

# Analysis of the “Group Buying Marketing” Model for Amateur Anchors and its Optimization Strategies—A Case Study of Local Group Buying on Douyin

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**Abstract:** With the rapid development of social e-commerce, the amateur anchor product promotion model has emerged as a novel e-commerce format demonstrating significant market potential. Taking the platform Douyin as an example, amateur anchors facilitate traffic conversion between online and offline channels for merchants while creating entrepreneurial opportunities for themselves through group buying marketing. However, amateur anchors face challenges such as insufficient content creation capabilities, low product compatibility, and unclear commercialization pathways. This paper analyzes the amateur anchor product promotion model and proposes optimization strategies. Through these measures, amateur anchors can enhance their promotional effectiveness and promote the sustainable development of this model.

**Keywords:** Group Buying Marketing; Amateur Anchor; Local Lifestyle Services

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## 1. Introduction

In recent years, the rise of social e-commerce and short video platforms has driven local businesses to adopt online marketing channels. The sales revenue from online e-commerce platforms has grown annually, escalating from RMB 397.5 billion in 2019 to RMB 587.03 billion in 2023<sup>[1]</sup>. This trend has encouraged a growing number of ordinary individuals, including college students, migrant workers, and veterans, to venture into entrepreneurship through short videos or live-streaming sales<sup>[2]</sup>. These individuals, characterized by their large numbers, relatively small follower counts, and limited influence, are often referred to as the “amateur anchors”<sup>[6]</sup>. The so-called amateur anchors are defined as ordinary individuals without significant backgrounds or specialized skills who engage with consumers and promote products through new media platforms<sup>[3]</sup>. This model leverages the traffic advantages and social attributes of short video platforms, transforming traditional e-commerce by overcoming the limitations of celebrity and KOL-driven sales, while also providing new business models and development opportunities for rural revitalization.

## 2. Current Status of Group Buying on Douyin

In March 2021, Douyin launched the function “group buying”, focusing on the food and beverage and hotel accommodation sectors, aimed at assisting businesses in converting online traffic into offline sales. The introduction of this function has not only enhanced interaction between businesses and consumers but has also provided positive support for the recovery of the real economy<sup>[4]</sup>. Douyin’s group buying function enables consumers to discover interested businesses and services through short videos and live streams, allowing them to purchase group-buying products or services directly on the platform, significantly increasing the exposure and conversion rates of local life services. According to the 2023 Annual Data Report released by Douyin Life Services, the total transaction volume for local life services grew by 256% in 2023, with store coverage expanding to over 370 cities, and the number of group buying influencers on the Douyin platform increasing by 2.89 times, contributing an additional RMB 94.6 billion in revenue to brick-and-mortar businesses through store exploration activities.

It is evident that the group buying function on Douyin has played a significant role in the development of local businesses while also providing new entrepreneurial opportunities for amateur anchors. In this context, the Douyin platform has facilitated easy access to group buying by implementing a low-threshold “group buying influencer” certification, allowing regular users to seamlessly join the ranks of group buying promoters and gradually become influential figures in this domain. This has led to the emergence of a new online marketing model centered around amateur anchors engaging in group buying. The following discussion will focus on the operational mechanisms and processes of the amateur anchor product promotion model, further revealing its importance and practical value.

### 3. Operational Model of Amateur Anchor Group Buying Marketing

The amateur anchor product promotion model has emerged in recent years as a novel e-commerce approach, particularly on short video platforms like Douyin. Unlike traditional sales models that rely on celebrities or key opinion leaders (KOLs), the amateur anchor model leverages the platform's vast user base and low entry barriers to attract a significant number of non-professionals to promote and sell products through short videos or live-streaming. Amateur anchors are typically not public figures with star power but rather individuals with a certain follower base, such as regular consumers, shop owners, or rural residents, often referred to as “influencers”. They collaborate with the platform to share authentic experiences and recommendations from their daily lives, stimulating viewers' purchasing desires and thereby monetizing their influence through selling products.

On the platform Douyin, the process of amateur anchors' product selling generally encompasses four key stages: product selection, content creation, product promotion, and purchase verification (see Figure 1).

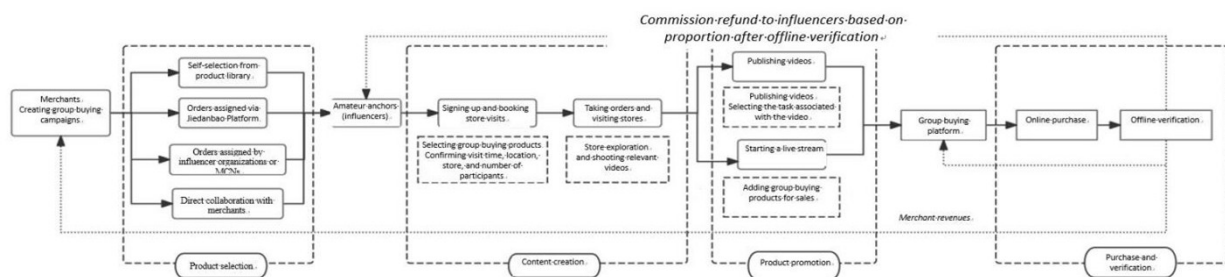


Figure 1 Diagram of Amateur Anchor Product Promotion Model

Initially, merchants publish group buying products or services on the platform, presenting this product information to potential influencers through four primary channels. First, the product selection library on the platform Douyin allows influencers to browse and choose items. Second, merchants can send store visit invitations to designated influencers through a tool named “Jiedanbao”. Third, orders can be dispatched to influencers through influencer organizations or Multi-Channel Networks (MCNs). Lastly, some influencers opt to collaborate directly with merchants for product promotion. If an influencer expresses interest, they can sign up and schedule a store visit, proceeding to the merchant's location at the agreed time to create and publish relevant video content. Subsequently, they guide viewers to click on a link to access the purchase page and complete the transaction through their live-streaming or short videos. After the purchase, consumers must visit the physical store for verification. Once the verification process is completed, the revenue distribution between the merchant and the amateur anchor begins, with a portion of the sales revenue returned to the influencer as commission, while the remaining amount constitutes the merchant's income.

In summary, the model of amateur anchor group buying marketing creates an effective commercial loop through multi-channel information dissemination and content creation, enabling merchants to attract consumers while influencers earn revenue. This process also highlights the close collaborative relationship among the platform, merchants, and influencers.

### 4. Advantages of Amateur Anchor Group Buying Marketing

#### 4.1 Cost-effective dissemination

Compared to celebrities or KOLs, amateur anchors typically do not require substantial endorsement fees, so merchants are able to achieve effective product promotion within limited budgets. The content creation of amateur anchors often relies on personal creativity and everyday life scenarios, which not only significantly reduces production costs but also renders the generated content more relatable, thereby enhancing emotional resonance with the audience. Through this promotional approach, merchants can effectively expand their market presence with minimal financial investment, particularly demonstrating significant advantages in penetrating specific regions or communities.

In addition, the platform Douyin offers a tiered support and incentive mechanism for store-visiting influencers. Douyin categorizes the sales capabilities of these influencers into video sales capability and live-streaming sales capability, with a total of nine levels ranging from

Lv0 to Lv8. For lower-tier influencers, the platform generally provides only free experiences or complimentary receptions, while higher-tier influencers receive more substantial resource support, including higher commission rates or filming fees. Merchants can select collaboration partners based on the influencers' levels, thereby achieving precise marketing while controlling budgets and enhancing the cost-effectiveness of promotional efforts.

## **4.2 High authenticity promotion**

Unlike celebrities or KOLs with strong character settings, amateur anchors tend to prioritize the authenticity of their content. Their shares often stem from personal interests and real-life scenarios, allowing them to present a relatable aspect that resonates with the daily lives of their audience. This sense of authenticity enhances the viewer's trust in the anchor, making the recommended products more acceptable. For instance, I know an amateur anchor who frequently captures moments of dining out with her child and attaches a group buying link for the restaurant in her video. This seemingly mundane yet genuine sharing can evoke resonance among fans, particularly those who are fond of children, ultimately leading to purchasing behavior through the shared link.

Moreover, in the initial stages of their outreach, amateur anchors typically rely on their personal social networks, which fosters a strong social connection due to the familiarity of relationships. By sharing snippets of daily life, such as family activities and gatherings with friends, they can naturally attract the attention and interaction of those around them. This relational network not only provides the anchor with an initial fan base but also enhances its influence within local communities. In contrast to traditional commercial promotion models, amateur anchors can establish a more authentic emotional connection with their fans through this "word-of-mouth" approach, thereby increasing fan loyalty and engagement.

## **4.3 Highly interactivity and sense of participation**

When amateur anchors engage in online group buying marketing within their local area, they enhance the interactivity and sense of participation between themselves and their audience through the creation of a video persona and active viewer engagement, thereby increasing sales conversion rates. Since the target audience of group buying for these anchors primarily consists of local consumers, the promotional efforts are focused on potential buyers within the vicinity of local residents or group purchasing businesses. In addition, the relatable persona of the amateur anchors fosters a geographical closeness and a sense of participation that further amplifies the interactive experience. Viewers can interact and provide feedback through video comments, such as inquiring about specific details of group buying packages or sharing opinions on products or merchants. This interaction also aids amateur anchors in refining their content and product strategies. More importantly, this engagement not only enhances the audience's sense of participation, but also effectively promotes their purchasing intentions. By establishing a close relationship with their audience, anchors can increase their credibility, which leads to better results in terms of sales conversions. Furthermore, as audience engagement rises, the community effect of group buying becomes increasingly evident, with word-of-mouth promotion and trust networks among fans strengthening, which not only boosts conversion and verification rates but also helps amateur anchors solidify their personas and reputations.

# **5. The Challenge of Amateur Anchor Group Buying Marketing**

Although the amateur anchor marketing model has demonstrated significant market potential and promising prospects, driven by platforms like Douyin, amateur anchors still face numerous challenges in their practical sales efforts. These challenges not only affect their sales efficiency but also hinder the sustainable development of the entire model.

## **5.1 Insufficient content creation capabilities**

For most amateur anchors, content creation is their most notable weakness. Firstly, many lack professional skills in photography, video editing, and creative ideation, resulting in content that lacks sufficient appeal and influence. This issue becomes particularly prominent when compared to the content produced by KOLs and celebrity anchors. The content produced by an amateur anchor often appears simplistic and monotonous, lacking professionalism or innovation, making it difficult to convert views into actual sales.

Secondly, in the highly competitive sales market, amateur anchors face the dilemma of content homogenization, leading to declining

user interest and, consequently, reduced sales effectiveness. The platform is flooded with group buying and sales videos, but most of these works share highly similar creative logic, filming techniques, and copywriting, lacking innovation and differentiation. This makes viewers fatigued with the content in a short period of time<sup>[5]</sup>. In addition, due to the lengthy duration of store visits, some influencers split a single visit into multiple episodes. While this approach maintains short-term content output, the repetitive nature and lack of freshness make it challenging to sustain viewer interest in the long run, ultimately affecting the continuity of content and long-term audience engagement.

Lastly, lower-tier influencers face greater difficulties in enhancing their sales capabilities. For instance, in the video sales capability ranking system, levels Lv1-Lv3 are assessed based on the number of local store visits and the number of local store verifications (with a minimum valid amount of RMB 200). Levels Lv4-Lv6 are evaluated on valid payment amounts, valid verification amounts, local store verification counts, and the average views of their top 10 videos. Levels Lv7-Lv8 involve even more stringent criteria. Due to insufficient resource support, amateur anchors relying on themselves to find store visit opportunities face higher costs and greater challenges. For example, some merchants impose strict requirements, often only offering free receptions to influencers with a level of three or higher. This policy inadvertently increases the costs for lower-tier influencers, raising the barriers to securing collaboration opportunities. Moreover, without a team, amateur anchors experience low efficiency in store visits, which may slow down video updates and negatively impact account operations. This, in turn, indirectly affects sales performance, making it difficult for amateur anchors to maintain or improve their ratings.

## **5.2 Product matching and content quality issues**

The effectiveness of amateur anchors in driving sales largely depends on whether the products they promote align with the audience's needs. Firstly, many amateur anchors, due to insufficient market research, often select products based on personal preferences, overlooking the actual needs and interests of their fan base. This approach not only risks promoting products that do not match the purchasing needs of their followers but also directly impacts sales performance and may negatively affect the anchor's credibility and fan loyalty.

Secondly, some amateur anchors rely solely on orders assigned by their group leaders or MCN agencies when selecting group-buying products, without thoroughly understanding or vetting the merchants. Even if they find the products unsatisfactory during store visits, they may still produce videos highlighting the products' advantages to fulfill their assigned tasks. This behavior lacks authenticity and genuine recommendation, resulting in overly commercialized content that diminishes trust and credibility, ultimately undermining sales effectiveness.

Finally, some amateur anchors do not engage in actual store visits. Instead, they obtain video or image materials through content provided by merchants, third-party resource packages, or influencer shares, subsequently processing and uploading these materials. While this "cloud editing" approach allows for rapid content generation in the short term, it is strongly discouraged by platforms. Such practices not only harm user transaction and browsing experiences but also disrupt the platform's creative ecosystem, compromising content quality and overall platform health. Collectively, these behaviors limit the potential of amateur anchors to improve their sales performance and negatively impact the platform's sustainable development.

## **5.3 Unclear commercialization pathways**

Although platforms like Douyin provide amateur anchors with low-barrier entry opportunities, their commercialization pathways remain unclear and unstable. Many amateur anchors lack clear sales goals and long-term strategies, often relying on sporadic traffic and short-term sales achievements while neglecting the long-term needs of brand building and audience cultivation. Such short-term focus limits their potential for sustained growth. In terms of income sources, amateur anchors primarily earn through platform commissions, travel allowances, and other agreed-upon fees. However, due to fluctuating platform traffic and unpredictable content conversion rates, their income is highly variable and uncertain.

In addition, the collaboration model between merchants and amateur anchors is not yet fully mature. Ensuring fair profit distribution and maintaining long-term, stable partnerships remain critical challenges for the current sales model. Only under a clear cooperation framework and stable commercialization pathways can the sales potential of amateur anchors be fully realized.

## **6. Optimization Strategies for Amateur Anchor Product Promotion**

### **6.1 Enhancing content creation capabilities**

In order to improve the quality of content creation, amateur anchors should enhance their creative skills through professional training and guidance. They can participate in content creation workshops offered by MCN agencies or platforms. For example, Douyin has established a learning center specifically for amateur anchors, providing courses such as “Essential Lessons for Newcomers” and “Guidelines for Boosting Video Sales”. These training programs not only help anchors master basic skills like video editing, live-stream techniques, and product presentation but also enhance the creativity and appeal of their content. Through systematic training, amateur anchors will be able to produce more professional and engaging content, thereby increasing audience attention.

In addition, to further optimize content production, platforms, and MCN agencies can provide amateur anchors with user-friendly creation tools and templates, which can help them reduce production costs and improve content quality. These tools can simplify the video production process, enabling anchors to quickly generate high-quality content while ensuring efficiency and effectiveness. Furthermore, amateur anchors can analyze successful sales cases on the platform, learn from their creative elements, and innovate based on their own unique style. By drawing inspiration from successful examples, anchors can avoid content homogenization, enhance diversity and differentiation in their creations, and strengthen the market competitiveness of their content.

### **6.2 Improving product matching and selection accuracy**

In order to ensure effective sales, amateur anchors need to enhance the precision of product selection, ensuring that the promoted goods align with the actual needs of their fan base. Firstly, anchors should regularly conduct surveys, interact with their audience, and review fan profiles provided by the platform to gain a deeper understanding of their followers’ interests and purchasing preferences. Through these fan profiles, anchors can identify product preferences and make more targeted selections, thereby improving product matching.

Moreover, amateur anchors should establish closer collaborations with merchants, help merchants understand market demands, and jointly select products that meet the needs of their fans. Through data feedback and in-depth communication, anchors can assist merchants in adjusting their product strategies to launch items that better align with fan interests and boost sales effectiveness. At the same time, anchors should choose products that match their personal image and avoid promoting items that conflict with their brand positioning. By promoting products that resonate with their personal brand, anchors can strengthen fan identification and purchase intent, ultimately improving sales conversion rates.

### **6.3 Clarifying the profit model and commercialization pathways of sales promotion**

Amateur anchors should define their profit models and establish long-term commercialization strategies. First of all, anchors should expand their sources of income by diversifying their income streams. In addition to platform commissions, they can earn income through live-stream tips, advertising collaborations, and brand sponsorship. This multichannel revenue structure can effectively mitigate dependence on a single revenue source, enhancing revenue stability.

Secondly, amateur anchors can establish long-term partnerships with merchants, becoming brand ambassadors or long-term promotional partners. Such stable collaborations not only ensure sustained income, but also help anchors accumulate brand value to strengthen their long-term competitiveness in the market. Besides, amateur anchors should focus on building their personal brands, leveraging their growing influence to drive commercialization. MCN agencies can provide brand development plans, helping anchors formulate long-term strategies for fan growth, product promotion, and brand collaborations to ensure the sustainability of their commercialization pathways.

## **7. Conclusion**

With the advancement of technology and the ever-changing market environment, the optimization of the amateur anchor sales promotion model will be a long-term process. By continuously improving their capabilities in content creation, fan management, and brand operations, amateur anchors can not only realize their commercial value but also create more employment opportunities and economic benefits for

society. In the future, with the ongoing optimization of platform mechanisms and the diversification of market demands, the amateur anchor live-stream sales model is poised to become a vital component of social commerce. It has the potential to drive rural revitalization and regional economic development, as well as create more business opportunities and social value.:

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