COVID-19 pandemic. This public product made Dingxiang Doctor enjoy a great first-mover advantage. According to the real-time demands, they optimized such diversified presentation forms as the original contents, total number of COVID-19 cases, itemized statistics of data tables and national trend chart. In addition, they added new interactive modes with the help of resource advantages of professional doctors and online consultation products. Dingxiang Doctor’s channel influence and reputation were improved rapidly in a short time due to the traffic growth brought by the huge number of visitors. According to statistics, since the launch of the “Pandemic Map”, the download ranking of Dingxiang Doctor has been significantly improved, and the average daily active users have increased from 21,800 to 79,500.