

Movie Trailers: Appealing to Millennials

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August 12, 2014

### **Acknowledgements**

This study would not have been possible without the support of my Cohort 8 family. I had no idea how much I could learn during my tenure in the Strategic Communication M.A. program, not only from our instructors but also from the career experience of my peers. The knowledge gained from simply being in the same room as my cohort members is invaluable. We were lucky to have such dedicated instructors and eager students, and I will forever be grateful for the experience. I would also like to give special acknowledgement to Alison Johnson, who went above and beyond in answering my many questions, guiding my ideas and encouraging me to pursue the topic of this capstone.

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## Movie Trailers: Appealing to Millennials

### **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

I have been captivated by all things entertainment and pop culture since a very young age. Although I have interests in other areas, my passion has always remained within the entertainment industry. It has taken some time for me to actually engage in my passion for entertainment instead of merely thinking of it in terms of a hobby. In my undergraduate career, I focused on global studies and Spanish studies, both of which interested me immensely. My study abroad experience in Spain changed my life in ways I never thought possible. But my mind continuously wandered to the arena of entertainment and, eventually, I made the decision to pursue that area of interest. I enrolled in the Strategic Communication M.A. program to explore opportunities in communication and public relations within entertainment. My trajectory up to this point has been storied, but I am on my way to realizing both my personal and professional goals.

When I began the Strategic Communication M.A. program, I wondered how I would be able to incorporate my love of entertainment into my studies. Although I chose my current organization of employment, the University of Minnesota Foundation, to profile in many of the assignments we have completed thus far, I made the decision to focus my capstone on entertainment and, specifically, movie trailers. After some preliminary research on the topic, it was clear that very little scholarly research on movie trailers exists. With this in mind, I set out to provide insight into the topic of movie trailer appeal.

## **I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This study attempts to evaluate consumer preferences to determine what drives millennial appeal toward movie trailers. Although preliminary, the study provides valuable insight into millennial audiences as consumers of movie trailers, including both emotional and cinematic aspects associated with such viewership. Research revealed that millennials consider storyline more than any other component of movie trailers, which has provided a foundation for further categorical research on the topic. Taking into consideration explicit limitations and allowing for the inclusion of recommendations, further studies concerning millennial preferences toward movie trailers could, ultimately, assist in increasing viewer appeal toward movies.

## **II. INTRODUCTION**

The creation of movie trailers dates back to the early 1900s, when they were merely clips strung crudely together and shown at the ends of films as promotional material. Because these promotional clips were first shown at the end of movies, the term “trailer” was coined. Producers quickly found that trailers were successful and eventually began showing them prior to the movie as an advertisement for future movies (Kernan, 2004). Lisa Kernan, library specialist in film, television, theater and photography, states that movie trailers today are similar to what they were in the 1930s when they became prominent (Kernan, 2004). Although technology has changed dramatically, the premise of the movie trailer as an advertisement has primarily stayed the same. With significant developments in both technological capability and marketing reach due to social media, trailers have become much more involved in terms of quality and ability to appeal to specific audiences. Trailers today are still considered the most essential aspect of marketing when it comes to movie promotion, especially considering the ease of access to movie trailers in the form of online viewing. In 2010, it was reported that searches for trailers on Google rose

50% (Johnson, 2011). Advances in technology and marketing reach, however, have been no match for dwindling admission totals in moviegoing over the past five years.

Although box office revenue has increased over the past several years due to the increase in movie ticket prices, admission numbers have been on a decline, slipping from 1.6 billion tickets sold in 2002 to 1.34 billion in 2013 (Friend, 2009). This decrease could be attributed to many factors, not limited to the economy and increased access to movies on the Internet. But it also brings to mind the quality of movies and, more specifically, movie trailers, in terms of getting viewers to the theater. Despite the decline in movie attendance, the number of movies released annually has risen by thirty percent, making it that much more critical for film marketers to produce trailers that appeal to the movie-going masses (Friend, 2009). Although trailers are as important in convincing audiences to see a movie as are written reviews, there has been little coverage in scholarly research on the merits of movie trailer appeal. Those scholarly articles that do exist are largely inconclusive. However, based on other informational articles about movie trailers made by those with firsthand knowledge of the industry, many inferences have been made concerning what viewers expect out of movie trailers to determine whether they will see a movie in the theater.

When marketing a movie, studios have key audiences in mind. “Many studio executives argue that films can’t objectively be categorized as “good” or “bad”: either they appeal to a given demographic - and make the studio at least ten-percent profit - or they don’t” (Friend, 2009, p.7). A typical way that movie studios segment their audience is by defining the target in terms of four quadrants: men under twenty-five; older men; women under twenty-five; and older women. The categories of men under twenty-five and women under twenty-five, particularly, indicate a recognition of the millennial generation. A studio will generally aim a trailer toward at least two

of the four quadrants, unless the movie is considered a blockbuster or franchise, in which case marketing will be aimed at all four quadrants (Friend, 2009, p. 7). Given that two of the four quadrants include millennials (individuals born between the years of 1981 and 1996) whose movie attendance has decreased over the past five years, the present study focuses on the millennial generation (Pew Research, 2014; MPAA, 2013). To that end, what does existing literature say about a conceivable “best practices” for movie trailers that will appeal to particular audiences?

### **III. LITERATURE**

The underlying principle of movie trailers is that they are a component of a larger marketing campaign. Many aspects of the process of creating a trailer, no matter its production company, are universal. Trailer houses’ definitions of creativity and style, however, can differ greatly. Film historian Finola Kerrigan’s look at consumer selection of films indicates that consumers are motivated at different times by different desires, therefore implying that film consumption is not consistent. While it is probable that this assertion is accurate, Kerrigan also quotes authors who argue for the value of “subjective personal introspection”, which can provide insight into consumer preferences (Wohlfeil & Whelan, cited in Kerrigan, 2010). Additionally, Kerrigan cites media reception theory as a meaningful descriptor of consumer influences.

Kerrigan cites Janet Staiger, author of *Media Reception Studies*, to explain the theory of media reception. As defined by Staiger, media reception occurs in both psychological and sociological terms. “While psychological theory emphasizes the individual experience, sociological theories of consumption consider how individuals function within a group setting” (Staiger, cited in Kerrigan, 2010). Looking at consumer selection of films based on both

individual and group perception allows for a well-rounded view of consumer preferences, which will be examined further in the research section of the present study.

Kerrigan's chapter on consumer selection of films goes on to discuss the implications of viewer uncertainty and trust. Uncertainty of a film's storyline or message can lead to more research on the part of the viewer (to seek out additional trailers, critic reviews, filmmakers' credentials, etc.), which makes it easier for them to assess the perceived quality of a film prior to viewing it (Hennig-Thurau et al., cited in Kerrigan, 2010). Additionally, trust is a factor in viewer perception of preferences and quality. Viewers develop trust with many elements of film marketing, including but not limited to the filmmakers, actors, critics and film marketers (Kerrigan, 2010). If a viewer has seen a film in the past that was not accurately portrayed in the trailer, or a film that they did not care for in general, there is potential for their trust in that filmmaker or franchise to be lessened.

Kerrigan concludes by again stating there is not much of a consensus when it comes to the reasoning behind why consumers select particular films, and what that may mean for trailer producers. Kerrigan will, however, continue to make correlations between psychological and sociological determinations of film preference despite her evaluation that preferences are difficult to discern due to consumer tastes varying over time (Kerrigan, 2010). Additional literature, from both scholarly sources and sources from directly within the film industry, addresses specific cinematic elements that are seen to be most effective in appealing to viewers. This literature provides the catalyst for gauging consumer preferences, beginning with the very first step of cutting a movie trailer.

*Filmmaker Magazine* contributor and co-founder of Kinetic Trailers, Stephen Garrett, breaks down the process of cutting a film trailer, not only in terms of format but also in terms of



elements that appeal most to viewers. Garrett (2012) says a trailer must, “lead with its merits.” It cannot simply give an overview of the film - its responsibility is to *sell* the film. Once a foundation is created based on the movie’s best elements, Garrett suggests considering the inclusion of reviews and accolades. Based on the type of film and what the filmmaker is trying to convey, the use of text indicating critic reviews or high praise may increase audience appeal.

Garrett next emphasizes the importance of rhythm to build the excitement of the viewer, which often has to do with music selection. Garrett’s process almost always begins with establishing the musical tone because it assists in cementing the overall rhythm of the trailer (Garrett, 2012). He also stresses the importance of providing just the right amount of information in the trailer. The key to maintaining audience interest is to leave questions unanswered so that people want more. With respect to copy and narration, Garrett uses the “less is more” approach. While some trailers use a narrator or copy on the screen to explain the storyline, it is often distracting. “Showing rather than telling is always more interesting, so I try my best to avoid copy and narration whenever possible,” (Garrett, 2012, p. 7). Garrett’s view is that trailers without copy and narration stand out from the others because almost 99% of trailers today include one of those two elements, if not both (Garrett, 2012). Attracting and holding viewers to the point that a hook is made - whether viscerally, emotionally or psychologically - is key to better possibilities of securing future viewership of a movie.

A study conducted in 2012 in New Zealand focused on film expectations, determined by both film content and quality. It delivers compelling insight, albeit broad, into both the emotional and cinematic elements of importance in trailers. The goal of the study was to, “discover why some film trailers are more effective at encouraging consumers to want to see the film by determining consumers’ immediate expectations after viewing a film trailer,” (Finsterwalder et

al., p. 4). Similar to the present study, Finsterwalder et al. evaluated consumers' feelings after viewing movie trailers in order to gauge their expectations of the film as a whole.

The research method included screening trailers from four film genres. Twelve participants, six male and six female with an average age of 22.25, were shown the trailers in a theater-like setting. Screenings were then followed by individual interviews where seven topics were discussed: general discussion; general expectation formula; storyline exposure and intrigue; trailer style; genre preferences; music; and actors, directors and writers (Finsterwalder et al., 2012, p. 11).

Findings indicated that prior knowledge of actors and/or directors, music, storyline and dialogue were the elements that had the most effect on viewer expectation for a film. According to participants, recognizing someone who is in the film or helped to produce the film allows the viewer to make an assessment of the new film based on the actor or director's previous work. However, writers, specifically, had no effect on viewer expectations (Finsterwalder et al., 2012, p. 11). Music was said to have an especially potent effect on viewers. One participant stressed the need for music to strike a balance: "A poor choice in music can greatly affect how one views something, even creating a false impression of what a film can be like. Or it clashes so much with the visual that it leaves a horrible impression," (Finsterwalder et al., 2012, p. 14).

The storyline exposure (amount of information about the plot) was also related heavily to viewer expectation. Participants mentioned that giving too much away in a trailer makes the audience think that they've already seen the majority of the movie, but not providing enough information may not interest viewers enough (Finsterwalder et al., 2012, p. 9). Another finding discussed was that "good" dialogue in a trailer indicated "good" dialogue in the movie. Although "good" can be defined many different ways, it was clear that dialogue had an effect on viewer

appeal. The opinion that recurred most during this study, though, was that a trailer should not be misleading. The importance of a trailer portraying the genre and storyline of the actual movie was paramount for this group of individuals.

A scientific study conducted on the movie industry in Japan provides insight into the minds of consumers and movie trailer appeal. Yanagisawa et al. (2014) was able to create a movie trailer scene composition model and then use both a survey and electrodermal responses to gauge viewers' interest in specific elements in movie trailers. The research methods in this particular study differ greatly from other studies reviewed because they use biofeedback, whereas the other studies and/or articles reviewed use data collected from surveys and/or focus groups about movie trailers. The study provides a unique perspective on the research because viewer opinion is based on both survey responses and physiological reactions.

The study focused specifically on action movies and young people (in this case, "young people" is defined as those individuals of ages between their early twenties and early thirties), or what is referred to in the United States as the millennial age group (Yanagisawa et al., 2014). The authors first investigated the most important traits of movie trailers by surveying individuals about seventeen compositional elements. From the questionnaire, researchers grouped the elements with common factors into categories:

- 1) Evaluation (film accolades, industry rankings, and individuals' ability to imagine their feelings after watching a film)
  - 2) Story (plot outline, accessibility/plot understanding, climactic scene)
  - 3) Video (stylistic rhythm, pace, number of scenes)
  - 4) Creators (distributor, director, cast)
  - 5) Role (opening date, title, message)
  - 6) Narration
  - 7) Soundtrack
- (Yanagisawa et al.)

Interestingly, the study combined film accolades, industry rankings, and the individuals' ability to imagine their feelings post-film viewing, which are all very distinct elements. The "ability to imagine their feelings after watching a film" strays particularly far from its counterparts in that category. After weighing each of the above seven elements using free-response answers, the study found that the four elements participants cared about most were, in order of importance, "Soundtrack", indication of title and opening date in 'Role of the Trailer', accessibility/plot understanding, and plot outline in 'Movie Story', and stylistic rhythm in 'Trailer Video'" (Yanagisawa et al., 2014). The study went on to measure changes in customer desire using the Galvanic Skin Response, which tested participants' emotions through perspiration before and after watching certain trailers. Results showed that changes in brightness, soundtrack and sound effects were the principal reactors in the Galvanic Skin Response test. The study found that customers' desires could be changed using the aforementioned techniques. Critical results of the study show that the top four most important elements of a movie trailer for the millennial age group are soundtrack, title and opening date, accessibility of movie story, and stylistic rhythm.

#### **IV. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

Based on inferences made from existing literature involving both general audiences and millennial audiences, specifically, this research aims to determine the following:

**RQ1:** What emotional and cinematic characteristics of movie trailers appeal most to millennials and pique their desire to see a movie in the theater?

**RQ2:** Is there a set of "best practices" film trailers can abide by to ensure that they appeal to the millennial generation?

## V. HYPOTHESIS

**Hypothesis:** Millennials, as a generation, view several specific elements of movie trailers as more important than others in determining whether they will see a movie in the theater.

Specifically, millennials view storyline exposure (amount of information about the plot), music, and people involved (cast, directors, etc.) as the most important elements of a movie trailer.

## VI. METHODS

### Method 1: Focus Groups

Two focus groups were conducted as the first research method in this study. Each group was comprised of both male and female millennials ranging in age from 25 to 28. The first group included two males and four females; the second included three males and three females. The focus groups were conducted on the same day, each one lasting approximately one-and-a-half hours. The groups convened at the researcher's residence in the evening and viewed all trailers in the dark in order to simulate a movie theater experience. Participants were asked a series of general questions about movie trailers (e.g. How many movies do you see in the theater per year; how often do you watch movie trailers on your own time), followed by viewing one movie trailer from each of five genres: drama, action/thriller, comedy, horror and romance. Movies selected have not yet been released in the United States, are based on fictional stories and are not sequels, in order to avoid preconceived notions about a film's storyline. Movies included were *God's Pocket* (drama), directed by John Slattery and starring Philip Seymour Hoffman, Christina Hendricks and Richard Jenkins; *Pioneer* (action/thriller), directed by Erik Skjoldbjærg and starring Wes Bentley, Stephen Lang and Aksel Hennie; *Obvious Child* (comedy), directed by Gillian Robespierre and starring Jenny Slate; *The Green Inferno* (horror), directed by Eli Roth and starring Lorenza Izzo, Ariel Levy and Daryl Sabara; and *The Immigrant* (romance/drama),

directed by James Gray and starring Marion Cotillard, Joaquin Phoenix and Jeremy Renner.

Participants were asked several questions at the conclusion of each trailer regarding what most appealed to them, both emotionally and cinematically.

### **Method 2: Survey**

A survey was conducted as the second research method in this study. The survey was designed for millennials (approximately ages 18-33) and was distributed by email and on Facebook. The first section of the survey included basic questions about age, gender, number of movies seen per year, and most important element of a movie trailer. The second section of the survey included twelve agreement statements, with responses being coded on a 5-point Likert scale from “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree”.

### **Method 3: In-Depth Interviews**

For the third research method in this study, two in-depth interviews were conducted with individuals who have created movie trailers and either short or feature films, both for their own films and for hire. The first interview was conducted by phone with Eric D. Howell, writer, director and producer of short and feature films. The second interview was conducted by phone with Christopher M. Beer, lead video editor at Refinery29, a lifestyle blog headquartered in New York City, and owner of a production company catering mainly to music videos. Both interviews lasted forty-five minutes to one hour in length. The interviews included general questions about movie trailer composition and also questions specific to this study’s focus group and survey results.

## **VII. RESULTS**

### **a) Focus Groups (Appendix A)**

#### **Group 1**

Pre-trailer viewing questions revealed that half of Group 1 use both trailers and critic reviews to make their decision about whether to see a movie in theaters. The other half use trailers exclusively. Group 1 discussed storyline exposure, emotional/intellectual elements, and music more than any other elements.

Each group was asked what they recalled most after viewing each trailer. Group 1 recalled the music most in four of the five trailers. In two of these four trailers, the group did not care for the music, and in another two of the trailers, the music was enjoyed. A clear consensus of this group was that not understanding a trailer - or, a trailer being more vague in terms of storyline - is more appealing than a trailer that provides too much information. The storyline exposure was a topic of conversation after every trailer in the set. Two out of six participants are more interested in the people involved in a film (filmmakers, actors) than the cinematic aspects. The remaining four participants all agree that cinematic aspects and, specifically, music, are more important than the people involved in the film. Although the group differs on whether people or cinematic elements are most important, there is a consensus regarding storyline: all six participants agree that who makes the film is more important to them than what the film is about. The group appreciates accolades written in copy in the trailers, but agrees that copy specifically about the storyline is distracting. Over half of participants feel that they can more easily connect with a film trailer if they can personally relate to an aspect of the storyline. It is unanimous that a cliché or predictable storyline is not favored.

## **Group 2**

Pre-trailer viewing questions for Group 2 revealed, as in Group 1, that half of participants use both trailers and critic reviews to decide whether to see a movie in theaters. The other half uses trailers exclusively. When asked what they recalled most, Group 2 recalled music most in

three of the five trailers. In two of those, they enjoyed the music; in one, they were turned off by the music. It was also the consensus in this group that the storyline exposure in a trailer is critical. Giving away too much information can be detrimental to viewer decision-making about seeing a film. However, this group was less tolerant of vague trailers than Group 1. They prefer enough information to give them a good sense of the plot, but not so much that the movie is spoiled. Group 2 spoke more about cinematic elements than Group 1. This group was also very concerned with movies that are considered “cliché”. They did not enjoy movies with cliché copy, such as, “Laugh-out-loud funny”, and they did not appreciate storylines that were predictable. The group appreciated accolades and was concerned more with the filmmakers than the actors.

There were many similarities within the two focus groups, and also several differences. Both groups recalled the music in trailers most above any other element. Music was discussed not only in recall, but also in other questions about both emotional and cinematic elements. It was clear that music has a significant impact, though not necessarily always favorable, on both groups. Both groups discussed at length the amount of information a trailer provides, but differed on how much information a trailer should have. Group 1 felt that a trailer is more appealing when it is vague and leaves something to the imagination; Group 2 did not like trailers that were vague, claiming it frustrated them. Instead, they preferred trailers that provided enough information so that the plot could be clearly explained, but not so much that all of the good parts of the movie appear in the trailer. Both groups appreciate accolades written in copy on the screen, as they provide an element of trust that the film will be good. The groups also agreed that movies with cliché storylines or copy are outdated and a turn-off. With respect to the people involved in a film, the consensus of both groups was that who made the film is more important than both the actors and what the film is about. Neither group commented on acting in any



respect. The second main difference between the two groups, aside from the amount of information that should be present in a trailer, was that Group 1 preferred storylines to which they had a personal connection, while Group 2 felt that entertainment value was more important than having a personal connection to a trailer.

Aside from the most glaring similarities and differences, there were several other interesting revelations to note. Both groups seemed to notice the music in all genres except for comedy. Dramas and action/thrillers were the genres people felt most need compelling music. It was stated in one of the groups that music does not matter as much in a comedy because comedies are not as emotional as other genres. The main actor in the comedy, a woman, was what people noticed most about that genre. Both groups felt that good comedy appears in the delivery, which would explain why both noticed the actress more than anything else in the trailer. Horror was the genre that had the most varying opinions and, therefore, it was near impossible to make any over-arching statements. Some people disliked horror films so much that they stopped watching once they realized it was horror; others were fans of horror and could contribute. This was the only genre for which some participants refrained from discussion simply because they do not care for the genre. For all others, everyone participated.

## **b) Survey (Appendix B)**

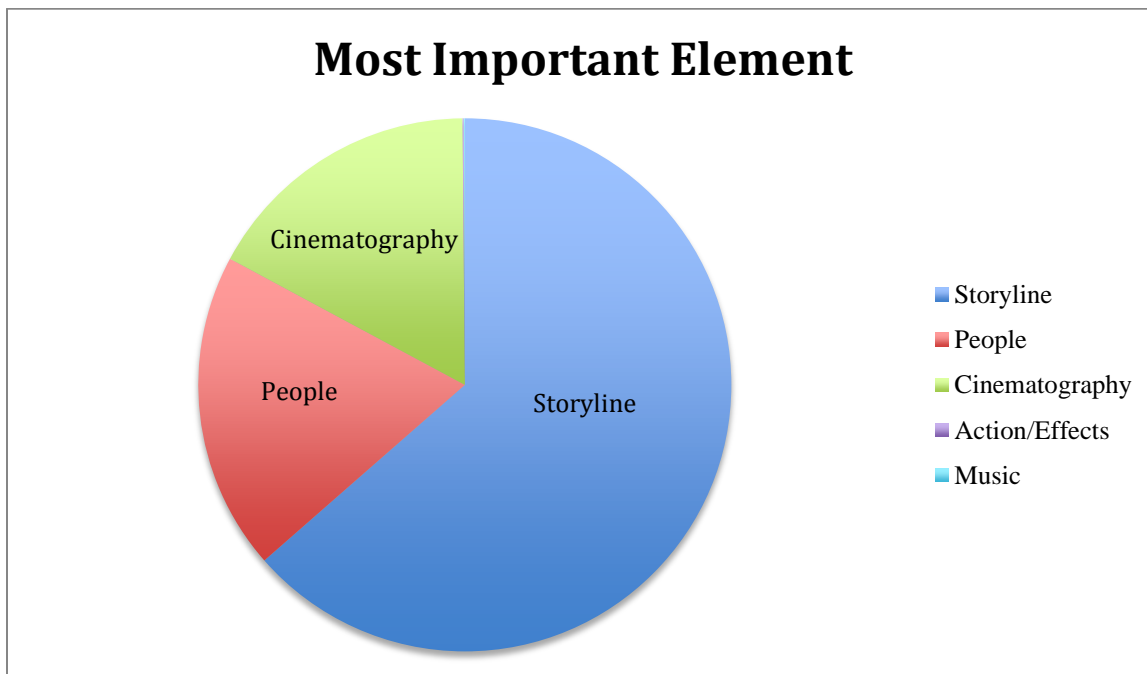
### **General Questions**

The 82 respondents who completed the entire survey were used as the dataset. Survey questions regarding gender, age, how many times a participant sees movies per year, and which element of a movie trailer is most important garnered 86 respondents, while the section of the survey involving agreement questions garnered 82 respondents. Thirty-two males (39.5%) and 49 females (60.5%) completed the survey. (Note: one respondent was too old for the required

age range and was removed from the demographics section. His/her responses are included in the rest of the survey results as there is no way to verify which participant belongs to which responses.) Survey results indicate that 26% of respondents go to movies in the theater six times or more per year; 45% go to movies in the theater four to six times per year; and 29% go to movies in the theater three or less times per year. Survey respondents ranged in age from 18 to 33, with a median age of 27.

**“What element of movie trailers is most important to you?”**

Results for, “What element of movie trailers is most important to you?” showed that over half of respondents (56%) care most about the storyline in a trailer. The people involved in a film (cast and/or filmmakers) were second with 17%, followed by cinematography with 15%. Storyline had the highest percentage in those who see movies four to six times per year (62%). Action/effects (.07%) and music (.05%) were consistently ranked lowest with three or less people stating that those elements were important to them.



### Agreement Questions

There were a total of twelve agreement questions; three questions involved marketing methods, while the remaining nine involved specific elements, emotional and cinematic, present in movie trailers. Questions involving marketing methods included the following: “Movie trailers heavily influence my decision to see a movie in the theater”; “Word-of-mouth heavily influences my decision to see a movie in the theater,” and “Critic reviews heavily influence my decision to see a movie in the theater.” Fifty-five percent of participants agree that movie trailers influence their decision to see a movie in the theater; 54% of participants agree that word-of-mouth heavily influences their decision to see a movie in the theater; and 37% of participants agree that critic reviews heavily influence their decision to see a movie in the theater.

Results with the highest percentages of participants’ agreement or disagreement regarding the specific elements present in movie trailers are shown below.

**Table 1: Agreement**

		<b>Agree/ Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Neither Agree nor Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree/ Strongly Disagree</b>
1)	“I am intrigued by a movie trailer that leaves me guessing.”	79%	21%	.04%
2)	“I am more likely to go see a movie if its trailer includes a star or director I have heard of.”	67%	23%	10%
3)	“Movie trailers today give away too much about the movie.”	27%	27%	46%
4)	“The music in a movie trailer is very important to me.”	56%	32%	12%
5)	“Seeing accolades in a movie trailer (e.g. “Academy Award Winner...”, “Winner of the Palme D’Or”, etc.) makes me more interested in the film.”	44%	22%	34%
6)	“Having a personal connection to the plot of a movie is very important to me.”	33%	37%	30%
7)	“Critic reviews in a trailer (e.g. “Laugh-out-loud funny”, “An instant classic”, etc.) are cliché.”	59%	18%	23%

8)	<b>“I prefer comedies that are more true-to-life than outlandish/unrealistic.”</b>	56%	35%	9%
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**c) In-Depth Interviews (Appendix C)**

**Eric D. Howell**

The first thing Howell focuses on when creating a movie trailer is building character. His view is that empathy comes through the actors. The next element he considers is location, followed by a “wow” factor that ends with a question of some sort. Howell believes that the most important characteristic of a film trailer is either empathy or excitement. If he had to choose, he would choose excitement. Curiosity, suspense and mystery are key. Regarding storyline exposure, (specifically, whether it is best to have a more vague storyline or one that provides a very clear overview), Howell says, “What you don’t know is so much better,” (E. Howell, personal communication, May 21, 2014). When asked what cinematic and emotional elements he would include if he were to create a trailer geared specifically toward millennials, Howell’s main concern was not with the elements *in* a movie trailer - he believes the basics of story structure have remained the same for thousands of years. His concern for millennials was whether they have a medium through which they can spread the word about a movie, interact with others and be heard. More important than the elements in a trailer is that millennials have a platform on which they can speak about that trailer, and about entertainment in general.

When asked what effect star power has in a trailer, Howell said it has a massive effect on the audience. He mentioned that roughly 200 movies per year are actually released, and maybe one or two have a breakout star. Otherwise, movies are composed of those stars we already know. The last topic of conversation involved the importance of the inclusion of music in a movie trailer. Howell stated, “150%!” (E. Howell, personal communication, May 21, 2014). Realistically, he feels that music is 80% of what constitutes a good trailer. He mentioned a study

in which individuals were made to sit in a room and watch something on television with sound, and when the sound was removed people completely lost interest. He believes that we are hugely auditory and that, “Sometimes people outside the business don’t even realize they’re responding to music. Most of the storyline is coming through in auditory signals- the way those points come across are coming across in music,” (E. Howell, personal communication, May 21, 2014).

### **Christopher M. Beer**

When Beer sets out to create a trailer, he first focuses on the perfect moments within the film that can start and end the trailer. He looks for what can produce an amazing opening and a resonating finale. The first and last shots of a trailer are crucial, and must effectively bookend what the trailer has shown. Beer believes, “It’s a tough line to toe, because it needs to be compact without being complete,” (C. Beer, personal communication, May 22, 2014). Beer believes the most important characteristic of a film trailer is that it can stand alone from the movie. The narrative information should be up to the audience member to figure out or imagine as they wish, where the trailer has their attention but doesn’t spoon-feed them information. He likened a trailer to a book synopsis- it’s only meant to get you to the movie, not tell you the whole story. When asked what cinematic and emotional elements he would include if a trailer had to be geared specifically toward millennials, Beer discussed “cultural re-appropriation” or “bringing ‘old’ into the ‘new’,” (C. Beer, personal communication, May 22, 2014). He feels that bringing something vintage into a newer setting, whether style, costumes or score, appeals to millennials.

Beer believes star power has a considerable effect on viewer appeal. He says that his perceptions of previous movies by that director will influence his decision about a current film. The same goes for actors. When it came to the importance of music in a movie trailer, Beer said

he believes music is one of the most useful tools. A movie can be summed up by music without using even scenes or dialogue. Even a movie that you have no interest in can be propelled by the use of music because it introduces a new element of artistry.

## VIII. DISCUSSION

Data collected showed very clearly that a majority of millennials heavily utilize movie trailers to assist in their movie-viewing decision-making process. Nearly all focus group members and nearly all survey respondents agree or strongly agree that trailers heavily influence their movie-going decisions, regardless of how many movies they see annually. Movie trailer viewing trumped both word-of-mouth and critic reviews. This result was not unexpected, as literature indicates that movie trailers are a compelling aspect of viewer decision-making. In terms of the hypothesis, results were varied.

**Discussion- Hypothesis: Millennials, as a generation, view several specific elements of movie trailers as more important than others in determining whether they will see a movie in the theater. Specifically, millennials view storyline exposure (amount of information about the plot), music, and people involved (cast, directors, etc.) as the most important elements of a movie trailer.**

Focus group data, taking into consideration the collective opinions of both groups, showed that millennials recall music the most out of all elements of a trailer. Whether the music was enjoyed or not enjoyed did not matter- it was still recalled the most. Storyline exposure in a movie trailer was also discussed heavily by both groups, but for different reasons. Group 1 preferred a more vague storyline, while Group 2 preferred a more revealing storyline. The people involved in a movie were discussed in the focus groups, but not as heavily as was expected.

From the focus group results, it was clear that all twelve participants were most concerned with music and storyline exposure.

In the survey, the question, “What element of movie trailers is most important to you?” revealed data that fell only partially in line with that of the focus groups. The survey revealed that over half of respondents (56%) agree that storyline exposure is the most important element of a movie trailer, followed by the people involved in the movie (17%) and cinematography (16%). Results also indicated that 56% of respondents, the highest percentage in the survey, agree that they are intrigued by a movie trailer that keeps them guessing, and 23% strongly agree, making for a total of 79%. This opinion is in line with the consensus of Group 1 of the focus groups. The second highest percentage in the survey was 48%, belonging to those who agree that they are more likely to see a film based on the people involved in it (cast, directors, etc.). Over 40% of survey participants agree that music is very important to them in a movie trailer, but only a total of four participants rated music as the *most* important element.

The two in-depth interviews had both similarities and differences with one another, and also had both similarities and differences with the focus group and survey data collected. While Howell begins crafting a trailer with character building and location and Beer begins with a “wow” factor, Howell also agreed that a “wow” factor is necessary in a trailer. Both agreed that star power has a heavy effect on audience appeal, and that music is one of, if not the most, important tool in a trailer. They also agreed that a trailer must be vague instead of information-laden in order for audiences’ interest to be piqued. A point on which the two discussed different ideas was which aspects of a trailer are most important for millennials. Howell believes that, more so than a specific element, millennials need a platform on which they can share and discuss movie trailers and entertainment in general. Beer discussed cultural re-appropriation and the

importance of including vintage stylistic elements with modern day themes in order to appeal to millennials.

With respect to the focus group and survey findings, the interviews matched up in several ways. Storyline exposure was important to both Howell and Beer. Both interviewees agreed that less storyline exposure is most effective, as it keeps the audience wanting more. This was in line with the survey data, while focus group data on this topic was mixed. Howell and Beer both agree that music is a key element of a movie trailer. This matches up with the focus groups, in which music was discussed heavily and was recalled the most out of all elements after viewing trailers. However, it differs from the survey results in which music was found to be an important aspect of a movie trailer, but was never thought of as the *most* important aspect of a movie trailer. Perhaps the most insightful parts of the interviews were Howell's comments regarding how an audience responds to music. He believes that, although music may be present in a trailer, viewers may not always realize that it is a primary reason for making them feel the way they feel. His perception of music leads to a possible explanation as to why so many survey participants rated music as the least important element in a trailer. "Sometimes people outside the business don't even realize how they're responding to the audio. Most of the storyline is coming in through auditory signals- the way those points come across are coming across in music," (E. Howell, personal communication, May 21, 2014).

Based on this research, it can be concluded that the hypothesis is partially supported. All data showed that storyline exposure was top of mind for participants and interviewees. It must be noted again, however, that although all data showed that storyline exposure was most important, the focus groups were split on how *much* information they preferred from a trailer, while survey results indicated that almost all participants prefer a more ambiguous trailer than an information-



laden trailer. Interviews also indicated that those who construct trailers believe an ambiguous trailer is much more effective than an information-laden one. Survey results indicated that the people involved in a movie were of critical importance, while focus group results showed that, although a factor, the people involved in a movie were not as significant a concern. Interviews revealed that those who create trailers believe the people involved in a film have a heavy effect on viewer appeal. Additionally, while focus group data showed storyline exposure and music to be the most important, survey results indicated storyline exposure and people involved to be the most critical. Music landed in the bottom three for nearly all survey participants, but those who create trailers believe that music is the most critical element in a movie trailer, which prompts a need for additional research specifically on the topic of music in movie trailers. Although not technically a set, a “best practice” could be created for millennials with a focus only on storyline exposure, as this was the one element that appeared prominently in all research methods. However, this would require more in-depth research about how much information millennials prefer, and why.

## **IX. IMPLICATIONS**

What is very clear from this study is that movie trailers prevail for millennials when it comes to movie marketing. The majority of millennials enjoys movie trailers and views them frequently, both in theaters and stand-alone on the Internet, which demonstrates their relevance in shaping today’s overall cinematic experience. Existing literature from those involved in the making of trailers showed that not all movie trailers are created the same. Although there is a general procedure, the creative aspects differ greatly. The literature from these artists was highly subjective, therefore serving simply as background on the creative process behind producing movie trailers. Those studies in which consumer preference was measured, however, were able

to provide insight into what consumers expect from movie trailers that can be connected to the original research conducted in this study. Specifically, the findings of Yanagisawa et al. correlated with the research conducted in the focus groups and survey.

Yanagisawa et al. found that “evaluation” (accolades, industry rankings, and individuals’ ability to imagine their feelings after watching a film) was the most important element of a movie trailer for millennials. As discussed in the review, the term “evaluation” is somewhat indistinct, and accolades, industry rankings and the individuals’ ability to imagine their feelings after watching a film are quite specific, making it difficult to gauge their true meanings. For this reason, industry rankings and individuals’ ability to imagine their feelings after watching a film were not discussed in the present study. Accolades, however, were discussed briefly in the focus groups and participants responded positively to seeing accolades displayed onscreen. The second most important element in Yanagisawa et al. was storyline, which was also one of the two most important elements of a trailer in the present study. As these two elements were present in both existing studies and the current study, it is clear that storyline exposure influences millennial preferences. Careful consideration should be taken when conducting further research on this topic to include these two elements and delve further into the reasoning behind their prominence.

An interesting finding that led to the hypothesis being only partially supported dealt with music. Per focus group consensus, music was recalled the most, but did not seem to matter as far as importance when it came to the survey. Music was consistently ranked in the bottom three. Similarly, Yanagisawa et al.’s study found that music was dead last in its list of the seven most important qualities. Focus groups and in-depth interviews, however, indicated that music is a key component of movie trailers, despite its low ranking in the survey. Interviewees Howell and Beer maintain that music is one of the most useful tools, and Howell’s postulation that the audience

often does not realize the effect music is having on the audience's movie watching experience could account for music's low rating elsewhere in the study. This indicates that further research could be conducted specifically on music in movie trailers, as data was somewhat inconsistent in the present study.

The hypothesis is only partially supported because millennials do care for some elements more than others when it comes to movie trailers, but the opinions about each of those elements are spread too far to make a set of "best practices" tailored to millennial preferences. A more specific, in-depth study about the elements of storyline and music would need to be conducted.

## **X. LIMITATIONS**

### **a) Demographics**

There were several limitations to this study, which was expected at the outset. The decision of having participants view one movie trailer from each of five genres made this research study extremely broad. Given the stark differences in movie genres, and especially the fact that today there are countless, results would have been more clear-cut had only one or two movie genres been chosen as the focus. In terms of participants, the focus was on millennials but methods were not segmented into male and female, which could have provided more insight into the specific genres selected.

### **b) Emotional vs. Cinematic**

Another limitation involved the definitions of emotional and cinematic elements. There should have been a clearer delineation between what constitutes an emotional element and what constitutes a cinematic element in a movie trailer. The way an audience feels about a film trailer's content is entirely different than the way they may feel about a film trailer's visual

presence. Additionally, the term “importance” could have been more clearly defined, as individuals perceive this term in different ways.

### **c) Survey Questions**

Questions asked in the survey could be considered confusing. It appeared that some of the questions may have been “leading”, because there were very few “disagree” and “strongly disagree” responses. Again, additional preliminary research should have been conducted prior to the focus groups and survey in order for questions to be more pointed and to focus on very specific movie trailer criteria.

## **XI. FUTURE RESEARCH/RECOMMENDATIONS**

This study provided preliminary insight into consumer preferences of movie trailers, but the study was not clearly defined in terms of movie trailer elements. Future research can build upon this preliminary data by a) delving deeper into existing scholarly research on consumer preferences in entertainment and, specifically, movies; b) segmenting focus groups and surveys into gender-specific categories; and c) studying emotional elements and cinematic elements separately. Additionally, it is recommended that further research focus only on those millennial moviegoers who see movies four to six or more than six times per year. Those who see movies more than six times a year already love movies and could therefore be targeted to increase their movie going even further. The same applies for those who see movies four to six times per year - they are clearly interested in movies but could still be moved up to the “more than six” range with the proper marketing. Future studies of this nature should not include those who see movies three or less times annually because they are likely the most difficult category to move. Marketers should further segment future research data to focus on this sector of millennials in order for a set of best practices to be aimed specifically at their two most important targets.

In terms of specific movie trailer elements, three clear preferences emerged: storyline exposure, music and people. Given that this study was so broad, it was expected that results would also be broad and that a clear consensus was unlikely to be reached. However, future studies focusing on these three elements separately could provide significant insight into the minds of millennials and movie trailer appeal. A future study on storyline exposure could pinpoint exactly how much information millennials want from different genres of movies, using pre- and post-trailer viewing surveys; music studies could focus on the specific types of music millennials prefer using electrodermal responses as seen in Yanagisawa et al.'s study; and a questionnaire about both well-known and lesser-known filmmakers/actors could gauge millennial interest in the people involved in films.

With data segmentation, future research must also focus on specific communications theories. As discussed earlier, Media Reception Theory could be applied specifically to the movie industry to gauge consumer preferences. Media Reception Theory identifies how individual tastes are formed and what satisfies or dissatisfies individuals. The theory considers what types of emotions people desire in terms of media, which could be added to a new study on movie trailers if the emotional and cinematic elements are studied separately, as suggested earlier. Another theory from which the study could benefit is Message to Desired Action, by David J. Therkelsen (Therkelsen & Fiebich, 2001). While the Message to Desired Action model is designed from a public relations standpoint, it can also be applied to consumer preferences of movie trailers. The model states that successful communication requires six elements: *reach* (received by intended audience); *attention* (get audience attention); *understanding* (understood by audience); *belief* (believed by audience); *recall* (remembered by audience); and *action* (acted on by audience) (Therkelsen & Fiebich, 2001). In terms of movie marketing, audiences must

have access or be exposed to marketing (reach); marketing must achieve audience attention (attention); audience must have a level of understanding of the marketing (understanding); audience must believe the marketing represents the movie (belief); audience must remember what the marketing contains (recall); and audience must act by going to see the movie (action). Again, additional research would need to be conducted prior to applying the Message to Desired Action model to this study because each of the elements of the model must be much more clearly defined (i.e. how can “understanding”, “attention”, “belief”, etc. be applied to the study?). This theory, coupled with Media Reception Theory, could produce valuable insight into consumer preferences, which, in turn, would help in streamlining this study to gather more specific data.

In addition to the two communications theories mentioned, it is suggested that future research take into consideration Eric Howell’s viewpoint on the importance of a medium through which entertainment can be discussed. Entertainment in today’s world is accessible in a multitude of forms, and with the advent of Facebook, Twitter and other social media sites, that entertainment can be discussed in a multitude of ways. The millennial generation grew up with these types of websites, and they are accustomed to using them for many reasons, not limited to entertainment. Including a social media aspect in a future study could allow researchers to see what role social media plays in the entertainment world, and how viewers use social media to enhance their movie going experience.

The results of this study revealed a multitude of different perspectives and emotions about movie trailers through the eyes of millennials. Much of the results conflicted, yet an underlying theme emerged: movie trailers are as much an art form as they are a marketing method, and millennials feel a connection to both. They require both a message and a visual; a communication piece conveyed through artistic expression. The key takeaway of this research is

the importance of recognizing the effect entertainment and popular culture have on the millennial generation, and keeping this in mind when conducting future research on the topic.

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## Appendices

**Appendix A**

## Focus Group Transcript

Trailer Criteria

- Movie not yet released
- Not a sequel
- Not based on a true story

Trailers

**Drama:** God's Pocket

**Action/Thriller:** Pioneer

**Comedy:** Obvious Child

**Romance:** The Immigrant

**Horror:** The Green Inferno

## Group 1

Pre-Trailer Viewing Questions**How much do trailers influence your decision to see a film?**

- 3 people look at trailers and then use critics' reviews to make decision.
- 2 people base a lot of their movie-going decisions on trailers.
- 1 person doesn't really use trailers to decide whether to see a film.

**How often do you watch trailers on your own time?**

- Those who base their decision on the trailer alone seek out trailers.
- Those who base their decision on both trailers and reviews only watch trailers when they are in the theater or on TV.

**A lot of people nowadays feel that trailers give too much of the movie away. What are your thoughts on that?**

- All agree that trailers as of late give too much of the movie away. If you feel you've seen all the good parts of the movie in the trailer, you're not going to pay to see the movie.
- Blockbusters always give away much more than indies, but both still give too much away.

**Note on movie marketing:**

-Movie production companies sometimes bypass the trailer and just go right to games/activities for a campaign, like website stuff, etc.

**Consensus on movie trailer *understanding*:**

-Consensus is that movies that leave you guessing- something you don't understand- is most appealing.

It sparks action- either they will do more research on their own, or go see the movie.

-The Matrix- no clue what it was about, but wanted to know. That's what made people want to see it more than anything.

Trailers**TRAILER 1: GOD'S POCKET (DRAMA)****What do you recall most from the trailer?**

-Philip Seymour Hoffman in it would make them seek out the movie more because he's deceased. But made it harder to focus on rest of film.

**What *cinematic* elements did you enjoy most from the trailer? Not enjoy?**

-Voiceover monologue- "Men of God's Pocket..." explains what God's Pocket is. One person said, "Do they do that to kind of have something to put in the trailer besides music?"

-It went on a little too long. Quick cuts that you didn't need.

-Two people care more about who made the film and who stars in it vs. music and emotion.

-Everyone else agreed that who made the film and who stars in it is very important, but that music is most important to gain audience attention.

-Accolades shown on the screen are integral- they peak interest.

-Trailer a little too long.

**What *emotional* elements did you enjoy most from the trailer? Not enjoy?**

-When there's something of particular interest to the individual watching- even something small, like seeing horse racing or seeing that it takes place in Minnesota- peaks interest.

-Looks like a movie that will be emotional and perhaps uncomfortable, but very well-done based on who directed and who is in it. Doesn't give too much away.

**Would you say that you understood what this trailer was trying to convey? Why or why not?**

-Group didn't really understand the movie but would still go see it or at least do more research on it.

-Means something about who produces, who's in it. Not so important what it's about.

**What amount of information do you feel the trailer gave? A good overview? Too much? Too little?**

-Just enough to peak interest.

**What did you think of the acting?**

-No one had anything to say about acting.

**Overall, did you enjoy this trailer? Why or why not?**

-All enjoyed.

**Will you go see this film in theaters?**

-Half would see in theaters, half would maybe rent.

### **TRAILER 2: PIONEER (ACTION/THRILLER)**

**What do you recall most from the trailer?**

-Conspiracy aspect.

-Setting.

-Time period.

-Upbeat music.

**What *cinematic* elements did you enjoy most from the trailer? Not enjoy?**

-Group doesn't seem as excited about this movie.

-Almost all felt that music was good and very important.

-Gave you that feel that it was made in the 80's- dull, bleak- adds to the feeling.

-All agreed that it was nice that it didn't show a ton of effects- made it more realistic.

-One person enjoyed that it was in another language.

-All agreed that copy on screen is important for accolades and quotes from critics, but distracting when pointing out parts of the story. (I.e. "1,000 feet below sea level...")

**What *emotional* elements did you enjoy most from the trailer? Not enjoy?**

-No emotional elements discussed.

**Would you say that you understood what this trailer was trying to convey? Why or why not?**

-Kind of, but then storyline took a turn. But again, group liked not really knowing what the movie was about.

**What amount of information do you feel the trailer gave? A good overview? Too much? Too little?**

-This kind of trailer gives you a pretty good idea of the story- just enough info, not too much.

**What did you think of the acting?**

-No one had anything to say about acting.

**Overall, did you enjoy this trailer? Why or why not?**

-Not really.

**Will you go see this film in theaters?**

-Consensus: no. A couple people would maybe rent it.

**TRAILER 3: OBVIOUS CHILD (COMEDY)**

**What do you recall most from the trailer?**

-Consensus: looks funny. Targeted toward women but men still want to see it.

**Why did it look funny?**

-It was structured like any rom-com trailer but looked like it also deals with real issues, which was more appealing.

**What *cinematic* elements did you enjoy most from the trailer? Not enjoy?**

-Music was good.

-Music good but not as important in comedies as they are in other genres.

-For comedy trailers, either they look horrible or if they have funny parts, you assume they've shown all the funny parts in the trailer so there's no point in seeing the film.

**What *emotional* elements did you enjoy most from the trailer? Not enjoy?**

-Stories that are more about the journey are appealing, instead of "they look like they'll end up together" in the trailer- predictability not good.

-Rom-coms are usually very formulaic and that is tiring. This had more of a story, which everyone enjoyed.

**Would you say that you understood what this trailer was trying to convey? Why or why not?**

-Yes, all understood.

**What amount of information do you feel the trailer gave? A good overview? Too much? Too little?**

-A couple people thought too much information; the rest thought the amount of information was just right.

**What did you think of the acting?**

-No one had anything to say about acting.

**Overall, did you enjoy this trailer? Why or why not?**

-All thought this trailer was "fine".

**Will you go see this film in theaters?**

-Almost all said probably not in theaters, but would see at some point.

**TRAILER 4: THE GREEN INFERNO (HORROR)****What do you recall most from the trailer?**

-Half said gore; other half said storyline and music.

**What *cinematic* elements did you enjoy most from the trailer? Not enjoy?**

- Some liked quick shots, some did not.
- All said music was creepy and they didn't care for it. Could have been better.
- All girls were completely turned off when they said "From the makers of Hostel".

**What *emotional* elements did you enjoy most from the trailer? Not enjoy?**

- Consensus: majority cared more about an interesting plotline than seeing the gore in the trailer.

**Would you say that you understood what this trailer was trying to convey? Why or why not?**

- Consensus: understood enough to be intrigued by the story.

**What amount of information do you feel the trailer gave? A good overview, too much, too little?**

- Majority thought there was a decent amount of info and just enough for them to want to know more- they were intrigued.
- A couple people wanted less info- could have been more subtle on the gore factor.

**What did you think of the acting?**

- No one had anything to say about acting.

**Overall, did you enjoy this trailer? Why or why not?**

- Majority said no- not a very good trailer.

**Will you go see this film in theaters?**

- Majority said no.
- A couple people said they'd see but not in theaters.

**TRAILER 5: THE IMMIGRANT (ROMANCE/DRAMA)****What do you recall most from the trailer?**

- Bad music

-All-star cast

**What *cinematic* elements did you enjoy most from the trailer? Not enjoy?**

-Music very slow, not compelling.

-Quotes on screen didn't add anything to the trailer.

**What *emotional* elements did you enjoy most from the trailer? Not enjoy?**

-Generally not having enough information would be intriguing, but this gave almost no information-no idea what it was about.

**Would you say that you understood what this trailer was trying to convey? Why or why not?**

-No. Consensus was that they did not understand what this trailer was about.

**What amount of information do you feel the trailer gave? A good overview? Too much? Too little?**

-Not enough.

**What did you think of the acting?**

-Definitely noticed the all-star cast. Acting was fine, but not particularly compelling.

**Overall, did you enjoy this trailer? Why or why not?**

-No. Boring.

**Will you go see this film in theaters?**

-Consensus: No.

Group 2

### Pre-trailer Viewing Questions

**How much do trailers influence your decision to see a film?**

- One person feels that the trailer is never enough for her to go see the movie. It can direct her, but not get her to go. Word of mouth and high reviews are more important.

-One person uses only trailers to make decisions about whether to see a film.



-Two people said trailers are highly influential and they prompt them to seek out critics' reviews and then make a decision about seeing the film.

-Several people mentioned that trailers are more influential in getting people to go to a movie with them- more "shareable".

### **How often do you watch trailers on your own time?**

-Infrequently (1 person)

-Semi-frequently (2 people)

-Fairly frequently (3 people)

### **A lot of people nowadays feel that trailers give too much of the movie away. What are your thoughts on that?**

-All completely agree.

-Majority agrees that they are more misleading than giving away too much information. I.e. comedy trailers: don't give the best jokes away in the trailer.

### **TRAILER 1: GOD'S POCKET (DRAMA)**

#### **What do you recall most from the trailer?**

-Philip Seymour Hoffman (everyone recalled him the most)

-Sex scene

-Horse racing (personal connection)

#### **What *cinematic* elements did you enjoy most from the trailer? Not enjoy?**

-Two people said they enjoyed quick cuts- they give a snippet into the scene without giving away the scene.

-Three people said that quick cuts can often hide a slower film- that they can be misleading.

-One person did not enjoy the intense music and short clips of violence because it was hard to tell what was going on.

-Group thinks copy and/or accolades on screen are important.

#### **What *emotional* elements did you enjoy most from the trailer? Not enjoy?**

-Many felt connected to Philip Seymour Hoffman.

-Two people felt a connection to horse racing, which was shown in one clip.

**Would you say that you understood what this trailer was trying to convey? Why or why not?**

-Most didn't know what the movie was about.

-One person says if they're into the genre and they don't understand the trailer, they're still likely to check it out because it's the genre they like.

**What amount of information do you feel the trailer gave? A good overview? Too much? Too little?**

-Too little.

**What amount of information do you feel the trailer gave? A good overview? Too much? Too little?**

-Little too vague. Just need one more thing to point audience in the direction of what's going on.

**What did you think of the acting?**

-No one had anything to say about acting.

**Overall, did you enjoy this trailer? Why or why not?**

-Consensus: "It was fine".

**Will you go see this film in theaters?**

-Half may get more info on the movie, but probably not. Other half would not see it.

### **TRAILER 2: PIONEER (ACTION/THRILLER)**

**What do you recall most from the trailer?**

-Music.

**What *cinematic* elements did you enjoy most from the trailer? Not enjoy?**

-Music was good, exciting. Music is a big component.

-One person said, "If you play a trailer on mute, it doesn't mean anything."

-Couple people loved the verbiage on the screen that explained the plot; couple people thought it was irrelevant.

**What *emotional* elements did you enjoy most from the trailer? Not enjoy?**

-Majority didn't like that plot started out one way and took a completely different turn in plotline halfway through.

-Any time a person in a trailer says it's their last day on a job or they're retiring, they're going to die.

-A couple people were intrigued by the subtitles.

-The majority thought the trailer was relatively engaging but had the typical "we're going to die" cliché. Cliché is not good.

**Would you say that you understood what this trailer was trying to convey? Why or why not?**

-Three people were disappointed when the plot changed- they thought they understood it but halfway through, they didn't.

**What amount of information do you feel the trailer gave? A good overview? Too much? Too little?**

-A decent amount of information, but misleading.

**What did you think of the acting?**

-They didn't make a big deal about who was acting in it- focused more on who directed.

-No one cared that the actors were no-names.

-Some thought it was easier to know the story without knowing the actors- avoids typecasting.

**Overall, did you enjoy this trailer? Why or why not?**

-Almost all enjoyed it.

**Will you go see this film in theaters?**

-Half said yes; other half said maybe.

**TRAILER 3: OBVIOUS CHILD (COMEDY)**

**What do you recall most from the trailer?**

-All recalled the main actress, Jenny Slate, the most.

-One person recalled it being about abortions, which is a touchy subject.

**What *cinematic* elements did you enjoy most from the trailer? Not enjoy?**

-Really predictable genre. (1 person)

-Several people said at first it looks like a typical rom-com but then it shows it has more real-life depth to it.

-The majority said that humor in comedies is in the delivery, not the jokes themselves.

-One person compared the movie to the show Girls; one compared it to the movie Knocked Up.

-Cliché wording not good: “Laugh out loud funny”, etc.

**What *emotional* elements did you enjoy most from the trailer? Not enjoy?**

-The whole group felt that you don’t need a personal connection to see a movie- it’s more about entertainment. Movies are supposed to remove you from your life for a bit, not make you questions your life.

**Would you say that you understood what this trailer was trying to convey? Why or why not?**

-All understood.

**What amount of information do you feel the trailer gave? A good overview, too much, too little?**

-One person thought it explained the plot too much; the majority felt it was just the right amount.

**What did you think of the acting?**

-The consensus was that it is impossible to gauge acting from trailers- consensus.

-Half the group knew who the actress in the movie was, and they enjoyed it because of her presence in it.

-One person thought everything was geared toward men.

**Overall, did you enjoy this trailer? Why or why not?**

-Half liked it because of the actress and her delivery; the other half just enjoyed it in general.

**Will you go see this film in theaters?**

-Half and half.

**TRAILER 4: THE GREEN INFERNO (HORROR)**

**What do you recall most from the trailer?**

-Everyone hated this.

-One person remembered a woman with a white eye.

**What *cinematic* elements did you enjoy most from the trailer? Not enjoy?**

-Glimpses of the girl being tied up keeps your imagination going.

**What *emotional* elements did you enjoy most from the trailer? Not enjoy?**

-Story had potential but then when then it took a turn and I was disinterested.

-Eli Roth is a twisted freak, but it makes me want to see it.

-“The Green Inferno” is misleading- don’t know what it means.

-Movie preys on the misunderstanding of cultural life- two people would not see it because of that.

**Would you say that you understood what this trailer was trying to convey? Why or why not?**

-A couple people didn’t totally understand because the copy said that the tribe was being filmed for the first time, but the film is not a documentary, so it’s confusing.

-The rest of the group understood the story of movie and likely what’s going to happen in it.

**What amount of information do you feel the trailer gave? A good overview? Too much? Too little?**

-Half said there was enough information to gauge interest; half said there wasn’t enough.

**What did you think of the acting?**

-No one had anything to say about acting.

**Overall, did you enjoy this trailer? Why or why not?**

-Whole group disliked it.

**Will you go see this film in theaters?**

-Consensus: No.

**TRAILER 5: THE IMMIGRANT (ROMANCE/DRAMA)**

**What do you recall most from the trailer?**

-Terrible music.

-No idea what it was about.

**What *cinematic* elements did you enjoy most from the trailer? Not enjoy?**

-Everyone thought the voiceover quote way too long.

-Second half of trailer was monotonous.

-Music was monotonous.

-No climax in music- music important.

-Change the music- worst part.

-It tries to win you over with the text- comparing to Ingrid Bergman. "Doesn't win for this millennial."

-Nothing stood out about the quotes, there were just quotes on the screen that didn't mean much.

-If people see too many words, people just won't read it. It has to be GOOD copy.

-Two cuts of her face swallowed in black- why?

-One person commented that if you base the conflict on Ellis Island, millennials can't relate much.

-Another person disagreed- they like history and although there wasn't a personal connection, they were still interested.

**What *emotional* elements did you enjoy most from the trailer? Not enjoy?**

-Movie gave participants a bad feeling, like something bad was going to happen.

**Would you say that you understood what this trailer was trying to convey? Why or why not?**

-Majority said no. "Steer us a little bit in the direction of what it's about."

-Was it about magic, or love, or saving someone, or what?

-In this instance, the non-understanding did not help. Not appealing.

**What amount of information do you feel the trailer gave? A good overview? Too much? Too little?**

-Not enough and it was confusing.

**What did you think of the acting?**

-Cast is great, so that is more compelling. Consensus was that if they saw this trailer and there were no-names in the cast, they wouldn't think to see it at all.

**Overall, did you enjoy this trailer? Why or why not?**

-Almost everyone disliked this trailer. They thought it was very disappointing.

**Will you go see this film in theaters?**

-Consensus: No.

**Other Notes**

-Majority of the group thinks that the movie could be good, but the trailer was bad.

-If The Immigrant showed best it has, it's not very good.

**Appendix B**

## Survey Questions

**Demographics**

AGE:

GENDER:

**General Questions**

ABOUT HOW MANY MOVIES DO YOU SEE AT THE THEATER IN ONE YEAR?

- More than 6
- 4-6
- 3 or less

WHAT ASPECT OF A MOVIE TRAILER IS MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU?

- Cast and/or filmmakers
- Storyline
- Music
- Cinematography
- Action/effects

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE THE ANSWER YOU CHOSE?

**5-point Likert Scale**

HOW MUCH DO YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS?

- Movie trailers heavily influence my decision to see a movie in the theater.
- Critic reviews heavily influence my decision to see a movie in the theater.
- Word-of-mouth heavily influences my decision to see a movie in the theater.
- I often watch movie trailers outside of the theater on my own time.
- Movie trailers today give away too much about the movie.
- Seeing accolades in a trailer (e.g. “Academy Award Nominee...”, “Winner of the Palme D’or”, etc.) makes me more interested in the film.
- Critic reviews in a trailer (e.g. “Laugh-out-loud funny”, “An instant classic”, etc.) are cliché.
- The music in a movie trailer is very important to me.
- I prefer comedies that are more true-to-life than outlandish/unrealistic.
- I am intrigued by a movie trailer that leaves me guessing.
- I am more likely to see a movie if its trailer includes a star(s) or director I have heard of.
- Having a personal connection to the plot of a movie is very important to me.

**Appendix C**



## Survey Results

**Demographics**

<b>Age</b>	<b>#</b>
20	2
21	0
22	1
23	2
24	4
25	7
26	14
27	31
28	5
29	6
30	2
31	3
32	0
33	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>81</b>

<b>Gender</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
Male	32	39.5
Female	49	60.5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>100</b>

\*One respondent was outside the required age range and was removed from the demographics section. His/her responses are included in the rest of the survey results as there is no way to verify which participant belongs to which response.

		What element of movie trailers is most important to you?					1) Please select your level of agreement with the following statements: - Movie trailers heavily influence my decision to see a movie in the theater.						
		Cast and/or filmmakers	Storyline	Music	Cinematography	Action/effects	Total	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
	<b>More than 6</b>	4	11	2	5	0	22	12	7	2	1	0	22
<b>About how many movies do you see at the theater each year?</b>	<b>4-6</b>	5	24	1	6	3	39	6	24	3	2	0	35
	<b>3 or less</b>	6	13	1	2	3	25	4	14	6	1	0	25
	<b>Total</b>	15	48	4	13	6	86	22	45	11	4	0	82

		What element of movie trailers is most important to you?					2) Please select your level of agreement with the following statements: - Critic reviews heavily influence my decision to see a movie in the theater.							
		Cast and/or filmmakers	Storyline	Music	Cinematography	Action/effects	Total	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total	
	More than 6	4	11	2	5	0	22	2	10	5	5	0	22	
About how many movies do you see at the theater each year?	4-6	5	24	1	6	3	39	6	9	11	5	4	35	
	3 or less	6	13	1	2	3	25	2	11	6	6	0	25	
	Total	15	48	4	13	6	86	10	30	22	16	4	82	

		What element of movie trailers is most important to you?					3) Please select your level of agreement with the following statements: - Word-of-mouth heavily influences my decision to see a movie in the theater.						
		Cast and/or filmmakers	Storyline	Music	Cinematography	Action/effects	Total	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
			More than 6	4	11	2	5	0	22	5	14	1	1
About how many movies do you see at the theater each year?	4-6	5	24	1	6	3	39	15	16	3	1	0	35
	3 or less	6	13	1	2	3	25	8	14	3	0	0	25
	Total	15	48	4	13	6	86	28	44	7	2	1	82

		What element of movie trailers is most important to you?					4) Please select your level of agreement with the following statements: - I often watch movie trailers outside of the theater on my own time.							
		Cast and/or filmmakers	Storyline	Music	Cinematography	Action/effects	Total	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total	
	<b>More than 6</b>	4	11	2	5	0	22	4	8	6	3	1	22	
<b>About how many movies do you see at the theater each year?</b>	<b>4-6</b>	5	24	1	6	3	39	6	13	4	7	5	35	
	<b>3 or less</b>	6	13	1	2	3	25	2	4	6	11	2	25	
	<b>Total</b>	15	48	4	13	6	86	12	25	16	21	8	82	

		What element of movie trailers is most important to you?					5) Please select your level of agreement with the following statements: - Movie trailers today give away too much about the movie.							
		Cast and/or filmmakers	Storyline	Music	Cinematography	Action/effects	Total	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total	
	More than 6	4	11	2	5	0	22	2	3	7	8	2	22	
About how many movies do you see at the theater each year?	4-6	5	24	1	6	3	39	4	5	8	16	2	35	
	3 or less	6	13	1	2	3	25	2	6	7	10	0	25	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>82</b>	

		What element of movie trailers is most important to you?					6) Please select your level of agreement with the following statements: - Seeing accolades in a movie trailer (e.g. "Academy Award Winner...", "Winner of the Palme D'or", etc.) makes me more interested in the film.							
		Cast and/or filmmakers	Storyline	Music	Cinematography	Action/effects	Total	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total	
			<b>More than 6</b>	4	11	2	5	0	22	3	6	5	7	1
<b>About how many movies do you see at the theater each year?</b>	<b>4-6</b>	5	24	1	6	3	39	1	15	9	10	0	35	
	<b>3 or less</b>	6	13	1	2	3	25	1	10	4	6	4	25	
	<b>Total</b>	15	48	4	13	6	86	5	31	18	23	5	82	

		What element of movie trailers is most important to you?					7) Please select your level of agreement with the following statements: - Critic reviews in a trailer (e.g. "Laugh-out-loud funny", "An instant classic", etc.) are cliché.							
		Cast and/or filmmakers	Storyline	Music	Cinematography	Action/effects	Total	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total	
	<b>More than 6</b>	4	11	2	5	0	22	7	6	4	4	1	22	
<b>About how many movies do you see at the theater each year?</b>	<b>4-6</b>	5	24	1	6	3	39	8	11	6	6	4	35	
	<b>3 or less</b>	6	13	1	2	3	25	8	8	5	4	0	25	
	<b>Total</b>	15	48	4	13	6	86	23	25	15	14	5	82	



		What element of movie trailers is most important to you?					8) Please select your level of agreement with the following statements: - The music in a movie trailer is very important to me.							
		Cast and/or filmmakers	Storyline	Music	Cinematography	Action/effects	Total	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total	
	<b>More than 6</b>	4	11	2	5	0	22	5	9	5	3	0	22	
<b>About how many movies do you see at the theater each year?</b>	<b>4-6</b>	5	24	1	6	3	39	6	12	11	4	2	35	
	<b>3 or less</b>	6	13	1	2	3	25	2	12	10	1	0	25	
	<b>Total</b>	15	48	4	13	6	86	13	33	26	8	2	82	

		What element of movie trailers is most important to you?					9) Please select your level of agreement with the following statements: - I prefer comedies that are more true-to-life than outlandish/unrealistic.						
		Cast and/or filmmakers	Storyline	Music	Cinematography	Action/effects	Total	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
			More than 6	4	11	2	5	0	22	5	7	9	1
About how many movies do you see at the theater each year?	4-6	5	24	1	6	3	39	9	13	10	3	0	35
	3 or less	6	13	1	2	3	25	4	8	10	2	1	25
	Total	15	48	4	13	6	86	18	28	29	6	1	82

		What element of movie trailers is most important to you?					10) Please select your level of agreement with the following statements: - I am intrigued by a movie trailer that leaves me guessing.						
		Cast and/or filmmakers	Storyline	Music	Cinematography	Action/effects	Total	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
			More than 6	4	11	2	5	0	22	8	12	2	0
About how many movies do you see at the theater each year?	4-6	5	24	1	6	3	39	6	20	7	2	0	35
	3 or less	6	13	1	2	3	25	5	14	5	1	0	25
	Total	15	48	4	13	6	86	19	46	14	3	0	82

		What element of movie trailers is most important to you?					11) Please select your level of agreement with the following statements: - I am more likely to go see a movie if its trailer includes a star or director I have heard of.						Total
		Cast and/or filmmakers	Storyline	Music	Cinematography	Action/effects	Total	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
	More than 6	4	11	2	5	0	22	4	8	5	5	0	22
About how many movies do you see at the theater each year?	4-6	5	24	1	6	3	39	8	18	8	1	0	35
	3 or less	6	13	1	2	3	25	4	13	6	1	1	25
	Total	15	48	4	13	6	86	16	39	19	7	1	82

		What element of movie trailers is most important to you?						12) Please select your level of agreement with the following statements: - Having a personal connection to the plot of a movie is very important to me.					Total
		Cast and/or filmmakers	Storyline	Music	Cinematography	Action/effects	Total	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	
	More than 6	4	11	2	5	0	22	3	3	9	6	1	22
About how many movies do you see at the theater each year?	4-6	5	24	1	6	3	39	3	9	12	8	3	35
	3 or less	6	13	1	2	3	25	1	8	9	5	2	25
	Total	15	48	4	13	6	86	7	20	30	19	6	82

Most Important Element of Movie Trailer & Reasoning					
ResponseID	What is your age?	What is your gender?	About how many movies do you see at the theater each year?	What element of movie trailers is most important to you? (1=Cast and/or filmmakers, 2=Storyline, 3=Music, 4=Cinematography, 5=Action/Effects)	Why did you choose the element you chose in the previous question?
R_5C3NbJ0ADAwE pwh	26	Female	3	1	I love Leonardo DiCaprio. When a movie comes out by one of my favorite directors or starring one of my favorite actors, the storyline is not as important to me as watching one of favorite actors in a new character. Music is also important to me.
R_cXPoFnRkO18B2 uN	26	female	1	1	Often base my movie choice on known quality of various actors or directors and their normal genre.
R_0VAI4d52mdI637 7	27	Female	2	1	i have favorite actors/actresses and directors i trust to make good movies
R_ey7RRCseWhvBY cR	28	male	3	1	Because I like to see what actors work together
R_doqZWK224nlXj1 j	27	Female	3	1	first thing that came to mind
R_3mAM3tIt9hq94B T	25	female	1	1	Nowadays, awesome cinematography and special effects are widely available; the last true differentiation of quality is in the talent of those on either side of the camera.
R_6L3FUYsLzQhMf nn	26	Male	3	1	cast/filmmaker usually predicts the quality of the movie
R_8uY7ASVIFMZk Tml	26	female	2	1	Cast, directors, etc. are usually the clearest predicament for my enjoyment of the film.
R_5z1bki5TcQchgv X	25	male	2	1	I'm always intrigued more when I see an actor or a director in an upcoming movie that I like.
R_6s66UhrGFZZD63 H	26	Female	2	1	I am more likely to see a movie if I know who is in it or who made it.
R_2uHOjM6E6qn7j mt	27	Female	3	1	It's easy to see a movie where you can trust the director who always puts out great movies. If I'm going to pay money it better be good!
R_dncTVAK36i5PO ZL	27	Male	3	1	

ResponseID	What is your age?	What is your gender?	About how many movies do you see at the theater each year?	What element of movie trailers is most important to you? (1=Cast and/or filmmakers, 2=Storyline, 3=Music, 4=Cinematography, 5=Action/Effects)	Why did you choose the element you chose in the previous question?
R_1ZYmpYNOD09h0Pj	26	Female	1	1	I know that I like the aesthetics and storytelling techniques of certain filmmakers so I pay the most attention to who made the film.
R_5aN8j7W0igsNEZn	28	female	1	1	because I dont like when they ruin the storyline
v	27	Female	3	2	it The storyline ultimately determines whether or not I'm interested in seeing the movie.
R_3Qtua4PTtAirOIZ	27	male	2	2	
R_9YmbKlaHpwinRtP	24	Female	2	2	I decide to see movies because of the plot more than anything else
R_8l862Tmksc4iGTb	28	Male	3	2	Interest You need at least a basic inclination as to what the movie is going to be about in order to draw viewers in.
R_39sbbn0JS11fFHL	27	Female	2	2	
R_3OQXGuxRmMxN12J	27	Male	3	2	I want to know what I am about to watch.
R_9NC13zAg0j5wiNv	33	Female	3	2	If the story is weak or far-fetched, the movie will be too Storyline shows what I will be seeing and if the storyline will interest me
R_0vp303tmeUzJI0Z	20	female	2	2	
R_dnbB64IyEqJK8wR	27	female	1	2	Because that's what entertains me
R_1YurHL7WhzmkJAF	26	Female	2	2	important Without a good storyline even the best actor/film director can't sell movie to viewers
R_cA3vXioesbWr37f	27	Female	2	2	
R_9YU5Y28zOEwk1s9	29	Male	2	2	Good stories make the best movies
R_a5gRE1JiPOsYab3	29	Male	3	2	I like movies that tell me a story, and if I can't tell what the story might be about, or if it doesn't have a hook, I find no interest in it.

ResponseID	What is your age?	What is your gender?	About how many movies do you see at the theater each year?	What element of movie trailers is most important to you? (1=Cast and/or filmmakers, 2=Storyline, 3=Music, 4=Cinematography, 5=Action/Effects)	Why did you choose the element you chose in the previous question?
R_0DqxcjTf522i9VP	27	female	1	2	I like a good story
R_0v4U7CrIRpHfXk p	23	Female	3	2	I like watching interesting/appealing stories that is what makes a good movie. you cant have a good movie without an amazing story
R_6yuZowZySZtd8Z 7	27	male	2	2	brings my interest and pulls in the emotions
R_bOA1Z88EqSyxQ PP	27	Female	3	2	A movie without a good plot won't keep my interest.
R_0uFQAa0nkWV9 PIV	26	Male	2	2	Story lines make the movie
R_eRMuDk7eVqr14 mF	26	Male	2	2	Helps me decide if I want to see the movie
R_eL4n3L9ZAOhK Mvj	27	F	1	2	storyline is most important because I need to stay interested in the content of the movie. I think that other elements like music and sound effects are related as well because they help build the story.
R_6s3ynQ9IQ0MoQ FT	28	female	3	2	If I'm interested in the story and subject matter that's what ultimately will entice me to see the film.
R_8r0j6yNv1wlrifj R_513j1uTb1uxiVw h	27	Male	2	2	storyline is what will compell me to see the movie
R_b4ozndIQo948IRH	33	Female	3	2	If I'm going to spend the time and money to see a movie in the theatre, I want to know if the storyline (plot) is appealing and worth my time.
R_eWiJW7dVuJkQa JD	27	Female	2	2	Plot is most important. Just because a movie has a famous person doesn't mean it is worth watching. Same goes with special effects.
R_6ooCzD1YUH7L Wjr	26	Female	2	2	I care more about the plot than any effects.



ResponseID	What is your age?	What is your gender?	About how many movies do you see at the theater each year?	What element of movie trailers is most important to you? (1=Cast and/or filmmakers, 2=Storyline, 3=Music, 4=Cinematography, 5=Action/Effects)	Why did you choose the element you chose in the previous question?
R_a5ZdwkbePBcmsYd	27	F	2	2	Because it's the most important to me
R_6lfXh29rKUV11hH	24	Female	2	2	I can't watch a movie that doesn't have a solid story
R_2iB1ecdYVIusx3T	27	Female	2	2	I desire to see a compelling story All the other options can be fluffed to make a movie seem better than it is. Storyline will let me know what is going on and if I want to investigate further.
R_ePNgUuzsFmXmHFr	27	Male	2	2	The story creates the strongest emotional reaction, the other elements are just there to enhance it
R_eDQaXFRZ6gZS2JD	27	Female	1	2	Content is more important to me than music or action elements. The storyline is what captures the audiences and allows them to remember the movie.
R_5zotE1Ah761xiGV	25	Female	2	2	I like a good story more than anything.
R_1YSTL0yPNXMmhhz	20	Female	2	2	if the story line is good the other aspects of the film seem to also be good. Actors want to partake in good films, etc.
R_559V3fW7ESR6bK5	27	Male	2	2	When I see clips of the plot, it leaves me guessing at how the story will unfold.
R_0OmMwdsc7K845UN	26	female	1	2	it is the basis of everything. A good story is hard to tell sometimes. I only go and see movies with a good plot in the theatre, otherwise I wait until video.
R_4N2XkcR87maGrHf	25	Male	1	2	Storyline's grab or lose my interest. Because it's what's most important to me. The storyline tells me if I'll be interested in the movie. The gimmicks won't trick me into a seat at the theater.
R_4I0ce0XA2T5ash7	62	female	1	2	
R_1QXa3hH4CFWUnrf	27	male	2	2	
R_0chJnnJhiGHJ2lf	31	female	3	2	
R_cD4Hho3tTZiHqe1	27	Male	1	2	

ResponseID	What is your age?	What is your gender?	About how many movies do you see at the theater each year?	What element of movie trailers is most important to you? (1=Cast and/or filmmakers, 2=Storyline, 3=Music, 4=Cinematography, 5=Action/Effects)	Why did you choose the element you chose in the previous question?
R_bQKbh9vH4PhuBTf	24	Male	1	2	Because I enjoy a great story line. If you can sell me in a minute in a half, I'll go see it.
R_bd3yQ52URRjyAg5	27	female	1	2	I have to know what the movie is supposed to be about before I decide if I want to see it.
R_b7sEXXWEjftzvtr	30	Male	1	2	If the storyline looks interesting, I'll be more likely to see the movie when it comes out.
R_bxEsRIuNLp0j36JR_6JVvwilXMjOYBdr	27	female	3	2	Above all, I'd like to know what the movie is about
R_3gFggs5nzijSrpXR_aWA9ft8meYE59E9	28	female	2	2	I enjoy getting lost in film, so the story line is important.
R_3g7jPUucmkzMJEx	27	Female	3	2	Most important for peaking my interest
R_3UVKVBkMynDkCSp	25	female	2	2	It makes the movie
R_eXsPZNZAyfgKvat	27	Male	1	3	The right music can induce an emotional response. This response is what draws me to the theater.
R_cZK7osRShJmnTBr	29	F	3	3	It is the most emotional to me
R_eyfnLMr2qrwEvVb	27	Female	2	3	While cast and storyline are always important to me, the music is what catches my emotional attention and ties things together in a short period of time.
R_9Mk4AL9apWvo1x3	27	female	1	3	the trailers that are most memorable to me, are memorable because of the music (wolf of wall street, for example)
R_9YR05cS9yeAE3c1	25	male	1	4	Because it has the most to do with why I'd enjoy a particular film
	26	female	2	4	i like to get a feel for the atmosphere of a movie and if im going to pay to see it in theaters, it better look beautiful on screen
	27	male	3	4	i believe that trailers with good cinematography, more often than not, show more substance of a movie. if the cinematography is solid, i believe that the other aspects of the movie will be well made

ResponseID	What is your age?	What is your gender?	About how many movies do you see at the theater each year?	What element of movie trailers is most important to you? (1=Cast and/or filmmakers, 2=Storyline, 3=Music, 4=Cinematography, 5=Action/Effects)	Why did you choose the element you chose in the previous question?
R_3juJcNhCKhwBJ1b	26	m	3	4	Because I could only pick one... I would have said "Overall Vibe", OLIVIA!
R_4Ge1WT9owvULY8J	29	Male	1	4	Cinematography is important because for me the look and feel is most important (followed by storyline and action)
R_cLLzT5IZGPEaWqN	30	Female	2	4	It is what is most engaging for me. If done well, it is what keeps my attention. A lot of movies are structured the same, I like ones that are unique and aesthetically pleasing
R_cN4556olE8DCjpr	22	Female	1	4	
R_cYCXLVHlaKTjzxj	26	male	2	4	It seemed most important
R_4PgWqY1j5pbO9ud	23	female	1	4	i want to be entertained - cool stuff does that  Presentation, music, emotion. You want to be able to touch a heart, make an impact, draw someone in to see more. Take the person away from their seat for a moment. It will bring them in to see it.
R_a463SIslw9OvZUF	24	male	1	4	
R_3VMZL2VOIkuaS9v	25	Female	2	4	If it is well composed, it is interested to me.
R_5ArnpVB3HyL8TQh	33	Female	2	5	Great action makes me want to see the movie  Often trailers don't give a good idea of what the movie is "really" about. So, I pay little attention to the plot in the trailer and more to the effects. Plus, cool effects are a draw for me to see a movie.
R_8cRdqkElx6kvhf7	33	male	3	5	
R_dbdpOFtZpf9ExDf	29	Male	3	5	Action keeps me engaged
R_9zf34OU098HPLh3	31	M	2	5	Because it's what captures my interest the most.
R_aVp9TXQVY99HY2N	27	Male	3	5	If I'm spending that much money to go to theater, I'm watching a big action movie with all the effects that is cooler than watching it at my house.

ResponseID	What is your age?	What is your gender?	About how many movies do you see at the theater each year?	What element of movie trailers is most important to you? (1=Cast and/or filmmakers, 2=Storyline, 3=Music, 4=Cinematography, 5=Action/Effects)	Why did you choose the element you chose in the previous question?
R_6Mtpl29BrXPyeB 7	29	m	2	5	It catches my attention

**Appendix D**

## In-Depth Interviews

**Eric D. Howell****1) What is your occupation?**

I'm a writer, director and producer of short and feature films.

**2) If your occupation is not in filmmaking specifically, what is your background/experience in filmmaking?**

N/A

**3) Have you produced a film trailer? If so, was it for your own film(s) or someone else's?**

Yes, my own- more of a teaser. *Strangers*. <http://vimeo.com/88603436>

**4) What is the first thing you, personally, do when you begin constructing a film trailer?**

I build character first- empathy comes through your actors. Then location. Then a “wow” factor- end with a question of some sort. You don't want to ruin the experience.

**5) What do you personally believe is the most important element or characteristic of a film trailer? Why?**

I would have to say...empathy or excitement. If I had to pick one, I might pick excitement/mystery. Curiosity, expense, mystery.

**6) Which do you believe is more effective in increasing viewer desire to see a film: a trailer that provides enough information so that there is a clear storyline; or one that is more vague and leaves the audience with questions? Why did you choose the answer you chose?**

What you don't know is so much better.

**7) If you were asked to create a film trailer geared toward the millennial audience, which cinematic or emotional elements would you think are most important to include?**

The core basics of story structure have remained the same for thousands of years. But it has to do more with having a way for millennials to spread the word and interact- allow them to share it, interact with one another- give them a chance to be heard. They need a platform for that. Movie trailers haven't changed that much- they've gotten faster and people have become more articulate so that you can share more info in a shorter amount of time. But I don't know that the content of it changes as much as the ability to interact with the content.

**8) How important is the inclusion of music in a movie trailer?**

150%! It's everything. No, but it's 80% of what a trailer is. They've built studies where people are made to sit in a room and watch something on television with sound, and when the sound is turned off people completely lose interest. We are hugely auditory. Sometimes people outside the business don't even realize how they're responding to the audio. Most of the storyline is coming in through auditory signals- the way those points come across are coming across in music.

**9) What effect do you think star power (be it cast, director, writers, etc.) in a trailer has on viewer appeal?**

Massive effect. That's where, ultimately, the Internet has become the new vehicle for filmmakers. Only about 200 movies/year actually come out. One or two a year maybe have a breakout star.

**Christopher M. Beer****1) What is your primary occupation?**

I have a full time job as lead video editor at Refinery29.com, and on the side I run a small production company, CMBeer.com, that caters mostly to music videos.

**2) If your primary occupation is not in filmmaking specifically, what is your background/experience in filmmaking?**

I studied production (directing, writing, editing, etc.) at the FAMU film school in Prague, shot two features for my summa cum laude thesis at the U of M, worked on a handful of industrial shorts in Minnesota, moved to New York City, assisted on The Avengers and Dark Knight Rises, among others, shot a handful of shorts that have played all over the world, and since starting my own little production company two years ago, I've had some mild success with music videos (two of which premiered on MTV). I also occasionally guest lecture at NYU about independent filmmaking and screenwriting.

**3) Have you produced a film trailer? If so, was it for your own film(s) or someone else's?**

Yes, I've made both trailers for myself and for hire.

**4) What is the first thing you, personally, do when you begin constructing a film trailer?**

I guess the first things I try to find within the film are the perfect moments that will start and end the trailer - something that will stick out to me as an absolute smash of an open, and a resonating finale. One of my old professors told me that the first shot of a film is absolutely crucial to grabbing attention and letting people know what they're going to expect; similarly, the first and last shots of a trailer should be absolutely tantalizing and effectively bookend what you've seen. It's a tough line to toe, because it needs to be compact without being complete, if that makes any

sense.

**5) What do you personally believe is the most important element or characteristic of a film trailer? Why?**

Honestly, I love when trailers can stand alone from the movies - especially if they feel like little music videos. Music videos are engaging, but a lot of narrative information is up to the audience member; the best trailers I've seen work in this respect, as well, where it's got your attention but doesn't spoon feed you. The *Only God Forgives* trailer, for one, is a favorite.

**6) Which do you believe is more effective in increasing viewer desire to see a film: a trailer that provides enough information so that there is a clear storyline; or one that is more vague and leaves the audience with questions? Why did you choose the answer you chose?**

Without a doubt, it needs to be vague. How many times have you seen a trailer, only to remark "Welp, now I don't have to see the movie, they told me everything"? An example that pops into my head immediately is the trailer for the Ben Affleck movie *The Town*, where they show you ALL the plot twists in the trailer - whoever cut that should have been fired. A trailer is meant to get you into the movie, much the way a synopsis for a book is meant to get you to buy it. Think about the new *Godzilla* movie - the first trailers were remarkable because of how little they showed, yet they were still able to effectively realize the tone and feel of the movie.

**7) If you were asked to create a film trailer geared toward the millennial audience, which cinematic or emotional elements would you think are most important to include?**

I notice a lot of cultural re-appropriation (bringing 'old' into the 'new') these days, so I imagine cultural anachronisms (old example, but putting The Strokes in the soundtrack for *Marie Antoinette*, for instance) would go over well. Presenting something vintage in a newer setting, whether it's a style (the clothing in *Her*), an idea (hero fable in *Drive*), or even score (use of classical music in films by Gus Van Sant and Lars Von Trier).

**8) How important is the inclusion of music in a movie trailer?**

I think music is one of the most useful tools - you can essentially sum up the tone and theme of the movie without even using scenes or dialogue. You can propel the trailer into a new territory. One example I have is the trailer for the movie *Drive*...halfway through, I had zero interest in the movie, it looked like Ryan Gosling racing around or something, blah blah blah - but then that operatic score chimes in halfway through and it's set to all these gorgeously composed shots, and suddenly my interest was snapped up because it introduced an element of artistry I didn't think would be present.

**9) What effect do you think star power (be it cast, director, writers, etc.) in a trailer has on viewer appeal?**

A lot - I know if I see a new trailer and it says, "from the director of this or that," depending on how I liked that movie will affect how I feel about this trailer. Same with actors - who *didn't* flock to *Place Beyond the Pines* because of Ryan Gosling?