

Analysis on the Phenomenon of Live-stream Marketing by Government Officials

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Abstract

In overall coordination of epidemic prevention and control and economic and social development, many local government officials have experimented with Live-stream marketing to help poverty alleviation and economic recovery, which has achieved excellent results. However, there are also many problems and risks. Therefore, the government should improve the supervision mechanism of Live-stream marketing by officials and strictly regulate their behavior.

Keywords

Live-stream Marketing; Government Officials; Risk; Countermeasures and Suggestions.

1. Introduction

With the development of network marketing and network communication technology, the live stream industry has emerged in recent years. In 2016, live stream industry has become a new growth point for e-commerce platforms. Live-stream marketing refers to the advertising and marketing activities of celebrities, web celebrity, entrepreneurs, media people or government officials and other public figures to show, explain and guide the sales of goods online through a live stream on Internet platforms.

The sudden outbreak of COVID-19 has dealt a tremendous blow to the offline real economy and sales channels, while the sales of e-commerce platforms have experienced a rapid growth in the epidemic. The market of Live-stream marketing has been on the rise, making it a worthy "draught" in 2020. In order to promote local economic and social development, many local government officials across the country have entered the studio and carried out Live-stream marketing. Instead of being strict officials in the past, they became network anchors, helping local enterprises and farmers solve slow-selling problems, endorsing local featured products and achieving excellent results. Government officials' Live-stream marketing not only helped the people out but also boosted market confidence. But at the same time, some leading cadres took the broadcast room as their own show field. There have been sales fraud, quota apportionment and other problems. These self-deceiving showmanship by government officials deviates from the original intention of doing things for the people and becomes a new formalism and bureaucracy [1]. These actions by government officials not only reduce the reputation of the products they promote but also do great harm to their own image and the credibility of government departments. Therefore, in order to make Live-stream marketing clean and upright, we must strengthen the guidance of norms, establish rules and draw the bottom line for government officials, and strictly regulate their Live-stream marketing from the aspects of discipline requirements, procedural norms, products with goods, communication supervision and so on.

2. The Risks of Live-stream Marketing by Government Officials

2.1. There are Risks of New Formalism and Bureaucracy Arising from the Live-stream Marketing by Government Officials

The purpose of the Live-stream marketing by government officials is to help local specialty products, especially agricultural and sideline products, find a market, promote the resumption of work and production, and help people get rid of poverty and get rich. In reality, however, some officials deviated from the original intention of serving the people by broadcasting their goods in order to achieve their political achievements and get more clicks. In order to improve their political achievements, some government officials even falsify the data and make a big apportionment, which makes the Live-stream marketing out of shape and out of taste. As a result, the official live broadcast of carrying goods out of style rather than actual effect finally gives rise to new formalism and bureaucratism. For example, the leaders of a county set a minimum amount of consumption when they broadcast the delivery of goods, and forced the government personnel to consume, which had a negative impact on the society. In addition, some government officials have not yet adapted to the characteristics of another way of communication, such as the network broadcast room as the conference room, and still follow the official thinking and executive orders formed over the years to do the live broadcast. Some government officials are not familiar with the language of online communication, so they still use the speaking habits of officials in the live broadcast, recommend products with the speech style of leaders, and their communication style is not down-to-earth, which scares away many onlookers. If there are behaviors such as fraud and appositions in the Live-stream marketing, it will not only go against the original intention of the Live-stream marketing but also easily arouse the dissatisfaction of cadres and the masses and damage the good image of the party and the government.

2.2. If Government Officials do not Strictly Check the Products during the Live-stream Marketing, it Will Damage the Credibility of the Government

The credibility of the government is the public recognition and trust which formed gradually, subtly and dynamically in performing the basic administrative functions [2]. Different from professional anchors and web celebrity, government officials are national civil servants and leading cadres. Their live broadcast is not a commercial activity, but a governmental service and public service. The Live-stream marketing by officials is closely linked to the credibility of the government, which is used to endorse local products. Therefore, if the inspection is not strict, the product quality is not up to standard, or the live broadcast propaganda is exaggerated, consumers will be dissatisfied with the products, which will not only make the officials fall into the mire of endorsement responsibility but also damage the credibility and authority of government agencies, and seriously affect the government image.

2.3. There are Potential Legal Risks in the Live-stream Marketing by Government Officials

At present, although there are no specific laws and regulations on The Live-stream marketing, they are all involved in the Advertisements Law of the People's Republic of China and other laws and regulations. Article 2 of the Advertising Law of the People's Republic of China stipulates that "the advertising spokesperson referred to in this Law refers to any natural person, legal person or other organization other than the advertiser who, in his own name or image, recommends or certifies commodities and services in the advertisement" [3]. The Live-stream marketing is essentially a kind of advertising. In the livestream, officials recommended and certified the goods as public officials, so they actually became spokesmen for the

advertisements. Therefore, officials must also abide by the "Advertisement Law of the People's Republic of China" and other laws and regulations when conducting live broadcast.

The Advertising Law of the People's Republic of China stipulates certain obligations of advertising spokespersons, such as true spokespersons, no endorsement without use, and no endorsement for medical treatment, medicine and medical devices. According to article 56 of the Advertising Law of the People's Republic of China, if the false advertisement of a commodity or service that is related to the life and health of consumers causes damage to consumers, the advertisement spokespersons of the commodity shall bear joint and several liabilities with the advertiser [4]. Therefore, government officials who act as spokespersons of products may be exposed to product liability risks in their live broadcast with goods. If they break the law, they need to bear the corresponding administrative and civil legal liabilities.

2.4. The Lack of Effective Supervision over the Live-stream Marketing by Government Officials May Easily Lead to Corruption Risks

Because of the particularity of its identity, the Live-stream marketing by government officials itself is prominent, which is helpful to attract eyeballs and traffic for the products. However, as a new thing appearing in a specific period, the explicit rules and regulations are lacking. In addition, there are a lot of local enterprises and featured products. In terms of the selection of goods, the direct broadcast of officials will be influenced by administrative power, and there will be great potential rent-seeking power, and there will be the risk of corruption [5]. In addition, it is unavoidable for officials to have direct contact with relevant enterprises when Live-stream marketing, which may lead to illegal behaviors such as soliciting and accepting bribes, and illegal phenomena such as accepting endorsement fees and hard work fees.

3. Countermeasures and Suggestions

3.1. Improve Laws and Regulations, and Strengthen Supervision

As an emerging consumption model, Live-stream marketing by government officials has strong explosive power. However, due to its relatively short time of occurrence, the current supervision mechanism is not sound, so there will be more unpredictable risks [6]. But it is not illegal for Live-stream marketing by government officials. Therefore, Live-stream marketing by government officials, supervision cannot be absent. While encouraging more officials to walk into the live broadcast room, the state should study and plan relevant policies and regulations as soon as possible, clarify the legal responsibility of officials' live broadcast, strengthen supervision, and strictly regulate the behavior of local government officials at all levels to ensure the healthy and orderly development of Live-stream marketing by government officials. Government officials should strictly observe the relevant disciplines, policies and regulations when taking part in the Live-stream marketing, prevent the behavior of Live-stream marketing, eliminate formalism, strictly examine and check every link of the activities, prevent sales fraud, hard allocation and other fraud problems, and prevent the problem of emphasizing form over actual effect. Officials are also required to strictly abide by the Advertisement Law of the People's Republic of China and other relevant laws and regulations when Live-stream marketing, and it is forbidden to fabricate and exaggerate the characteristics of products and other illegal propaganda activities.

3.2. Strengthen Education on Clean Government to Prevent Corruption

In order to prevent corruption, government officials should be honest and self-disciplined in Live-stream marketing. Live-stream marketing by officials belongs to the government's initiative service, and public welfare is the prerequisite for them to take part in the Live-stream marketing. The government takes the initiative to promote local products and enterprises to help enterprises, businesses and farmers tide over the difficulties [7]. Therefore, government

officials should be educated about clean government, so they will abandon their selfish thoughts and concentrate on helping the masses to sell agricultural products to benefit the masses. They should never take advantage of the opportunity of live broadcasting to receive remuneration or even solicit bribes.

3.3. Strictly Check on the Puality of the Product

Unlike celebrities, web celebrity and entrepreneurs, government officials' ability to deliver goods ultimately comes from the credibility of government departments. The willingness of netizens to place orders for products recommended by officials also stems from trust in their special status. However, whether the officials can accumulate good public praise depends on the quality of the products they recommend. Therefore, officials should handpick partners and strictly control product quality. They should not only be good product promoters, but also be good quality inspectors. They should recommend local products with high quality, rich varieties and distinctive features to netizens, so that their credibility and online sales power can complement each other. In addition, they should focus on promoting local industries with distinctive advantages and certifying poverty alleviation products. At present, we should mainly promote the unsold agricultural products affected by the epidemic and related products that will help local enterprises to resume work and production.

4. Conclusion

The emergence and prevalence of Live-stream marketing by government officials has played an important role in reducing the impact of COVID-19, promoting consumption and economic recovery, and improving the image of leading officials and local governments. At the same time, there are many hidden worries and risks in the Live-stream marketing by government officials, so it is necessary to further standardize its development. Of course, we should not regard the Live-stream marketing by government officials as an emergency measure to reduce the impact of the epidemic, but as a powerful lever for local governments to optimize and integrate various resources and promote high-quality economic and social development.

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