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# Value Orientation and Dimension Expansion of City Image Communication: A Case Study of Chengdu

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**Abstract:** The image of a city embodies its fundamental values and unique characteristics, representing the essence of its urban culture and spirit. It is considered to be one of the most valuable intangible assets of a city and serves as a crucial driving force for its ongoing development. Taking Chengdu as an example, this paper conducted a comprehensive analysis of Chengdu's city image communication strategy through various dimensions, such as the city's value orientation and modes of communication. First, it was necessary to explore the image resources of Chengdu, and based on this, the urban value orientation of "Man-Chengdu," an extensive strategy used by Chengdu to better communicate its culture, was proposed to facilitate image communication. Second, it was necessary to expand the dimensions of Chengdu's city image communication. This was achieved by building a resource pool of city image elements, leveraging major media events to promote communication and enhancing the correlation between content and channel platforms. Moreover, efforts were also made to develop people-oriented narrative strategies and give full play to the advantages of new technologies to form an integrated communication mode. Finally, it was crucial to bridge the official and folk communication systems to enable multiple subjects to share Chengdu's stories from diverse perspectives, thus improving the breadth and validity of Chengdu's image communication.

**Keywords:** city image, communication, value, dimension

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Chengdu, the capital city of Sichuan province, is a vibrant metropolitan with a long history and splendid culture. Blessed with gorgeous natural scenery, such as Mount Qingcheng, the Dujiangyan Irrigation System, etc., Chengdu is also abundant in cultural landscapes, such as the Wuhou Temple, the Du Fu Thatched Cottage, the Kuanzhai Alleys, the Jinli Street, etc. The city's unique food culture, folk culture, and leisurely lifestyles have earned Chengdu the reputation as the "Land of Abundance." City image is a concentrated expression of urban culture and the city's spirit. It is the most valuable intangible asset of the city and an important driving force for urban development. This paper explores two main questions. First, what are the fundamental value orientations and core elements that underpin image communication in Chengdu? Second, what strategies should be employed to broaden the communication dimension of Chengdu to ensure the comprehensive, accurate, and effective communication of its image?

### Research Background

The word "image" has its roots in the Latin term "Imago" and was used to describe the representation projected by the external world in the human brain (Chen & Jin, 2022, pp. 1–12). The term "city image" was first proposed by the American urban theorist Kevin Andrew Lynch in his famous book *The Image of the City* published in 1960. According to Lynch (2017), there seems to be a public image of any given city, which is the overlap of many individual images. Or perhaps there was a series of public images, each held by some significant number of citizens. Cox and Zannaras (1973) proposed a categorization of the city image as the designative image and the appraisive image. The designative image pertains to individuals' perception of a city's existing traits, while the appraisive image concerns an individual's psychological assessment of the city's value.

Chen Ying (2009) described the creation of a city's image by the media as an "imaginary geography" that resulted from the interplay of various historical influences. He Guoping (2010) constructed a pyramidal model for city image communication which consisted of stakeholders, urban marketing, mass media, and cultural strategies. Cao Jinsong (2012) proposed that city image communication should be based on narrative, sharing, and communicative principles, which were the fundamental principles of city image communication. Lv Kai and Li Wen (2016) held that the international expression of Chinese cities' images should be in line with the perspectives of both narrators and foreign audiences, as well as with their "pre-understanding" structures. Fei Aihua (2012) believed that the "Big Event" strategy comprised three main components: a theme-driven approach, mobilizing various media channels, and creating an engaging experience for the audience. Fan Hong (2008) suggested ten ways to accelerate the communication of a city's international brand image, including prioritizing planning for urban brand communication systems, emphasizing

the internationalized planning and packaging of the city, using multiple languages, giving importance to both domestic and foreign news media, and hosting regular city press conferences. The rapid development of new media has brought new opportunities for urban image communication and promotion, leading to the emergence of various research findings in this field. Mo Zhiyong (2013) argued that the significance and communicative potential of showcasing city brand images through digital new media platforms, particularly in audio and video formats, should not be overlooked. According to Wu Xiaofei and Cui Dandan (2019), short videos have emerged as a vital tool in promoting government-led urban image publicity, and have evolved into a preferred approach to urban image communication in recent years. Deng Yuanbing and Zhao Luhong (2019) believed that “common individuals” were the propagator and key characters for the communication of city image. As for the research on Chengdu’s image, Huang Lin (2013) argued that the giant panda, as a cultural icon, delivered a natural and amiable representation of Chengdu, which will enhance the city’s appeal to the audience by making its image fresh, friendly, and approachable, thus reducing emotional barriers and communication costs. According to Chen Xu (2022), the city image of Chengdu was far from fully explored in terms of its connotation, and there was a lack of integration of multiple communication systems, resulting in a need for further improvement of the communication effect. Liu Xingquan and Hu Yan (2015) pointed out that Chengdu had a diverse range of urban orientations coupled with abundant tourism resources and symbolic landmarks, but it lacked a precise and central image orientation. Currently, extensive research has been conducted on the principles and strategies of city image communication. However, there was a limited investigation on the value orientations and communication dimensions of city image communication. This paper utilizes Chengdu as a case study to examine the value orientation of the city image and approaches to broadening its communication dimension.

### **Value Orientation of Chengdu’s City Image**

City image refers to the distinctive personality and disposition of a city that is shaped by its geographical features, historical and cultural resources, civic attitude, and other factors. It encompasses the fundamental values and qualities that define the city. By utilizing a range of cultural symbols and promoting them widely, it shapes the public’s understanding, emotions, and assessment of both the physical appearance and internal essence of the city. The image of a city abstractly captures its fundamental characteristics, including its historical evolution, natural environment, cultural legacy, spiritual heritage, urban culture, economic foundation, civic morality, and city ethos. It encompasses various aspects of a city, including its scale, development level and model, and living quality. Today, as the competition for comprehensive strength among cities is becoming

increasingly fierce, city image, as a representation of the essence of the urban culture and spirit of a city, is playing an increasingly important role in this competition. It is considered to be one of the most valuable intangible assets of a city and serves as a crucial driving force for its ongoing development.

Effective urban image communication hinges on the value orientation of a city, which encompasses the historical connotation and spiritual disposition that a city projects to the world. It represents the distilled essence of a city's unique characteristics and reflects the long-standing interplay between its natural environment and human inhabitants. Although the hardware and software components of a city, such as its physical geography, economic development, history, and culture, may remain relatively stable in the short term, its image can be enhanced through strategic and precise positioning (Su, 2013, pp. 13–22). The core value of a city's image is of great significance. It relates to the identity and collective perception of the city. It can not only be internalized as people's sense of belonging and identity, as well as a cohesive force for urban development, but also be externalized as the brand attraction, appeal, and international influence of the city. The core value of a city's image should be extracted from its historical deposits, cultural resources, economic basis, lifestyle, and other aspects.

First, Chengdu is a famous historical and cultural city with a long history and splendid culture. Established during the Qin Dynasty (221 BC–207 BC) over 2,000 years ago, Chengdu was once recognized as the “Capital of Shu” in ancient times. Today, it remains a treasure trove of profound and extensive historical and cultural resources. The Baodun Culture, which represents the prehistoric city site group in the Chengdu Plain, predates the Sanxingdui Culture, and is regarded as the source of Shu culture. Chengdu has a rich and illustrious history, as seen in its impressive landmarks like the Dujiangyan Irrigation System, the Sanxingdui and Jinsha archaeological sites. This city was once the residence of renowned poets, such as Li Bai, Du Fu, and Lu You. It was a city boasting a rich literary tradition, whose poetic legacy was preserved through cultural sites like the Du Fu Thatched Cottage and the Wuhou Temple.

Second, Chengdu boasts unique and beautiful natural landscapes. Chengdu is fondly referred to as the “park city under the snow mountains.” On a bright day, one can relish the picturesque view of “My window frames the snow-crowned Xiling Mountain,” vividly captured by Du Fu. Qingcheng Mountain, one of the four notable Taoist mountains in China, is also located in the city, and is hailed as “the quietest and most secluded place in the world.” Additionally, Chengdu is also known as the “Hibiscus City,” with the hibiscus flower serving as its city flower. When in full bloom between August and October, the hibiscus lends a charming romantic aura to Chengdu. With its diverse culinary offerings ranging from traditional Chengdu snacks and hot pots to global cuisines, Chengdu is a city rich in gastronomic resources. This has earned it the epithet “a city where the most

delicious Chinese culinary offerings can be found.” Chengdu’s picturesque landscapes and mouth-watering delicacies have combined to create a distinctive business card for the city.

Third, Chengdu has experienced a remarkable pace of economic and social growth in recent years. Chengdu, a megacity with a permanent population of more than 20 million (Sichuan Provincial People’s Government, 2023), has become the third city in China’s mainland with two international airports after Beijing and Shanghai with the completion of Tianfu International Airport. In 2022, Chengdu’s GDP surpassed 2 trillion yuan (Chengdu Municipal People’s Government, 2023), indicating its growing economic prowess. Moreover, the construction of the Chengdu-Chongqing Economic Circle has been accelerated, and there has been an all-around development of a demonstration zone for park cities that embody new development concepts, indicating the elevated potential of Chengdu in the overall national strategy. Chengdu has topped the list of “China’s Happiest Cities” for 14 consecutive years (Sichuan Provincial People’s Government, 2022), and ranked second among the pilot cities of “Science and Technology Innovation China” in 2022 (China Association for Science and Technology, 2023). Chengdu’s economic and technological growth has demonstrated immense momentum, presenting the city with an unprecedented historical opportunity.

Fourth, Chengdu was an inclusive, harmonious, and leisurely city. Everyday life in Chengdu is pleasant and satisfying, with the city’s teahouses serving as a notable symbol of leisure, where its thousands of years of cultural heritage are embodied. But Chengdu’s emphasis on leisure doesn’t equate to complacency or stagnation. On the contrary, the city has always been at the forefront of attracting fashion trendsetters and brands. Chengdu’s diverse fashion consumption scenes are reflected in the development of various urban commercial entities like Sino-Ocean Taikoo Li Chengdu, New Century Global Center, and SKP. These entities offer a combination of diversified options to cater to the varying needs of consumers. Chengdu’s fashion scenes, which include elements such as Han Chinese Clothing and games, have attracted many ACGN<sup>①</sup> players to the city. The image of Chengdu was characterized by an attitude of tolerance and diversity, blending traditional elements with modern fashion, and balancing prosperity with a laid-back atmosphere.

The effective image communication of a city hinges on a clear and definite core value. After a thorough analysis of Chengdu’s resources, we put forward a clear value orientation for Chengdu’s image communication; that was, “*Man* (漫) -Chengdu.”<sup>②</sup> Unlike such orientations as “Panda Hometown,” “Park City,” and “Gourmet City,” which focus on objective resources, “*Man*-Chengdu” places more emphasis on the subjective emotions

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① ACGN is the abbreviation for “Animation, Comics, Games, and Novels.” It is a term used in some Asian countries to describe the strong economic and cultural connection that exists between animation, comics, games, and novels in the Japanese market.

② The pronunciation “*Man*” corresponds to the Chinese character 漫, which possesses a plethora of connotations related to leisure, optimism, and fashion. These profound associations will be further explored and elucidated within the context of this article.

and cognitive attitudes of the general public. The “*Man*” in “*Man-Chengdu*” embodies three meanings. First, it represents the delightful, entertaining, and cozy characteristics of Chengdu, which are a symbol of the Chengdu people’s ability to slow down and savor life amidst the fast-paced rhythm of modern-day life. Second, it shows the inherent optimism and open-mindedness of the people in Chengdu. Despite having suffered significant natural disasters like earthquakes and extremely high temperatures, Chengdu people have remained resilient, humorous, and friendly in the face of hardship. They are working together with great determination and creativity to make the city thrive and flourish. Third, “*Man*” also depicts the fashion and romance of Chengdu’s contemporary urban landscape as a modern metropolis. In 2018, Chengdu put forward a plan to establish itself as a globally renowned hub for culture and creativity, tourism, and sports, and a gathering place for global food, music, and exhibitions. The integration and development of cultural and creative products, tourism, sports competitions, food, music, exhibitions, and other distinctive elements create a mutually beneficial, interactive, and win-win environment. These combined efforts will generate powerful synergies, further enhancing the charm and vibrancy of Chengdu’s contemporary urban landscape.

Based on the establishment of the value orientation of “*Man-Chengdu*,” we attempt to enhance Chengdu’s city image through various communication dimensions, including developing compelling communication content, implementing effective narrative strategies, selecting appropriate communication modes, and engaging key communication subjects.

### **Expanding Diversified Communication Content**

Effective city image communication is centered on highlighting a city’s resources and characteristics, with stories serving as a powerful tool for conveying the essence of its culture and evoking emotions. Efforts should be made to craft high-quality communication content and tell the stories of Chengdu well, in order to enhance the city image of Chengdu.

### **Building a Resource Pool of Chengdu’s City Image Elements**

City image elements constitute the foundation of communicating and narrating a city’s identity and are the distinguishing symbols of the city (Xue, 2002). Chengdu is a city with unique cultural characteristics and deposits formed by the collision of traditional culture and popular culture. The city owns a wide range of image elements covering many industries and fields, such as giant pandas, covered-bowl tea, Golden Sun Bird, and museums, among others. The process of selecting and combining various elements, such as food, clothing, housing, transportation, and entertainment, is constructive to creating

an overall impression of Chengdu and developing different strategies according to varied categories of these elements to communicate its city image. Additionally, this approach can provide tailored recommendations and insights for individuals based on their specific interests and needs. The following figure shows the resource pool of Chengdu’s city image elements constructed in this paper.

Based on the element resource pool, the “*Man-Chengdu*” strategy was formulated by selecting elements suitable for Chengdu’s city image as the communication media and carriers, thus expanding the influence of communication. Chengdu has achieved notable

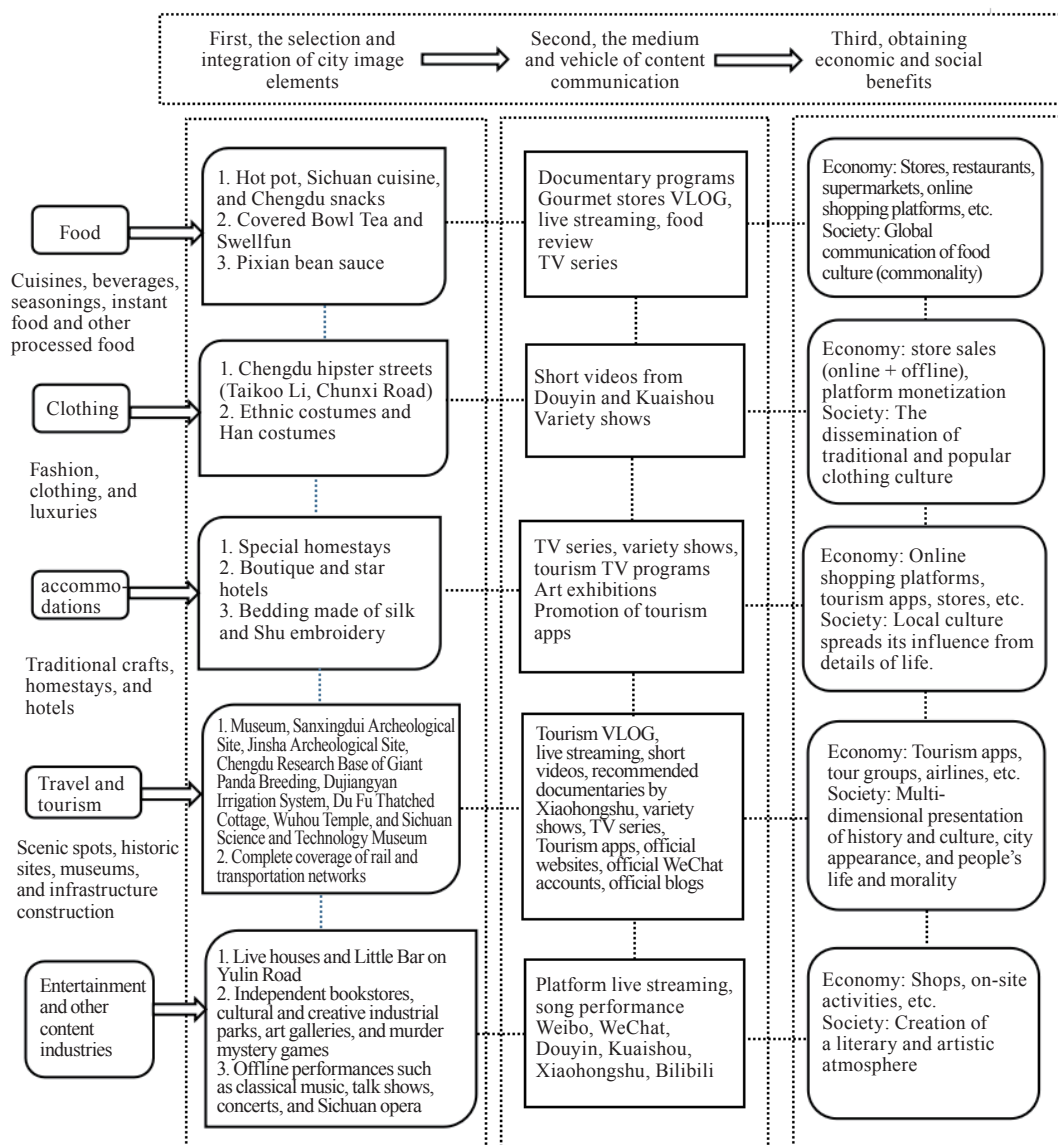


Figure 1 Resource Pool of Chengdu’s City Image Elements



results in selecting communication elements. Food, as the paramount necessity of the people, is represented by hot pots, Sichuan cuisine, and covered-bowl tea, which are dispersed in the streets and alleys of Chengdu, embodying the lifestyle of the Chengdu people. Clothing represents the fashion trend of a city. Taikoo Li, Wangping Street, and Chunxi Road are the fashion centers in Chengdu, where you can find various fashion elements and encounter diversified promotion activities represented by street snaps and live streaming. People wandering leisurely on the bustling streets become the fantastic scenery of the streets, colorful and enchanting. All of these showcase the fashion tone of the Chengdu people. As for accommodation, Chengdu boasts a variety of featured homestays and hotels with distinctive decoration styles, where you can experience Chengdu's intangible cultural heritage and panda culture. Tourism is another attractive point of Chengdu. You can wander around the streets and alleys of the city, and visit scenic spots, historical sites, and museums, immersing yourselves in the profound historical atmosphere and modern prosperity of Chengdu. Other content industries, such as bars and cultural and artistic museums, also enrich the life of Chengdu people and lend a romantic and artistic aura to the city.

### **Leveraging Major Media Events to Promote Communication**

Effective city image communication cannot be separated from strategic city marketing. An effective approach to city marketing is to fully leverage major media events, such as international sports competitions and conferences, as well as large brand activities with local characteristics, local festivals, and cultural and artistic creative activities. Major media events will provide a wonderful opportunity for the city to showcase its delicate cuisine, Tianfu Culture, panda Culture, city appearance, and hospitable people to the international community. With major media events, Chengdu is sure to capture the attention of people from all over the world. Meanwhile, Chengdu will capitalize on the buzz of the major media events to comprehensively revitalize and unify various elements to promote its image. It will seek the most appropriate approaches to maximizing the communication effect, striving to build itself into a glorious city with international competitive edges. The city will also leverage the Chengdu Creative & Design Week to stimulate residents' innovative awareness and enhance their engagement in the presentation of Chengdu's city appearance and lifestyles according to different themes. Tourism festivals are also held to promote the image communication of the city. A variety of boutique tourism routes are planned to promote cultural communication and the economic development of those splendid cities around Chengdu. On the occasion of International Museum Day, the city collaborates with various museums to engage the public in the carnival of culture. The China Food & Drinks Fair provides an opportunity for Chengdu to showcase its featured food and alcohol. At the promotion activity of

“Meeting Intangible Cultural Heritage,” celebrities are invited to help promote Chengdu culture, represented by the Sichuan embroidery to netizens across the country. Through a series of media events, Chengdu has effectively enhanced the public’s cultural recognition and a sense of belonging to the city.

### **Enhancing the Correlation Between Content and Channel Platforms**

It is necessary to clarify the themes of image elements and pay attention to the characteristics of the platforms and their users in order to select the most appropriate channel platforms to promote the image communication of Chengdu. In a nutshell, the city image of Chengdu can be divided into the political and economic image, cultural image, and environmental image. First, the Chengdu Municipal People’s Government plays a crucial role in shaping and disseminating the political and economic image of the city. The government announces information on urban policies, resident income, living standards, and economic development, among others, via various official channels, such as the official government affairs platform, media matrix, official WeChat account, official blog, and official website. Second, multiple channels should be leveraged to effectively promote the cultural image of Chengdu. For example, various social media platforms, such as Douyin, Kuaishou, Weibo, and WeChat, should be utilized to communicate the featured culture of Chengdu; e-commerce platforms, such as Xiaohongshu and Meituan, and tourism platforms, such as Mafengwo and Qunar, should be used to promote tourism resources in Chengdu. Third, to effectively communicate the cultural, social, and ecological images of Chengdu, it is recommended to utilize physical spaces in prominent cities across China and around the world to communicate the image of Chengdu, such as large-scale building billboards, subway stations, and urban screens to showcase Chengdu’s unique image to a wider audience in addition to traditional media outlets and social media platforms.

### **Developing People-Oriented Narrative Strategies**

In this era of media convergence, it is crucial to focus on how people perceive and feel about Chengdu in order to effectively promote its image, which can be achieved by crafting compelling narratives that evoke a sense of sharing, consensus, and empathy among audiences and creating content that resonates with the audience.

### **The Shared Narrative: Looking for Commonly Shared Communication Content**

The shared narrative is to find communication content of common interest to the public. Food, sports, scenery, games, and other commonly shared communication content have the greatest potential to trigger a strong resonance among the public. Immersing in the beauty of natural landscapes is also a key source of spiritual support for modern

people. Therefore, it is important to highlight the beautiful natural landscapes, pleasant climate, and comfortable living environment of Chengdu when communicating its city image. Statistics show that Chinese mobile games generate 40 percent of the revenue for the top 100 global mobile game publishers (Sensor Tower, 2003). Among them, Honor of Kings, Game for Peace, and Genshin Impact are extremely popular in China. To attract younger audiences, game developers can integrate elements of Chengdu's culture into their games, such as incorporating historical figures of Chengdu or urban landscapes of Chengdu into the games.

### **The Consensus Narrative: Strengthening Positive Cognition**

The consensus narrative pertains to reinforcing content that is already familiar to the audience, while simultaneously emphasizing the optimization and enhancement of the original material. Chengdu is the hometown of giant pandas and has rich and profound cultural connections to giant pandas. The peace and tolerance, tenacity and calmness displayed by giant pandas are also the common pursuit of people all over the world. Utilizing the unique and precious symbol of giant pandas is of great significance to create and enhance the image of Chengdu, and thereby improving Chengdu's visibility, reputation, and influence. At the same time, it is necessary to expand the practice of Chengdu's aesthetics and explore the ultimate pursuit of human spiritual needs behind the creation of Chengdu Park City to make Chengdu full of a creative, artistic, and cultural aura.

### **The Empathy Narrative: Focusing on Emotional Connectivity**

The empathy narrative aims to establish an emotional connection between the narrative subject of a city and its targeted audience by intersecting emotions in the communication process. First, efforts should be made to invigorate the ancient Shu civilization to maximize its cultural charm and significance. The Sanxingdui and Jinsha archaeological sites are remarkable examples of the ancient Shu people's intellectual achievements. The culture of the Shu people, which is rooted in respect for freedom, sun worship, sacrifice, and animism, as evidenced by the artifacts at the Sanxingdui Site, showcases a shared phenomenon among global civilizations. This similarity in spiritual perception connects the ancient Shu civilization with other ancient civilizations around the world, creating an emotional resonance among all human civilizations and among people all over the world. Second, it is crucial to respect nature and safeguard the environment, and Chengdu has made it a priority to conserve biodiversity. The city is dedicated to constructing an ecological oasis with a variety of features, including "four forests" (Ginkgo, birch, cherry, and red maple), "four gardens" (Peach, orange, pear, and rose), and "four scenic areas" (reed marshes, glass skywalks, tower pavilions, and zigzag streams). Additionally, the city has

established a greenway that winds around the city's perimeter and numerous urban parks. These together showcase Chengdu's excellent ecological environment. Third, the idea that greatness can stem from ordinary beginnings and that even the seemingly insignificant can possess great influence rings true in Chengdu's commitment to highlighting the power of human connections. Through exploring the themes of kinship, love, and friendship, Chengdu aims to tell stories that resonate with people at a personal level and bridge the gap between its residents and those from across the country and the world.

### **Expanding Integrated Communication Modes**

The advent of intelligent media, 5G networks, powerful algorithms, cloud computing, virtual reality, big data, and multimedia technology has opened exciting new possibilities for urban image communication.

### **Using the “Visualization + Scenario” Approach to Establish Virtual and Real Spaces in Chengdu**

A scenario encompasses the interplay between individuals and their surroundings, comprising both tangible elements like physical locations and scenery and intangible soft elements like ambient space and atmosphere that are inextricably linked to the scenario. Visualization is a narrative method that helps virtual objects become concrete and vivid. The scenario is presented through visual means, which complement each other and cannot be separated from one another. The creation of urban scenarios emphasizes the meticulous selection of locations and scenery, as well as the addition of a suitable spatial ambiance. Apart from enhancing real-life environments, it is essential to leverage various technologies to construct virtual scenes that aim to deliver a realistic “sense of the scene” experience. “5G+4K/8K+AI” technologies should be applied to provide users with improved real-time and on-site temporal-spatial experience and to shape the public's perception and desire for specific scenarios. The communication approach that combines “information, experience, and scenario” should be applied to effectively promote Chengdu's city image. This involves producing high-quality videos that showcase the unique features of Chengdu's exhibition halls, museums, and amusement parks. Efforts should also be made to communicate featured information of each element related to Chengdu's image by using descriptive language and sharing experiences in these locations, thus promoting the all-around communication of Chengdu's tourism, culture, history, and residents. Live-streaming activities should also be carried out on short video platforms to present these contents to the audience in an interactive way to deliver an experiential and immersive visual effect. Technologies such as panoramic shooting, lidar modeling, texture scanning,

and digital simulation should also be used to create a digital database and a 3D cloud exhibition hall that showcases cultural relics online, thus enriching the visual experience of the public.

### **Creating Sustainable Value Through Social Media Collaboration**

Socialization mainly refers to the interaction or communication in the form of benefit or non-benefit conducted by multiple subjects on social media platforms. First, to effectively communicate the image of Chengdu, a management institution should be established with the participation of the government, social media platforms, multi-channel networks (MCNs), key opinion leaders (KOLs), key opinion consumers (KOCs), and local social platform users. Through collaboration, these parties can form a communication matrix and clarify their roles and cooperation principles to achieve value co-creation. Second, it is essential to establish a consensus on the value creation of Chengdu's city image based on its unique cultural disposition. The city should focus on promoting social consumption and social collaborative governance by creating online communities and channels that encourage public participation in decision-making. This will facilitate collaborative communication among social media platforms. Third, efforts should be made to promote the socialized development of spatial areas in commercial blocks by offering diverse business forms that attract people with similar interests and hobbies. By creating new social scenarios that align with current trends, Chengdu can also attract more young consumers to commercial blocks, cultivate their loyalty, and increase the economic value of such areas. Meanwhile, various interesting topics should be introduced to enhance the popularity of Chengdu and related topics. As the checking-in culture on social networks continues to grow, Chengdu can expand the scope and types of places for internet celebrities to check in by tapping into users' desire to share experiences, create content, and follow trends to enhance the popularity of topics related to Chengdu via social media.

### **Fostering the International Communication of Chengdu via Multiple Approaches**

It is necessary to establish a systematic framework for Chengdu's international communication by conducting extensive research regarding the requirements of international markets and target audiences. First, it is essential to enhance the international communication of Chengdu's city image. To this end, a media matrix with international influences should be established to promote the extensive and multi-dimensional communication of Chengdu to the international community with the help of multiple subjects. Meanwhile, it is necessary to conduct emotional marketing on international social media platforms to enhance Chengdu's visibility. Second, it is important to use short videos to spread the city brand of Chengdu. The focus should be on highlighting

cultural icons that are already recognizable to people outside of China, such as pandas, local cuisine, and the Jinsha Site, and showcasing the thousands of years of history and culture of this ancient city alongside its modern and cosmopolitan atmosphere. Third, it is crucial to vigorously establish international community organizations, especially organizations dominated by groups such as resident foreign students, overseas students, inbound tourists, and foreigners living in Chengdu. Moreover, foreign internet celebrities should be invited to share stories about Chengdu to achieve creative expression and precise communication of Chengdu. In this way, Chengdu's international communication will be elevated beyond the tool-based level to a value-based one.

### **Expanding Diversified Communication Subjects**

#### **Strengthening the Communication of Official Mainstream Media and Building a Media Matrix**

The mainstream media should take the lead in interpreting policy documents issued by the government on city image communication. By doing so, the official mainstream media can accurately capture the public's information trend, steer them towards the right values, build a shared consensus, and establish a distinct urban cultural identity through targeted communication. This will help enhance the controllability of the city image communication. To effectively communicate Chengdu's city image, the mainstream media, as the major player in communication, should formulate meticulous communication schedules. In addition to leveraging traditional media, such as newspapers, radio, and TV, for overall image communication, they should also strengthen the channel layout and content creation of official media on social media platforms to create a media matrix. Taking Douyin as an example, official mainstream accounts such as "Chengdu Release (*Chengdu Fabu*)" and "About Chengdu (*Jiu Chengdu*)" can be easily found by searching with the keyword "Chengdu." Such official mainstream accounts should actively spread information and hot topics related to Chengdu according to the narrative rules of the platform, and embrace the internet culture with an open mind to show the comprehensive strength and unique style of Chengdu, as well as the government image, city image and resident morality of Chengdu, thus effectively enhancing the image communication effect of Chengdu.

#### **Broadening the Scope of Folk Communication Subjects to Create a Carnival-Like Atmosphere**

In the age of social media, powerful platforms with strong social connections, such as Douyin, Kuaishou, WeChat, and Xiaohongshu, have revolutionized the traditional and fixed relationship between information senders and receivers. The active sharing

and communication among the public in cyberspace have played a significant role in shaping and updating city image communication. Consequently, the subjects of urban image communication have become more diverse and varied. It is necessary to leverage two major folk social media subjects in order to promote Chengdu's city image. The first is the We-Media influential bloggers, who have a professional operation team, dedicated audience groups, and powerful support from millions of followers on various social media platforms. The second is ordinary users, who can easily share posts on social media to garner likes, shares, and engagement. It is necessary to engage folk communication subjects represented by We-Media influential bloggers and ordinary users in the promotion and communication of the city image. This will enable more individuals to share Chengdu's stories, experience its culture, and become advocates for its image. By doing so, we can create a lively and carnival-like atmosphere for Chengdu's image communication. Bridging the official and folk communication systems is crucial to effectively communicating Chengdu's image. This can be achieved by connecting the government and individual members of the public through official new media platforms, enabling them to tell Chengdu's story from diverse perspectives. Such an approach will make Chengdu's city image more appealing and persuasive, ultimately elevating its communication effect and influence to a higher level.

### **Conclusion**

The development of city image provides a unique opportunity for Chengdu to further elevate its urban level, which can boost its economic development by attracting investments and innovating in science and technology. It can also improve the quality of education and the well-being of its residents while enhancing the city's overall attractiveness and competitiveness. Using Chengdu as a case study, we have suggested strategies and ways to enhance city image communication from various dimensions, including refining the core values of the city, broadening communication content, developing innovative narrative strategies, expanding integrated communication methods, and diversifying communication subjects. To promote city image, Chengdu can employ a communication approach that combines technology, culture, and daily life to promote multicultural exchange and mutual learning. Chengdu has an opportunity to showcase its beauty as a park city with ancient Shu characteristics, while also highlighting its unique image characterized by optimism, inclusivity, friendliness, and social welfare. Moreover, Chengdu can deliver a positive image as a city distinguished by advanced technology, diverse fashion elements, and a desirable living environment, thus contributing to enhancing the overall image of Chengdu city and Sichuan province.



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