

Socially Expressive Commercially Impressive

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Abstract: *Film makers are finding innovative and scientific ways to market their film. Promotion of film has become very aggressive. Movie makers have become creative in communicating about their film. They have become more artistic. Everything is planned keeping in mind the script and plot of the film. 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. Marketing a film is considered as the second most important aspect after production. In India, promotion of film has evolved over a period of time in its approach. From the stage of production to marketing it, the directors & actors are tapping into this energetic brand loyalty by creating explosive, innovative campaigns. Campaigns need to be outrageous enough to make people stop, stare and grab the attention of the public. Movie marketing has developed to be more and more innovative to become clutter-breaker', 'striking', 'eye-catching', 'pea cocking so that it can attract attention and stand out from a crowd. This case study highlights how the two champions, Shah Rukh Khan & Rohit Shetty had taken the advertising world by storm in marketing their film 'Chennai Express' that created visibility, propaganda & publicity before the film was launched. The duos have challenged this belief that a movie is a perishable product.*

I. CASE

Film industry takes a lot of risks when creating new movies. Even after the film is completed, studios often spend many millions more to market the film. Because film studios are businesses, they are motivated by profit, which means they are always afraid of releasing a movie to empty theaters. To ensure healthy returns, most major studio films are supported by large marketing campaigns. Promotion departments are responsible for creating effective advertising campaigns in order to get people into theaters for these big blockbusters. Sometimes, the buzz works, and studios make back the money they invested. Without marketing, many people wouldn't even know which movies were playing at any given time, and the studios would have no hope of making money. The Indian Film industry, Bollywood always aims to please its audiences at large. In order to achieve it, film becomes a powerful part of the nation's psyche and an unparalleled medium for brand promotion. Marketing mix is the most important element in determining whether a film is successful or not. The success of a movie in theatres depends on its marketing. Even if a movie has fantastic story line, actors, special effects, character artists and sets, but without the development of proper marketing strategy, it will fail to attract the audience to hit the success at the box office. For most movies aimed at a mass audience the opening weekend is crucial for its box office performance. If it does not open well (Friday to Sunday) then it is likely to be a flop. Therefore most of film promotion is designed to open a movie big and then hope that positive word of mouth will kick in afterwards. Film marketing and promotion is experiencing an increasingly competitive scenario where reaching the multi-crore finish line within a short span has become film's most significant virtue. Film promotion is an art that is nearly as vital as the actual making and filming of a production. While the idea of film promotion may seem costly; the art of film promotion is ultimately necessary to be competitive in our modern time where everyone has access to the tools of success. Indian film production began in 1913. The history of Indian cinema before 1913 is a fragmentary one. Movies first came to Mumbai on 7 July 1896. In majority of the film markets, the films are released through windows systems. It means that films are given a theatrical release at cinemas and after a contractually agreed period they are available on DVD etc. Then by following another contractual period, they are available to the pay per view television channels and later free to view. In a study by Elberse (1999) it was shown that scheduling and release patterns do have a direct impact on the box office performance of a film. De Vany and Walls (1996, 1997, 1999), Jedidi et al. (1998), Jones and Ritz (1991), Litman and Ahn (1998), Neelamegham and Chintagunta (1999) and Zufryden (1996) all look at the impact that the number of screens on which a film opens, runs and closes on has upon success. Hence, the greater the number of screens a film is released on, the more likely the film is to achieve financial success. The number of screens and the length of the run of the films is dependent on the budget that the distributors have for prints and advertising.

The key elements of the marketing mix have been totally taken care in promoting Chennai Express, namely the stars, script/genre, age classification and release strategy. Shah Rukh Khan's extensive promotional strategy claimed Chennai Express the top slot when it comes to record breaking films. Success of a film not only depends on the lead actors, the script or the story, but the market share captured by it after its release. Chennai Express did not suffer from any of the negative factors or problems that had badly affected SRK's last 5 films like: 26/11 terrorist attacks, no promotion, too much promotion, poor content, massive protests by a political party against SRK, negative publicity, clash, non-holiday release dates, non-massy films, average soundtracks. Its only matter of concern was a mediocre music album. In terms of marketing, fan following and box office collections – India and overseas, no actor can come close to Shah Rukh Khan.

Shah Rukh Khan had left no stone unturned in creating an enormous amount of buzz in the marketing of his commercial romance "Chennai Express". Disney UTV ensured that the 360 degree marketing and promotional activities like massive outdoor, print and television campaigns were parallel with the theme of Chennai Express that was well carved in Rohit Shetty style. An integrated marketing strategy was adopted to attract maximum viewers. Also, the Bollywood Badshah is a marketing wizard & planned his promotional activities in great detail. Social media was used to create pre-buzz for the movie. Singbox karaoke application was used. The Social Karaoke app was created for users to sing a song from the movie, share the score on Facebook and also dedicate the songs to their friends. Songs from the movie were already making waves. For weeks, there were constant conversations among the social media users about the use of this app and even today, people world over are downloading the app and singing along. Fans were given an opportunity to watch the trailer of the movie that was created by UTV motion pictures. SRK engaged himself in many promos and songs, one after the other. Shah Rukh Khan sold the television satellite rights of the film for a whopping Rs 49 crore. Plus, he has been conducting one press conference after another without stopping. A mobile game 'Chennai Express: Escape from Rameshwaram', for both, feature phones and smart phones (Android), was launched to reach out to a wider audience. Every user got an opportunity to be Rahul (SRK's character in the movie) in this game, which was developed by Disney UTV's digital arm. It is a move to tap the huge potential of the cyber games user base. The game app is available on both android as well as java based. The star-crew of 'Chennai Express' launched a new line of sarees that have designs similar to Deepika's sarees in the film, which are in demand in the market. Integrated branding tie-ups were carried out by Best Rice, which was Zenith Optimedia.

This campaign was started two weeks before the release of the film which included co-branded TV, print, radio, cinema and digital campaigns. UTV Motion Pictures placed interactive bogies at Mumbai, Delhi, Bangalore and Hyderabad airports, along with multiple theatres in these cities. Song was cleverly composed on Lungi dance as a promotional drive of 'Chennai Express' that went on to become one of the chief attractions of the film. The cinema theatres will serve snacks carrying a local flavour in different metropolitans. Shah Rukh Khan leads the list of leading actors when it comes to brand promotion. He has been associated with a long list of products and many of them are going to be featured in the film as well. Chennai Express was part of the recently held IIFA awards. The film targeted three leading prime time reality shows: DID Supermoms, Jhalak Dikhla Jaa and Comedy Nights with Kapil to lend mass appeal to the music launch. The team also joined the madness on Tarak Mehta ka Oolta Chashma, encouraged the young singers on Indian Idol Junior and appeared on very popular shows – Madhubala and Diya aur Baati Hum. It means they targeted shows of high TRP. Being under the banner of Red Chillies Entertainment, Shahrukh, co-star Deepika Padukone and director Rohit Shetty have been giving interviews on every entertainment and news channel here and abroad, in person and via satellite. In order to create buzz among masses about the movie, Red chillies entertainment invested a huge budget on outdoor advertising which included hoardings, posters & billboards etc. It is estimated that around 1.4 crore was sent alone in Mumbai for setting up its posters/hoardings. Aaj Tak, ABP Group and Zee Cinema were leading TV channels and networks also came on board to create a co-branded campaign supported by mainline print advertising. Hence they were sending a clear cut message that they had different strategies of targeting their audience. UTV Disney had a clever distribution strategy of releasing the movie from "Kashmir to Kanyakumari" and to Non Hindi markets like Mysore, remote villages of Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. As no other movie was released on August 8, 2013, it was clean sweep for Chennai Express. The production houses, Red Chillies & distribution partner UTV Disney capitalized on the festive weekend of Eid, which happens to be one of the biggest festivals in many Muslim countries like Gulf, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore. Chennai Express enjoyed the advantage of solo release & the audience was left with no other choice but to watch it. Being a 4 day long weekend, Box office enjoyed more collections. Chennai Express created history in Indian cinema by releasing in 50 plus countries. The Executive Director - Syndication, International Distribution & Disney Media Distribution, Studios, Disney UTV highlighted that Chennai Express is a

commercial entertainer and has an obvious and enormous demand overseas with the Deepika Padukone and Shah Rukh Khan's fan base. They were happy to provide Indian movie lovers an opportunity to enjoy the movie in the language known to them and are excited to release Chennai Express in 10 languages. The film was screened in 700 places abroad including unconventional market like Peru & Israel; and in 3500 screens in India. Chennai Express is said to be the first movie to be released on such a large scale in overseas market. As the viewers watched the film in several languages, namely German, Spanish, Tamil and Telugu, so the promoters of the movie developed posters for the respective language which added a sense of belongingness to the posters.

The movie was released in North America across 195 screens, in Britain across 175 screens, in the Middle East 55 screens and 30 screens in Australia. There is a famous saying that everything is fair in love & war and SRK has used the same in film promotion. He was spotted at a fashion show walking the ramp which happens to be an alien territory for him. The film Chennai Express is associated with three big names of the film industry, namely Shah Rukh Khan, Deepika Padukone & the director Rohit Shetty all of them have huge fan base which is also a major reason for the tremendous success & the unprecedented turn out of followers. Mega hype was created before the release of the movie. The trio has attended Chennai Express premier also.

II. THE RESULT

Chennai Express went on to become the movie with highest collections in Previews, Biggest 1st day, Highest 2nd day, Highest 3rd day, Highest weekend, Fastest to touch the 100 crore mark, Highest week 1, Fastest to reach 150 crore, Biggest grosser of 2013 and Third highest grosser of all time. Chennai Express smashed all box office records in just 21 days since it opened to become the most profitable movie in India. The film crossed Rs. 100 crore in just 3 three days, has now created history by grossing Rs. 150 crore in a week. According to trade weekly Box Office India, it has overtaken previous record-holder '3 Idiots', which appeared in 2009 to collect at least Rs 211 crores domestically at a slightly higher Rs 218 crores. The film may also break international Bollywood records. This year, the Rs.100-crore (\$16 million) club was overhauled and swamped, as "Chennai Express" did super-fast record collection of Rs.216 crore (approximately \$35 million) at the box office. The brigade of Chennai Express have been able to reach the audiences by doing the right film promotion that they would never have thought was possible. As a result, fan base is built and there is higher potential for success. SRK's innovative marketing strategy like non-stop city tours, integration with reality and serials, brand promotions and, over and above, high quality content with masala entertainment which makes for universal appeal, has helped to smash all records for openings on an extended weekend. Set in southern India, the film has picked up very well in the western and southern regions. Lastly, the satellite rights for the movie also fetched a handsome price at Rs 40 crore, bought by Zee Entertainment's new Hindi movie channel and pictures.

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