



## FILM MARKETING IN INDIA: AN OVER VIEW

**Dr. B.P.Mahesh Chandra Guru\*** **Dr.M.S.Sapna\*\*** **M.Prabhudev \*\*\*** **Mr.M.Dileep Kumar\*\*\*\***

\* Professor, Dept. of Studies in Communication and Journalism, University of Mysore, Manasagangotri, Karnataka, India.

\*\*Assistant Professor, Department of Studies in Communication and Journalism, University of Mysore, Manasagangotri, Karnataka, India.

\*\*\*Research Scholar, Department of Studies in Communication and Journalism, University of Mysore, Manasagangotri, Karnataka, India.

\*\*\*RGNF Research Scholar, Department of Studies in Communication and Journalism, University of Mysore, Manasagangotri, Mysore-570006, Karnataka, India,

### **Abstract**

The latest technological innovations and production techniques have enriched the capacity of the film medium as an audio-visual medium of communication. It is so much blended with a mass appeal as no other medium can shift or replace its space. Indian cinema tends to expose the contradictions of Indian society and turns out to be a process which spurt momentary illusions and satisfaction to its spectators and acts as a defensive mechanism of the public. Movie marketing has become an important aspect of film management in the new millennium. The films are made to satisfy the audiences who are mainly responsible for the success of film industry. Several actors are involved in the process of film marketing which basically involves the marketing an idea or a script to a production company to the final marketing of the film. The film marketing landscape has changed significantly in the age of globalization. The academic research on film marketing has followed these changes. Film marketing is a process of shifting from traditional new product development to new forms of engagement with consumers. The film marketers are influenced by box office economics. They embrace the power of the crowd, both in funding and developing film in modern times.

### **Introduction**

Film is an effective medium of audio and visual communication in the world. It helps the audience to understand the concepts, issues and developments more clearly than any other media of communication. The film also has the capacity to reach out to the audiences regardless of education, profession, class, region, religion and other factors. Film is described as an effective and influencing medium of communication in modern society. The latest technological innovations and production techniques have enriched the capacity of the film medium as an audio-visual medium of communication. It is so much blended with a mass appeal as no other medium can shift or replace its space. Indian cinema tends to expose the contradictions of Indian society and turns out to be a process which spurt momentary illusions and satisfaction to its spectators and acts as a defensive mechanism of the public. Movie marketing has become an important aspect of film management in the new millennium. Revolutionary changes in the field of communication science and technology have added new dimensions to movie marketing all over the globe. Indian films and regional films rely mainly on movie marketing both in domestic and international circuits. The subject of movie marketing assumes great significance from research, management and development points of view.

### **Concept of Film**

Film is indeed an important art and craft of mankind. It is also based on the projection of all still images in a continuous manner and at high speed in a way that seem moving images. The film medium is based on creative expression. Films are capable of providing multi-faceted services including entertainment and education to the audience across the globe. Film also generates mass mediated culture arising from elite, folk, popular or mass origins. Cinema combines many arts such as the performing arts, music, acting, photography and literature. It is a product of team work of directors, screen writers, producers, stagehand, technicians, musicians and so on. It is also based on certain well defined concepts, parameters and practices. It is a prominent audio – visual means of communication which attracts the attention of large number of people.

Lumiere brothers of France invented the medium of film in 1890s in France. In 1895 Lumiere brothers captured a one and a half minute film which encompassed the visuals of a train arriving at a station, waves on the shore; workers leaving a factory etc. The medium for recording such moving and live pictures were observed nothing other than an invention of a scientist. The invention of film was termed as ‘the marvel of the 20<sup>th</sup> century’ by the communicators across the globe. Film also was subjected to several changes and modifications due to technological advancements. By that time in America and Europe a major shift happened to film making- its transformation into an industry. It was during that period huge professional theatre groups, operas, orchestra companies and news papers were too burgeoning. Film at its earlier stage itself adapted industrialization. Drama professionals saw the medium to record the facsimile of theatre performances on stage.



### **Concept of Marketing**

Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large, according to American Marketing Association (2007:01). This definition covers the major dimensions of marketing. Peter Drucker, Kotler and other management experts have emphasized the need for placing customer satisfaction at the centre of marketing concept. They have continued the call for customer to be the centre of marketing activities. Modern service providers have also realized that customers matter most from marketing management point of view.

Philip Kotler defines: “Marketing is the science and art of exploring, creating and delivering value to satisfy the needs of a target market at a profit”. Marketing identifies the needs and demands of customers and adopts certain strategies for the fulfillment of the requirements of the customers. Generally, marketing includes research, targeting, communications (advertising and direct mail) and often public relations. It is an ongoing communications exchange with customers in a way that educates, informs and builds a relationship over time. The over time part is important because only over time can trust be created. Modern organizations cannot achieve the goal of business management in the absence of effective marketing tools and techniques.

### **Concept of Film Marketing**

Marketing is an important component of film management. The film makers are required to understand the marketability of film before making a film. The film marketing practices are embedded within the practice of film professionals to such an extent that they are not explicit, while others are explicitly undertaken. Consumer satisfaction cannot be achieved through asking consumers what they want to watch movies about and making them, but can be achieved by making films which are of high technical and/or artistic value and positioning these films appropriately in order to appeal to the target market. The films are made to satisfy the audiences who are mainly responsible for the success of film industry.

The film makers and marketers should have an understanding of the different audiences that exist and produce the films which satisfy the needs of the audience. The movie marketing is more than marketing communications in the film industry. Film marketing, in line with the marketing management processes in other industries, begins at the new product development stage and continues throughout the formation of the project ideas, through production, distribution and exhibition. Several actors are involved in the process of film marketing which basically involves the marketing an idea or a script to a production company to the final marketing of the film in cinemas, on DVD and through other exhibition outlets such as cable television and terrestrial television.

Durie et.al. (2000:03) define film marketing as “any activity that assists a film in reaching its target audience at any time through its life”. The scholars have noted that it was necessary to continue the film marketing journey into the realm of film consumption and out the other side. This broad definition implies that film marketing encompasses a range of activities.

Kerrigan (2010:07) noted that film marketing as a research area should not stop at the exhibition stage, but must consider value creation and recreation activities that take place for and between consumers before, during and after film consumption. Film consumption is a dynamic and cyclical activity which is inspired by other cultural products such as books, music, television, newspaper articles and so on. This necessitates any study of film marketing to consider both the producer and consumer perspectives and to look at where these intersect. The value creation begins at the point where consumers become aware of a film, try to make sense of the messages they are receiving from the film makers, marketers and mediated by the press and other film consumers. The process ends somewhere after consumption when the consumer makes sense of their experience and draws on this experience to consume the film again, to recommend to others or move on to a related film. The process of value creation cannot be seen as being a contract between the film maker/ marketer and the consumer, but takes place in the circuit of cultural consumption, observe du Gay et al (2000:02).

### **Need for Film Marketing**

The film marketing landscape has changed significantly in the age of globalization. The academic research on film marketing has followed these changes. Film marketing is a process of shifting from traditional new product development to new forms of engagement with consumers. The film marketers are influenced by box office economics. They embrace the power of the crowd, both in funding and developing film in modern times.



The advertising of a film is known as film promotion or film marketing and the people who are responsible for this are the distribution company which distributes the films to the cinemas along with the promotional material around the country. The film marketing is an expensive exercise. It has to be planned and executed on the basis of proper assessment of ground realities and requirements of the audience. The distributors normally undertake film marketing campaign. They examined the tools of film marketing such as posters, trailers, websites and other material that will market the film.

Kerrigan (2010:08) notes: “In recent years, there have been significant shifts in arts marketing, both as a practice and an academic discipline. The relationship between art and the market is increasingly complex and dynamic, requiring a transformation in the way the arts are marketed. An art marketing is not about the simple application of mainstream managerial marketing to the arts. The role of the arts marketer has been converted into market maker. The artist has also become a brand or entrepreneur. The film marketers are required to gain perfect knowledge of customers who matter most from film marketing point of view. They should also undertake segmentation and targeting of film audience who can be categorized as core audience and wider audience. The marketability of the film with regards to the consumer’s lifestyle, social networks, media consumption, behavioral pattern etc has to be considered while positioning the movie to target audience”.

The film marketing objective is not only to get visibility and to create awareness but also to engage interest so that the consumer will switch from awareness to the decision of going to watch the movie. The film marketing is undertaken on the basis of identification of gener, initial impressions about the film, narratives of the film, trailer of the film, combination of sound and moving images, prominence of the film director, popularity of the artists, appropriate film marketing tools and advanced techniques of film marketing.

### **Ideas and Guidelines for Film Marketing**

Grove (2015:04) explored the movie marketing techniques across the globe and offered meaningful ideas for the film makers and marketers. They include: Internet savvy, spell check, short titles and hash tags, competitions/ contests/ sweepstakes, vine, personal contacts, festival screenings, trailers, blogs, giveaways and investor benefits, Wikipedia, Internet Movie Database listing, street marketing, personal appearances, the power of theme and getting the team engaged. These measures are based on practical realities and enable the film makers and marketers to achieve success in their film marketing endeavors.

Hope and Jackson (2015:06) have provided the tools of film marketing which suit the contemporary film environment. They include:

- Mission/Objectives – what’s the point of making this film?
- You – tell your audience about the driving force behind this film, warts and all. Especially the warts!
- Them – people are, fundamentally, interested in themselves. They want to learn about themselves and their world thru the medium of your film. Make your marketing personal and organic and authentic.
- Ask for Help – marketing is a second marathon alongside the making of them film – start by inviting people to help. It’s like Kickstarter, but you’re not asking for money, just time.
- Timeline – I rarely see this, but I always want it, a timeline of the film from inception thru now.
- Budget – be open and transparent about money issues, it’s interesting and compelling and people love it. Share your budget docs!
- Synopsis – I see SO many bad synopses. Make yours sing, with lean, spare prose and perfect grammar and syntax. Around 200 words. Max.
- Tagline – a short, pithy one-liner that instantly grabs attention.
- Long Description – you need this also, should be no more than 1000 words.
- Storyboards – great if you have them, share them online.
- Genres – choose 1 primary genre and (maybe) one sub-genre, and stick to it.
- Sales Pitch – 50-100 words on why this film is a smart commercial bet.
- Script – put the script (or at least bits of it) online, it’s great SEO (search-engine optimization)
- Memorable Quotes – we love ‘em on IMDb, and people will be similarly drawn to yours
- Top Ten Lists – my 10 biggest rookie director screw-ups or 10 lucky breaks in the making of this movie, and so on.
- Optimal Title – I’ve written about this before, the alphabetical advantage. Unfortunately it’s true that “20,000 Zombies” gets better placement on many VOD platforms than “Universal Zombie”



- SEO – Search Engine Optimization. Learn a little about it and views all online marketing through this lens, it's critically important.
- Keywords – come up with a half-dozen keywords for your film and make sure they are on every web page you have control over (e.g. Facebook, YouTube, etc.)
- Film Detail Page – we're planning to give every film a "detail page" on KinoNation.com
- Trivia – everyone loves this, it's always compelling, so give your audience some!
- Video – you can never have too many video clips out there, the more the merrier.
- Trailer – cutting a trailer is hard; don't wait for this, get other clips released.
- First 8 mins – studios often do something like this, easy to cut, great way to get viewers hooked.
- Clips – studios do this constantly, releasing literally dozens of 30-60 sec clips as part of the marketing campaign. You should also.
- Outtakes – don't save these for the DVD, get them out there if they're truly funny or compelling.
- Behind the Scenes – mini interviews with cast & crew, location scouting video, whatever you have.
- Media Relations – journalists want things to write about, especially if their magazine or blog is on the same subject as your film, or if your film was shot in their town. Don't be scared, call them!
- Hand-Crafted Pitches (emails & calls) to film mags and blogs, tell them why your film is worth featuring.
- Social Media – think about what this really means. It's not just having a Face book page — it's about creating a compelling arc for the story of your struggle to write, finance, cast, shoot, edit, screen and market your film.
- Web Site – or at least a single "film detail page," which KN.com will have for all our films
- Face book – start it early in the process, post something every day.
- Twitter – I'm far from expert, all I know is that it's worth the investment.
- Pinterest – more popular every day, should be the pictorial hub for your movie.
- YouTube – all your video clips should be here, plus Vimeo also.
- Images – still images can show aspects of your film that video won't...take lots and lots and show them off!
- Posters – on VOD, films live or die by how compelling your poster image is as people scan a page of movies. It's the same as a video store shelf. Don't make a great movie with a lame poster. This deserves enormous effort to get right — make a dozen and test, test, test!
- Talent – empower your talent, beg them if you must, but enlist them early in mobilizing their friends and family and fans if they have them.
- Behind the Scenes – the stories behind the camera are only worthwhile if you capture them somehow.
- Cast – create profiles of your cast members, the who/what/where/why when of them and the characters they play.
- Crew – the crew have friends and families too, so find ways to leverage them for marketing.
- Director, Writer, Producer, DP, Editor — get them to write some copy, snap some images, generally engage them in the on-going marketing
- Locations – leverage your locations; make sure the good folk of the small desert town you filmed in are kept informed via their local paper, blogs, etc. They're prime target audience.
- Score Music – release bits of your music online, give your (hopefully) growing audience some sounds
- Tech – don't forget to talk tech, there are plenty of gear heads out there, they want to know about the camera, the lights, etc.
- Stunts & Action – if you have stunts or car chases this is great footage for early release.
- Languages – think globally from the beginning, VOD is a global medium, translate at least your synopsis and sales pitch into the major foreign languages.
- Funny Stuff – there's always funny stuff on film sets, documentary shoots, etc. Don't just tell your pals, tell everyone.
- Accidents – these happen too; as long as they're not tragic, you should blog about them.
- Festivals – tier A, tier B, tier C — all useful, but you must plan!
- Test Screenings – do what the studios do, show and tell and feedback loops.

### **Film Marketing Plan**

The film marketing plan includes objectives, time line, budgets and promotional activities. The promotional activities can be divided in pre-launch, launch and post-launch plans. Theatrical exposure is done 4-8 weeks ahead of the film release to generate positive interest in the movie genre and topic. The marketing budget depends on the national or regional release of



the film. The media touch points of the target consumers should also be identified for proper use in future. The theatrical promotions are the central part of any film marketing plan as they actually target movie goers directly. Wallia (2002:12) writes: "It is observed as theatrical promotions create most conversions towards the decision of watching the films. The print media publicity and advertisements are also effective tools of film marketing. The creative banners, posters, wall writings and other channels are useful tools of film marketing".

The direct marketing and personal level promotions also facilitate effective film marketing. The film promoters also conduct on ground activations in malls and theatres to generate buzz among the audience. They conduct games, quizzes in the stores and create aspirations to meet the actors of upcoming movie. The digital media are the fastest, innovative and viable means of film marketing. The Face book, You tube and other social media also have created interactive sessions between audience and movie promoters. These media are an exponential way of communication where messages spread faster and facilitate effective film marketing. The mobile games and apps are also created targeting the movie going audience who are mobile consumers. The marketers are required to adopt creative, competitive and effective film marketing tools and techniques in modern times.

Taylor (2015:11) offered 17 tips for marketing films and TV shows online since there are quite a few things unique about marketing films and TV shows. They include:

- Remarkable publicity stunt since the word of mouth is the most powerful form of film marketing.
- Pre-roll video advertising since they are an incredibly effective tool for drumming up interest and seeding the trailer online.
- Effective use of press junkets which are the movie industry's most powerful publicity tactics.
- Allowing the viewers experience the story through virtual game.
- Listing of Internet Movie Database since they also have an excellent range of advertising packages.
- Involving the audience in the making of the film since it is effective film promotion strategy.
- Visiting the towns with video marketing since it produces better results.
- Creating a visually compelling and functional sub-site since it gives the opportunity to make film marketing visually exciting.
- Making the Face book page interactive since it presents a huge variety of games, contests, and fun apps to use.
- Using niche social networks since they are effective tools of film marketing.
- Using auction props in the film or TV show since they facilitate huge amount of film publicity.
- Using social competitions and quizzes since they offer a large incentive for people who invite more of their friends.
- Using celebrity and brand partnerships since they command public goodwill and respect.
- Using persona marketing since it connects the audience with the film show.
- Using memes and other forms of user generated contents that subtly promotes the movie.
- Using Google ad words since they are creative and cost effective means of film marketing.
- Using Face book advertising since it is effective means of reaching out to the audience.

Film marketing strategies have undergone revolutionary changes. Earlier, distributors employed marketing teams to create press books which would carry information about the cast and the production crew, plot synopses, stories about the making of the film, background information, still photographs from the film and from behind the camera, and details of the availability of posters or other promotional aids such as lobby cards or 'standees'. The marketing strategies changed later with the evolution of media mainly radio and TV and launch of film festivals and award ceremonies in India.

Khandelwal (2009:09) observes: "Movie marketing has become more scientific and innovative, finds Campaign India. Ubiquitous is how one can describe brand 'Ghajini'. One can find its presence across all mediums, be it TV, print, outdoor, Internet, mall activation, cinema activation and even in the advertisements of other brands! Movie marketing in India has evolved and is becoming more innovative and scientific in its approach. Film marketing has become important for a film to recover money with a good beginning. But one has to remember that marketing ensures trial. This is similar to product advertising which ensures that the consumer tries the product. If the product is good, there will be repeat trials and if the product is not good, marketing and advertising can't do much for the brand".

Mathur (2015:10) comments: "It is no longer just TV, print and outdoor. Most available mediums are now being used by the movie marketers. Movie marketing has changed because people are now looking at the consumers. It is not just B2B marketing (for the distributors) anymore. B2C marketing has gained prominence because of specialized agencies like us. The



campaigns that are being run to promote a film are 360 degree in nature. Various innovative initiatives like channel show integration and cricket tie-ups are happening”.

### **Film Marketing in India**

The Hindi film sector is popularly known as the Bollywood which is one of the biggest film industries in the world. It is also known as the world’s largest film ticket market. In the present times, many movies are grossing 100+ crores at the box office in the first week of release itself mainly because of creative film marketing techniques. The film marketing budget is also increasing along with the increase of multiplexes and income level of the people. The film makers and distributors adopt advanced film marketing techniques in order to win over the audiences. The regional film sectors also have improved their economic status and film marketing techniques over a period of time.

The Indian film marketing strategies are based on systematic segmentation of the audience based on their demographic features. The positioning of movie to target audience is also based on proper assessment of the target audience. The market plan includes objectives, time line, budgets and promotional activities. The promotional activities are also undertaken well in advance. The media touch points of target customers are also considered for the promotional mix which includes theatrical promotions, print media, electronic media, outdoor media, digital media and social media in the present times.

Guru et.al. (2015:05) note: “In the post-independence era, Indian film industry entered its golden age and produced many award winning films which mainly relied on hand painted posters for home publicity. The advent of radio paved the way for commercial advertisements to market Indian films during 1970s. The film festivals, premieres and awards were covered by the media in order to give wide publicity and enhance film marketing across the country. The emergence of television also led to increase in the number of movie watchers who could see movies at home rather than theatres. The cable and satellite television in India also enhanced film marketing by creating necessary hype pre-release. The alternative channels also appeared in the decade of 1990s and strengthened the process of film marketing in India”.

The direct marketing techniques are also adopted for promoting the films. The street and guerilla marketing strategies are also adopted to enhance the marketability of films. The on ground activations in malls and theatres and film merchandising techniques are also adopted by the distributors. The movie promoters also partner with food chains and provide discount coupons for food combinations. Various special events are also organized to enhance film marketing on the basis of active media coverage and people’s participation.

The digitization also enabled the telecasting of popular films recorded on the DTH. The role of product placement also played an important role in the process of film marketing. In the new millennium, the social media revolution also changed the film marketing scenario across the globe. The Face book, You Tube and other social media were used as prominent tools of film marketing in India. A new age of online film marketing began and Sharukh Khan was the first personality in the history of Indian Cinema who tied up with the web giant Google. The YouTube videos were also used to facilitate film marketing.

The digital media which are the fastest, most innovative and most recent way for film promotions are also utilized to create interactive sessions between audience and movie promoters. The social media have enabled better film marketing on the basis of advanced tools and interactive communication opportunities. The studies have reported that social media is an exponential way of communication where messages spread faster and facilitated quick actions from the film marketing agencies. Modern website has taken the place of old press release book where all the information about the movie is available to the audience anywhere and at any time. The increasing mobile penetration in consumers has also multiplied the number of the movie going audience who are mobile consumers. The movie marketers are required to adopt best marketing plans to showcase their qualities to the right audience.

The emergence of multiplex culture also improved box-office collection by 3 times. The large number of screens in multiplexes has provided an excellent opportunity for small movie makers to reach out to their target audience. Another film star Aamir Khan also added a new dimension to film marketing through application of new technologies. The present generation of movie makers and distributors has developed new revenue earning models such as theatrical rights, satellite rights and music rights. The Indian films have a global appeal and enjoy the benefit of larger audience across the world. The film marketers are also adopting aggressive marketing strategies to earn profits.



## Conclusion

Movie marketing has become a challenging task in the age of globalization since the audience enjoys the benefit of access to different sources of entertainment. The global film entertainment market is likely to reach USD 100.6 billion in 2017 from USD 88.6 billion in 2012. The Indian film entertainment market has steadily increased its profit due to several factors. The film makers are vying for the same screen space and audiences are now targeting a specific occasion to watch films. The stakeholders of film marketing cannot ignore the marketing tools and strategies which fetch rich dividends. They are called upon to undertake herculean efforts to enhance the status of movie marketing on the basis of quality centered films and advanced film marketing tools and strategies.

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