

# Cross-Cultural Management of Chinese Traditional Theatre Industry Based on Broadway Operation Model

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## ABSTRACT

Broadway, as one of the leading commercial show districts in the West, has a mature commercial experience and operation model. The theatre industry on Broadway is different from other places, and its production and marketing methods have also proven to be highly successful. This paper analyses the business model, artistic concept, communication strategy, and user research of Western theatre based on Broadway at the academic level. At the practical level, the paper investigates the cross-cultural management and communication model of the Chinese theatre industry. The Broadway theatre management that operates separately for theatres and productions, together with the art form that focuses on scenery, stage art, and sound effects, is applied to the management and communication of the traditional Chinese theatre industry. The paper aims at promoting traditional culture and making traditional theatre more suitable for modern aesthetic needs and market demands. The contribution of the paper is to improve traditional Chinese theatre into a creator-centered theatre performance consisting of music, song, dance, and dialogue in a cross-cultural context, based on the Broadway operation model. A modern marketing campaign is used to promote exposure and sustainability. As a result, a framework for Chinese traditional theatre products based on cross-culture is constructed.

**Keywords:** Cultural industry management, Cross-cultural management, Traditional Chinese theatre, Broadway, Product design, Business model

## INTRODUCTION

Broadway is the birthplace of the musical and theatre industry, and a profitable theater gathering area which is most representative and research-worthy in the United States. For more than 100 years, its production and operation mode has been continuously improved, and it has formed a production and promotion system that can withstand scrutiny. Broadway, as one of the leading commercial show districts in the West, has a mature commercial experience and operation model. The theatre industry on Broadway is different from other places, and its production and marketing methods have also proven to be highly successful. At present, the development of China's domestic theatre industry is still in a relatively slow state. On the one hand, influenced by modern art forms such as movies, the art market of domestic theatre is

narrower and narrower, and the attention is not high enough to form hot spots. At the same time, for the traditional art such as Kunqu, there is no extensive appreciation culture in China, especially among the new generation. The younger generation of consumers has little tendency to consume theatre. In addition, the creation of Kunqu scripts is also greatly hindered. The creation of new scripts requires a lot of manpower and material resources, and this field is rarely favored by capital. This situation forms a vicious circle that People's low interest - the theatre industry can't make money - the capital is unwilling to invest - the new script is difficult to carry out - the scripts are in an old-fashioned way - people's lower interest. So this paper addresses the current pain points of domestic theatre product design. Based on the operation model and artistic expression of Broadway theatre, a new model of cross-cultural management and design for China's theatre industry is studied.

### **BROADWAY OPERATING MODEL**

The key to the Broadway theatre industry's current success lies in its unique mode of operation. Broadway's commercial theatre and non-profit theatre are complementary, each contributing to the other's development and presenting a synergistic effect, one cannot be without the other (Huang Heqing, 2011). In addition, Broadway theatre productions focus on artistic forms such as stage sets, stage art, and sound effects (Duan Qile, 2020). There is still much to be studied in-depth in terms of product positioning, pricing strategies, channel promotion, and promotional strategies. In the cross-cultural management and design of traditional Chinese theatre products, the Broadway model should be reformed locally. The traditional Chinese theatre products should mainly include: theatre transformation services, start-up crowdfunding products, and theatre education public welfare projects. Ultimately, traditional Chinese theatre will be improved into a creator-centered theatre performance consisting of music, song, dance, and dialogue in a cross-cultural context, based on the Broadway mode of operation.

### **CHINESE THEATRE PRODUCT DESIGN**

The products are aimed at the current pain points of the domestic theatre art design. At present, the products mainly include theatre transformation services, start-up crowdfunding products, and theatre education public welfare projects.

#### **Theatre Transformation Services**

The Services have carried out different degrees of transformation on the current forms of theatrical art in the market. The main services include:

Modernization of scripts, lines, and beauty on the stage. According to a survey, 74% of people think that they don't go to the theater to watch the art of the theatre because they think that the form of theatre is not attractive enough (Yang W, 2013), and far less modern than the current genre of movies or musicals. For this reason, the Services have carried out different degrees

of transformation on the current forms of theatrical art in the market. The main services include: will transform the existing theatre art into scripts, lines, and stage design. By hiring a team of high-level modern theatre writers, the original form of classical Chinese will be transformed into modern Chinese with the standard of “Xin Da Ya” in China. Experts will also be hired a team of stage design from the Broadway to apply the modern mechanized stage and lights to the art form of Kunqu, which can quickly update the original art forms of theatre art such as Kunqu, while retaining the essence of the original culture, incorporating modern elements to make it more suitable for the aesthetic concept of modern people, to expand the audience.

**High-Quality Marketing Strategy.** Successful public art depends on the appropriate promotional measures, in the case of Broadway, Broadway has become a business card in New York City’s times square (Zhao Yingyan, 2013). In New York, one of the most important cultural life is heading to the Broadway theater district to appreciate opera. And marketing promotion played an extremely important role in the formation of the culture. Specifically have a look at Broadway’s advertising: several large Broadway billboards on both sides of times square street, mixed with some luxury ads. In addition to the large performance advertising pictures on the walls of buildings on both sides of the street, huge performance advertisements will also be placed on the roof. Promotional flyers are often handed out on the streets, and the characters of musicals are visible to the crowds. The hotel near times square will also cooperate with the performance marketing of the theater to do a lot of specific work. At the hotel check-in service desk, there will be the performance manual and promotion flyers for this week on Broadway. Guests of the hotel can get free access to them. In some corners of the hotel, posters with performance information will be placed. Those hotels also have ticket counters in the lobbies to sell tickets for performances at Broadway theaters. In New York, especially in times square, there will be Broadway advertisements as far as where eyes can see, and the Broadway opera will be introduced in various modern media at present. The release of new plays will be published intensively on social platforms such as Twitter. All these make people gradually form the cultural habit of watching Broadway operas. The marketing promotion model of Broadway can be drawn. First, the theatres we choose are located in the core business circle of Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Shenzhen. In the meantime, theaters in one city tend to be adjacent to each other, which helps to form a clustering effect. Secondly, we employ a professional poster design team to design the poster carefully and conduct intensive publicity through large billboards in the core business circle where the theater is located. Finally, we should make full use of traditional and new media, that is, we should make full use of new social media, such as the popular search on Zhihu (an app that works like Quora) and Weibo, and contact KOL to watch and promote in advance.

**Selection of theatre Actors Publicly.** For the actors who participate in plays, we adopt a socialized public selection system and turn the whole process into a TV show. On the one hand, it can attract actors who love the theater and art industry to join. On the other hand, open selection can create hot topics in society in advance, which will improve the popularity of the theatre

before the formal play is released. In addition, the service will provide personalized services for different theatre forms in the current situation: To some successful modern theatre art forms, we help to improve the choreography and marketing strategy. For example, Kunqu actor Zhang Jun has integrated Kunqu music “water cavity” with all kinds of music styles (Kou Kou, 2020), including the NEW AGE, electronic music, rock, jazz, and so on a different style of music elements, which formed a relatively perfect modern Kunqu art form, and what the development of this type of dramatic art lack most is further marketing promotion, and high-quality stage design. The transformation service makes full use of the stage design and marketing promotion forms of Broadway musicals in the United States, hires the stage design team Broadway-level in the United States, and improves the quality of light and dance beauty. For plays that are relatively old in form and not highly recognized in the market, modernization transformations were carried out from the script and lines to adapt them to modern stage design and modern aesthetics and adopt effective marketing promotion measures. For all the reconstruction projects, we have a professional theatre team to conduct research in advance and make a personalized targeted modification.

## **CROWDFUNDING PRODUCTS**

The action aims to provide the market with a possible financial product for the investment of theatre. On the one hand, it fills the blank of theatre investment and finds the possible investment direction for related funds. On the other hand, it mobilizes the idle capital of society to support the new creation of new plays.

At present, the script of domestic theatre is still what is played hundreds of years ago, and there is very little fresh blood to supplement. The reason lies in the creation of a new series of dramas from the script until it onto the stage has huge investment risk., It is difficult for the individual writers or general troupes to bear such risks, so many theaters choose the old scripts which have a certain content and audience basis. In the long-term development of Broadway, it developed the company’s risk self-sustaining mode. Although companies take a huge risk for each new script, one successful script will have a very considerable income. But for Chinese theatre art market has just started, and it is not mature enough, so to avoid this kind of individual risk, products adopt the raised way of raising money public for the creation of new products.

Specifically, the company establishes a crowdfunding platform for theatre art, and the identity of each creator is audited and endorsed by the company (Zheng Weixiong et al. 2018). The writer elaborates on the new idea on the platform according to his conception, and users on the platform can decide whether to invest in it or not. Once the investment is successful, the user will become the shareholder of the new play, and the equity proportion will be calculated according to the total amount of funds raised and the proportion of the user’s investment. After the play is released, the crowdfunding users will receive corresponding dividends.

### **Theatre Education Funding Project**

This project aims to cultivate talents related to theatre in the long term and promote the preservation of traditional theatre culture. The company's purpose lies in promoting the development of theatre art. Although the project transforms the art form of the traditional theatre under the premise of trying to keep the original essence of the culture, to make it more adaptable to the modern's aesthetic ideas, the project also supports the original traditional theatre form of culture, and through the substantial funding, we support its development. The company 10% of the profits as fixed support funds, which is used to fund the construction of traditional theatre art talent training project, encourage talents to join in theatre industry, and provide a high level of education in dramatic art.

### **CONCLUSION**

This paper analyses the business model, artistic concept, communication strategy, and user research of Western theatre based on Broadway at the academic level. At the practical level, the paper investigates the cross-cultural management and communication model of the Chinese theatre industry. The Broadway theatre management that operates separately for theatres and productions, together with the art form that focuses on scenery, stage art, and sound effects, is applied to the management and communication of the traditional Chinese theatre industry. Overall, this article has analyzed, summarised, and concluded the Broadway's commercial and non-commercial combination from the perspective of the operation mode at the macro level. It also draws some implications for the development of the Chinese traditional theatre industry. Cross-cultural management and design are used to promote exposure and sustainability to save the gradually declining Kunqu and other theatres and make them rejuvenate. As a result, a framework for Chinese traditional theatre products based on cross-culture is constructed. It will modernize traditional Chinese theatre art forms, including scripts, lines, stage design, and marketing promotion, making it more suitable for modern people's aesthetic needs and market demand.

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