

The Size of Your Stage = The Size of Your Heart

An Interview with Guo Zhenxi, Director, Advertising, Business, and Information Service Center, and Director, CCTV Economic Channel, China Central Television (CCTV), Beijing



Guo Zhenxi

EDITORS' NOTE With an M.A. in economics from Lanzhou University, Guo Zhenxi joined CCTV in 1992 as a journalist, and then became a producer. From May 1998 to April 2001, he worked as associate director of CCTV's advertising department. He was appointed director of CCTV's advertising department prior to his current position, where he increased advertising revenue over 50 consecutive months from May 2001 to June 2005. He has earned a variety of honors, including being named one of China's top 10 media managers.

COMPANY BRIEF China Central Television (CCTV) is the most influential national TV station in China. CCTV's penetration in China reached 94.4 percent in 2003, with an audience of 1.15 billion. Its ratings share accounts for more than 30 percent of the total and is still on the rise. Currently, CCTV has 16 channels, covering every aspect of life. In addition, CCTV has a high-definition TV system, which is on test broadcast; 11 pay-TV channels; and 28 online channels. This year, CCTV has put forward a new strategy featuring "the branding of specialized channels," and has started to shift its focus from TV-program production to the branding of TV media.

What effect has the transformation

from a planned economy to a market economy had on CCTV?

In the late '80s and '90s, CCTV focused mainly on the reform of news programs, which laid a foundation for future development and set CCTV's position as China's number-one media brand. In 1999, CCTV implemented a strategy based on the idea of specialized channels, individualized programs, and quality programming, which led to a large number of TV programs with great influence. In the past two years, CCTV has implemented the "advance-or-out" system in its programs. The rapid development of CCTV over the past few years, is the result of the reform and development.

How does CCTV promote China's internationalization process?

As the most authoritative medium in China, CCTV bears the responsibility of introducing China to the world. The signals of our Chinese-, English-, Spanish-, and French-language international channels are transmitted by satellite to the farthest corners of the world. Moreover, CCTV has entered terrestrial broadcasting systems in more than 120 countries and regions in North America, Europe, Africa, Asia, Oceania, and Central and South America. On October 1, 2004, headed by CCTV, domestic local TV stations and overseas Chinese-language media jointly launched the China Satellite TV Great Wall Platform, which includes six CCTV channels, seven provincial channels, and 17 programs from overseas Chinese-language media. The platform has entered the terrestrial broadcasting system in North America, which demonstrates that CCTV has stepped onto a new stage in the process of internationalization.

What are CCTV's branding strategies?

The communication guidelines of CCTV are to hand down civilization and make explorations and innovations. This reflects not only CCTV's responsibility in handing down Chinese civilization and advanced human culture, but also its innovation in embracing the world and the future.

Since CCTV is the only TV network

that covers the whole of China, influence lies at the core of CCTV's branding strategies. In China, CCTV represents the Communist Party of China and the government, while outside China, it represents China. The depth and breadth of its influence on China's politics, economy, culture, and people's lives and the added value that advertisers get cannot be matched by any other medium. The win-win partnerships that form between CCTV and its advertisers, in terms of building their respective brands, is the best illustration of CCTV's brand strategy.

How is CCTV involved in the development of the Chinese economy?

CCTV and its advertising department witness and promote the rapid development of the Chinese economy, and grow together with the Chinese economy. We always advocate that the media are a strategic resource for enterprises, and that the media should establish cooperative relations with enterprises. We adhere to customer-oriented guidelines and help clients to make the best use of media resources.

With the aim of keeping in line with reform and opening up, growing together with the Chinese economy, and joining hands with enterprises, we actively participate in the main battlefield of economic construction, focusing on the development of the main industries and promoting the expansion and updating of industries. Each year, we hold more than 20 industrial summits. Participants discuss sustained development and modernization of the industry.

What is behind your slogan, "the size of your stage depends on the size of your heart"?

This slogan reflects CCTV's confidence in the future, its passion, and its dream. Currently, the Chinese economy is facing a new round of development opportunities and many domestic enterprises are beginning to move onto a new step. As the national TV station, CCTV is obliged to provide a wide stage for Chinese enterprises, to enable them to have their own confidence, passion, and dream. 