

Changing Face of Movie Marketing in India: A Case Study

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Abstract

Gone are the days when plastering a few posters on the walls and hand-painted billboard signs though very attractive were the only means available for a movie's marketing. Actors barely promoted their movies as is happening today, movie-producers never ventured in front of the camera and our main stream media didn't care. Today's Bollywood presents a very different scenario. With over one thousand movies releasing in a year and all of them fighting for a common goal i.e. box-office success. For the success of the movie it has become a imperative necessity for those involved, to do whatever it takes to enforce that "must-watch" feeling among the masses in order to win the hearts of masses & classes and to move through this very competitive rat-race. In this marketing, the Indian media played a vital role. This paper discusses the concept of movie marketing and how the different marketing channels are used to create not just awareness but also increase the saleability of the finished product i.e. the movie. This paper of ours highlights on the questions, What is the formula for successful movies? How do movies manage to keep the cash register moving? What do the audiences want? Though there are no definite answers to these questions, though there are formulas or mavericks which have been reasonably figured out by successful directors in the different eras of moviemaking.

Keywords : Bollywood, Movie marketing, Item songs, Digital marketing, product, people, placement, Promotion, Positioning

1. INTRODUCTION

Bollywood, the Hindi movie industry at Mumbai, is the largest and most popular branch of cinema in India. Indian Hindi cinema initially explored issues of caste and culture in movies such as Achhut Kanya (1936) and Sujata (1959). International visibility of the industry came with Raj Kapoor's movie Awara in 1960's. Hindi cinema grew vigorously during the 1990s and at present the industry is releasing not less than one thousand movies a year with its commercial presence in the Western world. At present the industry is growing at a growth rate of 15% annually.

Today, the meaning of watching Cinema has completely changed. Gone are the days when the content and story line and the strong performances were the key points in pulling the audience to the cinema theatres. It has been replaced by extensive marketing gimmicks of present movie producers.

2. MOVIE MARKETING STRATEGIES

a) Before 1980's : There were simple marketing campaigns in the form of huge hand-painted cloth posters of movie stars on billboards painstakingly made by

artists were used by Bollywood to draw the crowd to theatres. These posters were made just before a movie was to be released. The smaller towns and villages used cycle-rickshaws and tongas decorated with movie posters announcing a movie's release on a loudspeaker. In those days Movie premieres used to be a grand affair and got huge coverage from the media in magazines and the lead actors maintained their exclusivity and usually didn't used to go out for giving interviews before a release. Firstly the movies were released in big cities and in smaller cities, a movie's success often preceded its release. The movies that were declared a hit in the big cities drew the crowd in the rest of the country.

Besides above, the new songs were played on Binaca Geet Mala, a popular show hosted by Ameen Sayani on Radio Ceylon. Later, in 70's when television came to India people were hooked on every Wednesday, and later on every Wednesday and Friday and to enjoy Chitrahaar. Even now music plays a major role in attracting people to the movie halls.

b) Before 2006 : It was the time when cable TV was introduced to India. This started the trend of promos on the small screen with song clips & crisp edits. The trailers were shown during the beginning of a movie in the theatres halls. Hand-painted posters were replaced by digitalised ones and grand premieres replaced music launch parties.

c) After 2006 : With the rise in number of releases per week, the competition grew and the pressure to succeed increased multifold. The marketing and promotion strategies for movies, targeted at the customers began through songs, ,star appearances on TV shows, trailers, , interviews, making of reviews and movie news on mobile phones , television, radio, internet etc. The stars began to come out of their shell and started making appearances in reality shows for promotions and giving interviews before their movie hit the halls.

Today, Songs are used to generate interest in the movie. Today the special category of songs called "item songs", are included in the movie especially for the purpose of marketing the movie for pulling in crowds. These item songs are shown on TV in full length though they have no relation

whatsoever with the movie's storyline.

Free publicity channel for the movie makers in the form of special appearances made by the actors, actresses and even the producers and directors on various like talk shows, TV shows, reality shows etc. has become the trend of the hour.

Producers now spend loads of money Digital marketing. They create mobile games based on their movies. The latest example is Shahrukh Khan launching a Youtube channel to promote his movie Ra.One.

Tie-ups with radio channels for movie marketing are becoming increasingly common in the form of interviews with movie stars, on-air contests, interviews with music composers, distributing complementary movie tickets, movie premiere coverage, an option to meet the stars in person etc.

Movie marketers are increasingly using Internet to create hype and promote new movie. Internet as a medium to promote a movie offers a wide platform of activities like trailers, reviews, bulletin boards, email, and blog for marketing movies. Movie marketers are choosing internet as the cost effective medium of marketing as online campaign costs only one-tenth of the amount a producer will spend promoting the movie in the print medium. Yashraj Movies was among the first studios to start off promoting movies on the Net and the movie "Mujhse Dosti Karoge" won the prestigious ABBY Gold award for its Internet marketing initiative in 2004.

Movie marketers are using mobile phones to SMS short reviews as well as schedule of theatres on the mobile. A substantial segment is favourable to games related to movies. A large population prefers to read a movie's review before seeing it. The success of movies like Veer Zaara through R World comprising of automated calls from Veer Zaara stars Shahrukh Khan and Preity Zinta to consumers' mobile phones followed by SMS contests made history of success.

3. STAGES IN MOVIE MARKETING

The movie marketing plan progresses as the way the movie progresses. Stages in movie marketing can be divided into following three stages:

a) Concept Planning: This phase starts with the development of preliminary marketing plans which should be developed even before the script. This preliminary plan contain a synopsis, budget, information about target audience, plan about making the story interesting and release plan information .

b) Production Stage: After the development of the preliminary plan is developed and execution starts into a full fledged marketing plan. In the production stage the plan for movie promotions, distribution, in-movie placements, mediums used, posters, trailers and snapshots is developed. New hooks, plans and strategies are built around the same. The teasers are exposed.

c) Release Stage: By this time, all the elements for marketing and material needed have been created. More information in form of capsules, vignettes, posters, song releases etc is done. Focus group discussions, PR activities, festivals, rewards, media buys take place in this stage. Star interviews, web chats, press shows etc. are conducted 12-14days before the movie is about to release.

4. 7P'S OF BOLLYWOOD MARKETING

Marketing is all about catering to the needs of the consumers and making profits by satisfying those needs. Today's moviemakers have realized that their movies are products that need to be branded, positioned and targeted at the right audience. The moviemakers of today are spending whopping 20% to 40% of total movie budget on promotion Dabangg, the Salman Khan starrer movie, made on a budget of 30 cr. had a marketing budget of 12 cr (40% of the movie budget). Following lines discusses P's of Bollywood marketing with examples of movies released in the recent past.

a) Product: The product is the movie which a moviemaker tries to sell. Movie is selected by the audience on the basis of the content, i.e. script, name, stars, story, special effects, style all need to be presented effectively. When a movie watcher spends Rs. 100 to watch a movie, he is paying more for the experience that he will get during and after watching of movie than for the movie itself. Today, Bollywood marketers realize that marketing movies means selling the entire experience of watching a movie to

its end consumers. While other elements of marketing focus on attracting the audiences, the product that aims at satisfying these audiences. Product is that element that directly relates to the end-user, their needs and wants.

A good script is the backbone of the marketing strategy. The core of the movie-marketing strategy lies in a well researched script with a well-woven screenplay. Movie producers need to understand the category to which their movie belongs to and to which audience it aims at targeting. It is not about who sees the movie only, it is about catering to a definitive audience who watches the movie in cinema hall and with what frequency. For example, Dabangg was targeted at the masses as Dabangg's promos reflected the masala experience that the masses will relate too while Peepli Live by Aamir Khan was targeted at the multiplex audience as Peepli Live's promos had sarcasm and black humor for generating interest among the multiplex audience.

Movie producers are also giving a lot of thought to the naming of their movies. Like other products, movie names too should reflect the spirit, genre and feel of the movie. The name of the movie like 3 idiots was enough to generate curiosity in the minds of the public to attract them towards the screens.

b) Price: Pricing in the movie industry is standardized. At any cinema hall, a movie ticket costs the same for all movies.

c) Placement: Audiences will be satisfied only when they are attracted to go into the theatre to watch the movie. It is where placement comes to picture. Placement describes the modus-operandi of placing the communication and promotion strategy of the movie on to media and non-media platforms available in the industry today.

As the timing of the launch of a product is a crucial factor in determining its success, similarly, the release date of a movie is one of the smallest but most significant factors in determining the success of the movie. If we look in t the past, biggest blockbusters are released during the Diwali season, during the Christmas, near id, at the time of New Year or any such special occasion. Producers

nowadays invest a lot of time in deciding the right time for releasing a movie. Even a blockbuster movie release is clashing with a major event such as IPL cricket extravaganza or is released during the exam season of students will certainly get a dismal opening. Movie makers also watch out if any big banner a movie is being released during the same time as their movie and accordingly they postpone or pre pone their release to make the movie successful.

c) Promotion: Promotion is a powerful marketing tool throughout the lifecycle of a product. Producers create the end-product (movies) for the consumer, but they seldom market the movies directly to the consumer. They market their story to investors and distributors while distributors market to sub-distributors, exhibitors and retailers. The sub-distributors, exhibitors and retailers market to the end consumers.

Seeing the craze that youth of today have for playing games, Bollywood marketers have taken the route of combining movies and games to help promote their movies.

Today, movie marketers are using television as a facilitator to promote their movies. Reality shows are used by moviemakers to promote their movie. A few weeks before the release of a movie the stars of the movie making appearances as judges, hosts, participants on TV shows.

d) People: Actors, who are directly involved in promoting the movie have also taken to blogging and tweeting for promoting movies and breaking barriers that exist between them and their audience. Today, every actor is present on the social media circuit trying to develop a connect with their audience. Many times, the lead actors ask the public to share with him their moments on Face book fan page. YouTube is also being effectively as a medium to connect to movie buffs. In the movie Anjaana Anjaani has a promotional campaign on YouTube in which movie fans can directly ask questions to its stars Ranbir Kapoor and Priyanka Chopra and get them answered.

e) Positioning : The entire marketing and communication strategy of the movie depends on the

positioning of the movie. Positioning means particular slot in the mind of the audience that the movie positions itself in. The positioning can be effective if we have clear idea who our target audience is. The movie by and large should appeal to the sensibilities of all kinds of audience but prominently should be positioned for a well defined audience. Based on the projected associations with our target-audience the movie marketers must formulate the positioning strategies.

f) Public Relations: Public relations play an important role in the success of any movie.

5. MOVIE MARKETING - GHAJINI

Ghajini movie's promotion is a case study where 30% or ₹15 crore of the 50 crore cost of the movie has been spent on promotion in creating a buzz around a movie as the campaigns tapped numerous fresh ideas including life-size statues, sporting Ghajini hairstyles, ushers at multiplexes, a special 3-D PC game and the release of Ghajini edition mobile phones. The key facets of the Ghajini movie marketing campaign are as follows :

a) The look of Aamir Khan: Aamir Khan came out with new and conspicuous hair cut having the latest rage in country. Hair cut was one of the positioning strategies to imprint his hairdo into audience's mind.

b) Aamir's Ghajini Mannequins: Movie Ghajini marketing team tied up with some leading sculptors in creating replicas of Aamir's Ghajini look, with his eight-pack abs, and installed them at various multiplexes in the country.

c) Haircut by Aamir Khan : Radio channel, Radio Mirchi, invited SMSes and phone calls from people to get a haircut from the Aamir Khan personally himself as he gave the 'buzz cut' - the hairstyle the actor sports in Ghajini at a leading saloon in New Delhi. The producers and marketers tied up with leading multiplexes like PVR, BIG, Cinemax across the country to give all the ushers, ticket-sellers the distinctive "Buzz-cut" that Aamir sports in the movie.

d) Viral Marketing : A supporting viral website www.findghajini.com for the movie was launched aims with the objective to replicate a similar concept

from the movie. In this viral application, the user plays the role of Sanjay Singhania (character played by Aamir Khan in the movie) and tries to find Ghajini through the clues provided. After the user finds a clue, he is given a hint about where one might find the next one. After one finds all the clues, the user was allowed to talk to Aamir Khan after dialing a phone number provided to him.

e) Launch of Official website : Marketers of movie Ghajini launched www.rememberghajini.com as official website for the movie which features usual videos and images and does not feature the synopsis or main plot of movie but on certain events of movie.

f) Contract for Co-Branding : Samsung , Tata Sky, Van Heusen and Tata indicom spend approximately 140 mn in marketing related to Ghajini .Samsung launched special Ghajini edition of models L700 and M200 of its mobile phones, pre-loaded with ringtones, pictures and songs from Ghajini. Infact, Ghajini was the first movie to release a handset as part of the movie's content.

Van Heusen launched Ghajini range of formal collection for today's confident young men that are inspired by the movie. Van Heusen promoted their new range by organizing a fashion show in which models sported Khan's clothing style as well as hairstyle in the movie.

Tata sky chose Asin, the heroine of Ghajini as their new brand ambassador. Every time an advertisement Tata Sky starts the viewers get to see the new advertisement featuring Asin opposite Aamir Khan. Tata Sky also launched a contest specifically for the movie and there was a splurge of videos about making of Aamir's body for the movie.

Tata Indicom's started outbound dialler service with Khan's pre-recorded voice in which Tata Indicom service user used to get a call in Aamir Khan's voice, asking the caller whether he is Ghajini and will tell the caller that the movie is releasing on 25 December. Indicom also advertised on TV for mobile downloads of Ghajini songs from the site businessofcinema.com

The success of the movie Ghajini is widely attributed to the aggressive promotional strategies adopted by the movie makers in conjunction with the

lead actor of the movie, Aamir Khan who played a vital role in the promotion of the movie. It is the first movie to cross more than 100 crores in a week.

6. MOVIE MARKETING – RA.ONE

Uniqueness about the movie Ra.One marketing was that the producers of Ra.One allocated marketing budget of around 52 crores, of which 15 crore was used for online promotion, which is highest ever for a Bollywood movie. Extensive marketing campaign of movie Ra.One named promotional blitzkrieg is described "longest promotion in Bollywood history", as well as "the most comprehensive and all-pervasive among people's lives" was designed by Red Chillies Entertainment (RCE).

Promotion of the movie officially began in December 2010 when the first poster was published in all g news papers across the country. nine months before the movie's actual release date two teaser trailers of the movie were released during the 2011 Cricket World Cup .The movie's first theatrical trailer for the public of the movie was released three months later. To promote the theatrical trailer, Sharukh Khan toured Delhi, Chandigarh, Indore and Ahmedabad accompanied by the director. At the same time, a 3600 ft long fan mail collecting audience wishes and messages for the movie was also launched.

In early September, viral marketing campaign for promoting the movie more effectively in the online arena was launched. The Red Chillies Entertainment (RCE) launched the official customized Ra.One channel of the movie on YouTube, a first for an Indian movie, where several song and theatrical promos were released to the public, along with videos of the movie's making, events and uncut footage. Ra.One channel also hosts games, including the first social game from India, and contests where participants can create promos from clips, music and dialogues of the movie.

The Red Chillies Entertainment also tied-up with major brands which included the Formula One races, Horlicks, Godrej Consumer Products, HCL, Nokia, HomeShop18, Coca-Cola and multiple live

chats conducted on Google Plus for which Khan became the first Indian movie personality to utilize.

Red Chillies Entertainment tied-up with Sony Computer Entertainment Europe (SCEE) to build a full cycle game of the movie on PlayStation which offers more than 20 game environments, features original voice-overs from the actors and is available on PlayStation 2 (for the Indian market) and PlayStation 3 (for the international market). Sony Computer Entertainment Europe invested around 4.5 crores to license the Ra.One IP and an additional 3 crores in the marketing and promotions of the game that included offline promotions and television advertisements of nearly 250 ad spots. 21,000 game consoles were sold at the time of its launch. On 14 October, a gaming tournament “The Ra.One Nvidia GeForce lan” was held in Mumbai in which over 1000 gamers competed against each other. The tournament featured several popular games such as Call of Duty, FIFA, Counter-Strike, and was telecasted live on YouTube, showcasing digital innovation by means of live interactive contests, puzzles etc.

Red Chillies Entertainment collaborated with UTV Indiagames to design a social game, Ra.One Genesis, based on the movie as part of the digit marketing strategy for integration of merchandise and gaming. The game reached the No. one position on the iTunes store within 24 hours of its launch, becoming the first ever Bollywood movie app to be top-featured on iPhone and iPad. Ra.One Genesis also became the most downloaded game in India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Malaysia within 24 hours of being launched. The game was launched across platforms like mobiles, tablet PCs, the direct-to-home platform and social networking sites like Facebook.

Red Chillies Entertainment also collaborated with UTV Indiagames to develop digital comics based on the movie’s characters featuring weekly episodes and served as a prequel to the events happening in the movie. The comic was written by Sharukh Khan.

Three weeks before the movie’s release, Western Union launched a mass media campaign for

international promotions in the U.S., Canada, the Middle East, Africa and Asia-Pacific using radio, television, print media and outdoor advertising as platforms for the millions of non-resident Indians across the world.

The first look of the character Ra.One, portrayed by Rampal, was revealed on the eve of Dussehra. as this time was chosen to show the symbolism between Ra.One and the mythological villain Ravana of the Ramayana.

Red Chillies Entertainment tied up with Seventymm to market a variety of merchandises, original G.One tee shirts, wrist bands, coffee mugs, watches, mobile pouches, video cameras, as well as many other things related to the movie. Similar products were also available for purchase on the official G.One online store, which was launched alongside the movie’s official website. In addition to this, a jewellery line inspired by the symbol of “Ra.One”, as well as a series of HCL laptops with customized integrated Ra.One skin were also made available to the public.

Between October 24–26, Ra.One had its international premieres in Dubai, London and Toronto, along with co-stars Kareena Kapoor and Arjun Rampal, followed by a high-profile dinner and charity auction, after keeping in mind their large international significance, as well as the presence of large South Asian populations.

7. MOVIE MARKETING – BODYGUARD

Movie Bodyguard is produced by Reel Life, owned by Salman’s brother-in-law Atul Agnihotri – and co-produced by Reliance Entertainment was having a marketing and print budget of around Rs 22 crore.

The movie was released on Eid in 2011 and the movies released in the past on Eid has been lucky for Salman since the release of Wanted in 2009, followed by Dabangg in 2010.

Rather than emphasis on release in multiplexes the marketers counted on the rising popularity of single screens as the star has a formidable fan base across these theatres. Bodyguard was released in a 65:35 ratio in favour

of single-screen theatres. Refurbished single theatres and mushrooming multiplexes allowed producers and financiers to release the movie across 2,250 screens in 70 Indian cities and with 482 overseas prints in comparison to *Dabangg* which was released on 1,800 screens in India while *Kites*, *Ready* and *Raavan* were released on 1,500 screens.

Movie marketers entered co-branding deal with Tupperware India, one of world's leading direct selling companies. Tupperware promoted a 30 sec co-branded TVC showcasing Tupperware's product lineage with the scenes from the movie across channels. Tupperware also showcased its products in the movie along with brand placements in some parts of movie.

8. EPILOGUE

In this paper from the case studies of

bollywood movies we can infer that today a whole lot of thought movie promonotionists are putting into to develop more and more meaningful promotional campaigns with the spread the word of mouth to give the movie a longer shelf-life and emotional connect with audiences.

The aggressive marketing followed in Bollywood movie marketing is due to the influx of professionals which work in true corporate style in branding movies. In today's time, a movie might be great but without marketing gimmicks it would be very difficult to have it make an impact at the box office. One factor remains common in pulling the masses is songs. Once the music becomes a hit, it leads to a develop interest among the audience and internally motive them to watch those songs on the big screen.

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