

Bilibili Video Streaming Platform: Community Culture Identity vs. Commercial Culture

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In this chapter, the author presented the “commercial dilemma” that trapped a famous Chinese video website called Bilibili. In the beginning, Bilibili was a streaming video website for only a small group of users, fans of AGC (Anime Gaming and Comics). This small group of users who shared similar interests created a strong community with a clear culture. However, as the development of Bilibili continued, the platform attracted more new users who for many didn’t belong to the original ACG culture. Under this circumstance, a conflict happened between the original users of the platform and the management. The original community perceived that the CEO of Bilibili decided to sacrifice the original ACG culture to get more traffic from mass users. This situation created lots of debates online among netizens with different opinions. The chapter will therefore present the company, collect many different opinions from netizens, and classify them to show how netizens from China reacted to this issue. It will also outline how the company handled and responded to the situation.

BRAND BACKGROUND

Brief Introduction

BILI BILI (NASDAQ: BILI; HKEX:9626), English name: Bilibili, short for B station, is now a cultural community and video platform highly gathered by young generations in China. This website was founded on June 26, 2009, and is affectionately called “B Station” by fans. On March 28, 2018, Bilibili was listed on NASDAQ. On March 29, 2021, Bilibili officially went public in Hong Kong.

In the early days, Bilibili was a video website for ACG (animation, comic, game) content creation and sharing. After more than ten years of development, it has built an ecosystem that continuously produces high-quality content around users, creators and content (Lukman, et al., 2020). B station has covered more than 7,000 multicultural communities of interest circles. It has won first place in the two lists of “Gen Z’s Preference APP” and “Gen Z’s preference for Extensive Entertainment APP” by Quest-Mobile Research Institute and was included in the “Brand Z” Report of the top 100 Most Valuable Chinese Brands 2019.

On November 17, 2021 (Beijing Time), Bilibili announced its unaudited financial results for the third quarter that ended September 30, 2021. According to the financial report, the revenue of Bilibili reached 5.21 billion yuan in the third quarter, up 61% year on year, and various community operation data hit a new high.

Developing History (Bilibili also called B-station in Chinese.)

From 2009 to 2014: Bilibili established and started to operate its business

On June 26, 2009, Bilibili was officially established. In February 2010, Bilibili organized 40 UP hosts to make the first Video of Chinese New Year greetings (the prototype of Chinese New Year greetings), which attracted many netizens to watch and gathered considerable popularity. After that, Rui Chen, co-founder of Cheetah Mobile Inc., joined Bilibili as an angel investor in 2011. February 2, 2011, 2011 Bilibili New Year’s Worship was launched, and 210 video uploaders participated in the production of this New Year’s worship. In 2012, the Bilibili mobile version was officially launched (<https://baike.baidu.com/item/IOS/45705>). On October 5, 2013, Bilibili held the first BML at the Mercedes-Benz Arena in Shanghai, where 800 audience members toasted to Bilibili (<https://baike.baidu.com/item/BML>). Since 2014, Bilibili has partnered with Sony’s wholly-owned subsidiary Aniplex to purchase animation rights. In 2016, Bilibili announced that it was the exclusive agent for Aniplex’s mobile game Fate/Grand Order. In November 2014, Rui Chen officially joined Bilibili as chairman.

From 2015 to 2017: Bilibili got maturity and further expand its influence (<https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E9%99%88%E7%9D%BF/19185575>)

On April 18, 2015, Bilibili launched the first offline tour “Bilibili Micro Link” in Chengdu, followed by an offline tour in Guangzhou, Xi ‘an, on October 31, 2015, the first Bilibili animation character became popular. In 2016, Bilibili launched the charging plan function. The dance area was the first zone to open the charging function, and then the major zones were gradually opened. On February 4, the whole of Bilibili opened the charging plan. The charging plan refers to viewers buying a virtual gift for their favoured uploaders voluntarily to encourage them to produce more excellent videos. On March 26, 2016, Bilibili participated in Anime Japan 2016 with domestic animation. Bilibili became the first Chinese Internet company to enter Anime Japan. On July 28, 2016, Bilibili participated in ChinaJoy for the first time. At the booth site of Bilibili, the super luxurious Bilibili, Fate/Grand Order pain car and muscle-shaped small TV appeared one by one, attracting fans to watch and take photos. On October 28, 2016, Bilibili announced at the launching ceremony of the Shanghai Men’s Basketball Team that Station B had officially become the team’s title sponsor for the new season, and the Shanghai Men’s Basketball Team had officially changed its name to “Shanghai Bilibili Basketball Team” (<https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E4%B8%8A%E6%B5%B7%E5%93%94%E5%93%A9%E5%93%94%E5%93%A9%E7%AF%AE%E7%90%83%E9%98%9F/20141100>). On Decem-

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