Social Media Marketing in the Film Industry:

Using Social Media to Create a Successful Marketing

Campaign for the Theatrical Release of a Film

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the use of social media as a marketing tool within the film industry including its successes in regards to popular social tactics and campaigns as well as where it may fall short within the realm of marketing as a whole. As the world is racing to be the first to implement the "next biggest thing" and beginning to drift away from traditional marketing practices, social media is potentially the next step to ensuring a successful marketing campaign for any product or service. This study takes a look into how social media can best be used and implemented to create for a successful marketing campaign for the theatrical release of a film.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

This study focuses on the effectiveness and the necessity of the rising field of social media and digital marketing within the film industry. In the last few years, the rise of social media as a personal form of expression has exploded. Most of the time, however, companies don't take advantage of the fact that mostly all of their consumers are on social media. To traditional marketers, social media is still a relatively new and unexplored terrain and that can be intimidating. However, "today, many analysts agree that social communities should be a top priority for marketers.

According to Esteban Kolsky, the founder of ThinkJar, more than 20 percent of activity on the Web includes social communities, and that proportion will continue to grow…Pretty much everyone is using at least one [social community]. The goal is to disseminate information to the public. And if they are all in one place, that's where [marketers] want to go" (Farb, 2011, para. 2).

Background of the Problem

The importance of utilizing social media to market products is not only a new concept, but also a foreign one for most traditional marketers. Often, it is common to see marketing agencies and teams applying traditional marketing tactics to social campaigns, when in reality, a social campaign should be tailored specifically to a social media audience, which is always changing. According to Farb, "for marketers who are looking to participate in these communities, best practices that worked as recently as a year ago

may no longer apply" (Farb, 2011, para. 3). A traditional marketing campaign can most likely not be successful being transferred to social media platforms because the way to market and impact audiences on social media has the potential of changing every day.

Traditional marketers make the mistake of seeing social media as simply another platform to place their campaign on rather than looking for creative ways to market their campaign that will sell on social media as a separate entity (Farb, 2011, para. 4).

Purpose of the Study

With the rise of social media, there are new strategies and tactics that marketers and advertisers must take advantage of when creating a campaign. Social media platforms are a place for targeted tailoring and personalization. Social media is exactly what it is by definition: social. Personally connecting with social audiences through a marketing or advertising campaign is the best way to find success with that campaign

By investigating current social trends and best practices regarding social media marketing campaigns performed by several major film studios in the United States, it will benefit social media, marketing, advertising and film industry professionals who are looking to increase their visibility and create a more successful campaign on social media.

Setting for the Study

This study will be done as part of the data collection for a Senior Project at California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo, California. Interviews will be conducted with three experts in the following fields: digital marketing, social media, and

film marketing. The experts will each be asked the same set of questions and probes. The questionnaire is specifically designed to answer the research questions and fill the gaps in previous literature on the topic of the use of social media marketing in the film industry.

Research Questions

  The study used the following research questions that were designed to answer questions and gaps in the existing literature on the topic of the use of social media marketing in the film industry as well as investigating some best practices in the field of social media marketing. Each question was created after going over the existing information on the topic in order to acquire the necessary data from professionals in the fields of digital marketing, social media, and film marketing.

1. Why is social media important to the success of marketing campaigns today?
2. How can social media be used to create a marketing campaign?
3. What are the best uses for each individual platform when it comes to marketing?
4. What are some examples of studios using social media to successfully market an upcoming film?

Definition of Terms

  The following are defined to clarify several of the terms on the topic, assist the reader, and provide context to the remainder of the study.

  <u>Attachment Theory</u>: a theory proven to contribute to current marketing strategies based on the quality of attachments between a consumer and a brand by creating trustworthy, loyal relationship with the consumer (Thomson, 2006, p. 105).

B2B: Business-to-business (Your Social Move, 2011).

B2C: Business-to-consumer (Your Social Move, 2011).

Hashtag: a word or string of characters that starts with a number sign. Identical hashtags are grouped into a search thread (Your Social Move, 2011).

Platform: A system that manages content. For instance, Wordpress is a platform that manages a community of blogs (Your Social Move, 2011).

Real Time Engagement: turning to social media for questions and concerns that an audience has with a company or brand (York, 2016).

Schema Congruity Theory: a theory describing the idea that consumers have specific thoughts, memories, or feelings associated with brands, and which are then set off when a celebrity, product, or other brand name is mentioned. (Kahle & Kim, 2006, p. 165).

Show Marketing: Using visual media through the use of videos, photos, tutorials, trailers, etc. (York, 2016).

Tag: Indicates or labels what content is about; attaching the handle of another companies' or user's social media to the content being published (Your Social Move, 2011).

Traffic: the visitors that visit a website or social page of a company or organization (Your Social Move, 2011).

Transparency: Social media users expect to engage in considerate and honest online conversations with individuals and businesses (Your Social Move, 2011).

User Generated Content (UGC): Anything published online by social media users (rather than companies or brands) (Your Social Move, 2011).

Organization of Study

   Chapter 1 included the background of the problem, purpose of the study, and a definition of terms. Chapter 2 will identify the trends regarding social media marketing use in the film industry by reviewing the current literature on the topic. Chapter 3 will present the methodology of the study. In Chapter 4, the findings will be presented and organized based on the original research questions. The data will then be analyzed compared to the current literature on the topic. Lastly, Chapter 5 will include a summary of the study and recommendations for professionals in the digital marketing, social media, and film industry to develop and manage a successful social media campaign.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

The following review of literature focuses on the existing literature on the topic of social media marketing use in the film industry including the cause for the shift to social media, best practices by major studios, and various platform frameworks regarding increasing awareness of up and coming theatrical films and maintaining consumer relations and engagement.

The Importance of Social Media in Marketing

According to Evans and Bratton (2012), social media is crucial to the success of any marketing campaign nowadays because of an idea known as network value (p. 52). Network value is "the power or value of the network from a member's perspective" (Evans and Bratton, 2012, p. 52). In other words, the ability to reach anyone at anytime with a specific and personalized message is potentially more valuable from both a marketer's and consumer's perspective than reaching the entire network with a single message (pg. 52). Social media, according to Evans and Bratton (2012), "is an individualized media, an idea key to understanding how to translate this potential into reality" (Evans and Bratton, 2012, p. 52).

In regards to network value, Evans and Bratton (2012) also mention Metcalfe's Law, a law that states, "for networks that support communication *between members—* rather than only from a single originating source like a radio station—the network value grows as the square of the number of users" (Evans and Bratton, 2012, p. 53).

Figure 4.2 A comparison of Metcalfe's vs. Sarnoff's laws

Essentially the value of social media in marketing that arises from this law is from the fact that when "people can talk in both directions and with more than one conversation occurring simultaneously", the network value increases within the member's of the network (Evans and Bratton, 2012, p. 53).

Using Social Media to Create a Marketing Campaign

The number one mistake that companies make when using social media in marketing campaigns, according to Farb (2011), is that they see social media as simply "another channel for marketing…instead of looking at how to do things differently…they just go into online social communities and advertise their message, instead of engaging and having conversations" (Farb, 2011, para. 4). The main aspect of using social media to market anything is to understand that "social media has put the consumer in power more

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than they ever have been in the past" and that listening to the consumer's voice is vital to a successful marketing campaign. (Farb, 2011, para. 5).

Social media can be used in many different ways within a single marketing campaign; that is what makes it the most versatile platform to structure a campaign on. Paid advertising is one aspect of a campaign that is highly rewarded by using social media. According to The Economist (2015), "social networks like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn have cultivated vast audiences: 2 billion people worldwide use them" (The Economist, 2015, para. 3). Social media platforms are becoming bigger and better for advertising not only because of the extreme reach potential, but also because social sites "gather all sorts of data on each user's age, consumption patterns, interests and so on" (The Economist, 2015, para. 4). This gives advertisers information that they wouldn't necessarily be able to get on any other platform as well as giving them the ability to aim their ads with "an accuracy that is unthinkable with analogue media" (The Economist, 2015, para. 4).

Social media is best used and is most successful in a marketing campaign when there are two factors involved: fine-tuned targeting and audience engagement. Fine-tuned targeting, according to The Economist (2015), means, "the distinction between advertising and e-commerce is becoming blurred" (The Economist, 2015, para. 5). With social media, instead of one broad message that will be spread across multiple platforms, there are many variations of the same message that are finely tuned to specific audiences in a way that those audiences will respond best to. In addition to fine-tuned targeting, audience engagement is another factor involved in using social media in marketing campaigns. Like Farb (2011) stated earlier, it is unlikely that a social media marketing

campaign will be successful if a company merely uses it as "another channel of marketing" (Farb, 2011, para. 4). Instead, a company must engage with the audience that they are trying to reach in the form of comments, messages, etc. in order to display transparency, trustworthiness and personalization to the consumer. This transparency relates back to the Attachment Theory, a theory that examines the attachment between the consumer and the company that is brought upon by creating trustworthy and loyal relationships (Thomson, 2006, p. 105).

Best Marketing Uses for Each Social Platform

Social media is a vast and broad landscape for marketing, but there are specific uses for each individual platform when it comes to effectiveness of a marketing campaign.

Facebook

According to the Pew Research Center, "Facebook remains the most-used social networking platform, as two-thirds of online adults say that they are Facebook users" (Duggan and Brenner, 2012, para. 6). With this in mind, Facebook is a platform that a marketing team should expect to spend the most of their social media marketing budget on. Facebook, however, tends to have an older demographic, with the highest percent of users in the 30-49 year old age range. This means that ads that are purchased on Facebook or any Facebook driven social content should be aimed at an older demographic in order to be successful. Looking further into the demographic statistics of Facebook, the site tends to have a more female-heavy audience, with 72% of users being

female (Duggan and Brenner, 2012). With just these two statistics, it can be concluded that Facebook is best used to advertise to an older, female audience.

In regards to content, Facebook is best used to advertise visual posts, events, or audience interaction and engagement (Grabowski, 2015).

Instagram

Since founded in 2010, "Instagram has obtained 100 million active monthly users. 40 million pictures are being uploaded daily and there are 8500 likes generated per second" (Bergstrom and Backman, 2013, p. 11). According to the Pew Research Center, Instagram is used mostly by 18-29 year old women (Duggan and Brenner, 2012). With that being said, it is best to target that audience when advertising on Instagram. "For companies, Instagram can be used as a tool to connect and communicate with customers and potential customers. The company can present a more personal picture of their brand, and by doing so the company conveys a more honest picture of itself" (Bergstrom and Backman, 2013, p. 12). Instagram is used best to portray a more transparent view of the company through photos. Video has also proved to be successful content on Instagram because it is short and keeps the audiences' attention.

Twitter

Since November 2010, the percentage of Twitter users has doubled. It is easily becoming the most popular social platform for users aged 18-29 (Duggan and Brenner, 2012). For marketing purposes, Twitter is best used for audience engagement. It is the best platform for that because of its informality and how it's a platform that is made for

user response. According to Patel, images perform better than videos and text outperforms images (Patel, 2014).

Snapchat

Like Instagram, Snapchat is another platform where companies can capitalize on transparency and creative personalization. Snapchat is the "trendiest new thing" for advertisers and therefore is where most advertisers are spending a lot of their marketing budgets (Benner and de la Merced, 2016, para. 3). Snapchat is attractive to advertisers because it has multiple outlets for creating ads. An advertiser can do video, photos, and even filters and geotags. Snapchat is best for marketing campaigns that desire more of a creative flare.

Effective Social Media Marketing Strategies Used by Major Film Studios Today

Since social media has become a staple for marketing and advertising in the last few years, several major film studios have taken advantage of its popularity and successfully created marketing campaigns for their films accordingly.

Disney's Use of Social Video Interactivity

Disney used several successful marketing strategies for their release of *The Jungle Book* (2016), including partnering up with Facebook to create "a touring virtual-reality experience and 360-degree Facebook video emphasizing the "Avatar"-like world of its jungle," (Barnes, 2016, para. 14). Studies have shown that moviegoers are "more likely to spend $3 to $5 more a ticket to see (a film) in 3-D, which can lift opening-weekend sales

considerably" (Barnes, 2016, para. 14). Disney took this and decided to take the aspect of 3-D and combine it with an interactive experience for social media users to give audiences an idea of what to expect for *The Jungle Book* in 3-D. Their marketing strategies proved successful with a $103.3 million box office opening weekend according to BoxOfficeMojo.com.

Universal Pictures' Use of Social Celebrity Endorsement

Universal Pictures began marketing *Fifty Shades of Grey* (2015), the year before by having multi-platinum, Grammy-Award winning recording artist Beyoncé release a 15-second trailer for the film on her Instagram in July 2014. Teaser trailers are known to be a huge success when marketing a film, but what created the biggest impact on the outcome of this marketing campaign was having a celebrity, Beyoncé, with millions of Instagram followers release it. Not only was it unexpected, as the studio is usually the first to release any trailers of the film, but also it had an "accidental leak" feel to it, which has proven to peak the interest of audiences everywhere. According to Lee, "fan reaction [to the trailer] erupted right on cue, proving that pop music's reigning diva plus first-look footage of 2015's most tremulously awaited erotic drama equals a match made in viral heaven" (Lee, 2014, para. 1).

Along with *Fifty Shades of Grey*, Universal Pictures used a similar strategy when marketing their film *Fast & Furious 6* (2013). Universal ran a trailer during the Super Bowl in 2013 and coordinated a huge social media "moment" where they had the entire cast from the film promote the trailer on their personal social media accounts as soon as the trailer ran, a smart move on Universal's part as the lead cast of *Furious 6* has over 200 million combined followers on Facebook alone. Speaking about Universal's ability

to reach fans in a personal way, usually through the use of celebrities involved with the movie, Umberto Gonzalez, a contributor to the movie fan site Latino Review, said "'We can tell when it's just a studio publicist blasting out marketing materials, and they don't do that to us. They involve fans and listen to us'" (Barnes, 2013, para. 14).

Paramount's Use of Fan Involvement

Paramount took a different route when marketing their film *Paranormal Activity* (2009), a route that lead to the film becoming the studio's most profitable movie in its history, grossing $107.9 million (Hampp, 2010, para. 3). Through their various social media accounts, Paramount devised a "first-of-its-kind 'Demand It' campaign in which movie fans could 'demand' that movie to come to their hometown. If the film got 1 million demands, Paramount promised, the studio would roll out the film nationwide to all the markets that asked for it" (Hampp, 2010, para. 2). The studio ended up reaching its goal of 1 million "demands" in less than a week. This strategy was devised by Paramount's marketing team because the movie had only a fraction of the budget that most studios have for major films and no trailer or TV campaign. With these marketing barriers, they had to get more creative and decided to instead invert the funnel. Instead of having a product-launch or wide release strategy, they democratized the process and let the audience tell them where to go first (Hampp, 2010, para. 3). Paramount's Executive Vice President of Interactive Marketing Strategy and Production Amy Powell said "Winning over your fans and letting them feel included in the process is instrumental in the marketing of any film…for a long time, movie marketing was a mass-market approach that wasn't personalized—there was no thank you" (Hampp, 2010, para. 4).

Lionsgate's Use of Blurred Social Reality

For its release of the third installment of *The Hunger Games* series, *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 1* (2014), Lionsgate relied heavily on YouTube, creating a "boundary-pushing initiative called 'District Voices'" (Barnes, 2014, para. 24). The Lionsgate marketing team essentially created its own *Hunger Games* television network by creating a YouTube channel called CapitolTV (Barnes, 2014, para. 25). CapitolTV served as a news source for the movie's fictional government, including appearances from some highly known YouTube stars such as iJustine, Rob Czar and Corrine Leigh. On this particular YouTube channel, that was shared throughout their social platforms as well, "Lionsgate went a step further, helping produce the scripted 'District Voices' videos, which features the YouTube personalities in Hunger Games costumes with props from the movie, blurring the line between fiction and reality" (Barnes, 2014, para. 26). Audiences have been known to respond better to marketing that doesn't feel like marketing, which is why a strategy that immerses the film into the real world proved very effective for Lionsgate.

Chapter 3

Methodology

This chapter presents the methods used to collect data for the study including data sources, collection and presentation of the data, and limitations and delimitations.

Data Sources

In order to execute this study, one expert from the field of digital marketing, social media, and film marketing were interviewed based on a single questionnaire. The questionnaire was developed to answer the original research questions regarding the use of social media marketing in the film industry.

Participants.

The digital marketing expert chosen for the interview was Raunika Nayyar, assistant manager of digital marketing at Universal Pictures Home Entertainment, a property of Universal Pictures that markets and distributes NBC Universal's contemporary and classic theatrical and television product, spanning properties from the company's Universal Pictures, Focus Features and Universal Media Studios, as well as DVD Original titles from Universal 1440 Entertainment and select third-party productions including entertainment from Open Road Films and Mattel in Universal City, California. The social media expert selected for the interview was Sean Murphy, content strategist and digital marketing manager at Ernie Ball Music Man, an American instrument manufacturer in San Luis Obispo, California. The film marketing expert selected for the interview was Hallory Sindelar, marketing and social media coordinator for Universal Pictures, an American film studio owned by Comcast through

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the Universal Filmed Entertainment Group division of its wholly owned subsidiary NBC Universal in Universal City, California.

Interview Design.

The following questions were asked to each of the experts and served as data sources for this study:

1. Do you feel that social media and other digital platforms are crucial to creating a successful marketing campaign? Why or why not?

2. Please describe the digital/social platform that you have the most experience with and explain why you feel that platform is a good platform for marketing purposes.

3. What social media/digital campaigns have you produced and/or managed? Please describe the campaign and your role in it.

4. What are some of the best social/digital campaigns you have seen and why do you think they were successful?

5. What are some of the strategies you use to contribute to a successful digital/social campaign (i.e. community engagement, video, images, etc.)?

6. What are some of the digital/social trends you are noticing in your work today?

7. In your opinion, how has social media/digital marketing changed or grown in the last few years?

8. When it comes to marketing films, how to you feel digital/social media is best utilized for marketing purposes?

9. Who are your top competitors when it comes to marketing your films and why do you feel they are competitors?

10. What are the steps to creating a digital/social campaign? Walk me through the process.

Data Collection

Data was collected for this study by conducting three individual interviews with each expert. The interviews were conducted in November 2016 and lasted approximately 30 minutes. Experts were asked the same questions from a single questionnaire designed to answer the original research questions of this study while gaining insight into the use of social media and digital marketing within a marketing campaign.

Data Presentation

The data collected during the each interview was documented through audio recordings using a digital voice recorder as well as written verbatim notes during and after the interviews to document any additional information that could potentially clarify the context of the responses. This method of data collection ensures that the data is presented in the most complete and objective way possible.

Limitations and Delimitations

This study was conducted to gain insight into the use of social media in order to create a successful marketing campaign, however there are limitations to this study based

on the type of data collected and interview process. Limitations may exist assuming that

the responses are all qualitative and opinion-based and therefore cannot be generalized.

Additionally, the subjects being interviewed at NBC Universal only have a 30-

minute time slot to be interviewed therefore potentially causing rushed answers or

answers that aren't fully thought out.

Chapter 4

Data Analysis

This chapter will provide descriptions of the each of the experts interviewed in the study and summarize the respondents' answers to the questionnaire. Since the data was collected through recorded interviews lasting approximately 30 minutes, it will be presented in the form of direct quotations or paraphrased responses. The answers will then be analyzed and compared to the original research questions and the existing literature on the use of social media in the film industry as reviewed in Chapter 2.

Description of Participating Experts in Related Fields

    Digital Marketing.

    Raunika Nayyar was the digital marketing expert for this study. Nayyar has worked for NBC Universal for three years, starting as an intern in customer marketing and working her way up to assistant manager of digital marketing. She has been around marketing for years, going to school at California State University at Northridge and majoring in Business Administration, Economics and Marketing as well as being a member of the American Marketing Association. She has seen the ins and outs of several major digital marketing campaigns for the digital release of popular blockbuster films like *The Huntsman: Winter's War* and *The Purge*.

    Social Media.

    The social media industry expert chosen for this study was Sean Murphy. Sean has had an extremely successful career in social media, having started in 2004 right when Facebook was first created and was one of the only social platforms and continuing his

career to now when there are an abundance more platforms to work with, most of which

he has used in his career to create successful campaigns. He is currently the digital

marketing manager at Ernie Ball Music Man, an innovative instrument manufacturer

headquartered in San Luis Obispo, California. Previously, however, he has worked on

social campaigns for several agencies including Verdin Marketing and Lindamood-Bell

Learning Processes. Once of the most successful social campaigns that he has worked on

was for the University of California at Santa Barbara, successfully decreasing the

attendance of Halloween and Deltopia parties from well over 20,000 people to fewer than

2,000 in just 2 years.

Film Marketing.

Hallory Sindelar was selected as the film marketing expert for this study. Hallory

has worked for Universal Pictures since March 2016, but has highly proved her expertise

in social media film marketing and is already running her own film marketing social

campaigns for films such as *Popstar* and *Bridget Jones' Baby*. Her expertise is studying

trends and tactics that other film studios do to market their films and taking that and

bringing it to the table at Universal. She truly has a grasp on how films can and should be

marketed online because of the skills that she has learned throughout her years of

experience in marketing and social media. Previously, she has worked for companies

such as Populus Brands, Cox Communications and Vendetta Studios in Los Angeles. She

has been marketing films for years now and is an expert in how to translate working

traditional film marketing tactics into social media film marketing campaigns.

Social Media and Digital Marketing Questionnaire

Each expert was asked to respond to the following questions regarding personal branding and celebrity status:

11. Do you feel that social media and other digital platforms are crucial to

creating a successful marketing campaign? Why or why not?

Question #1 was asked to gain insight into whether or not marketing professionals feel that social media is a need in the marketing industry nowadays. It was designed to clarify expert opinions on the growing social industry and how they feel it will effect the industry as a whole.

- Raunika Nayyar: "I really think social media is important for business nowadays. First of all, you can reach not only your country, but people outside of your country which is so easily done by Facebook, targeting, Twitter; you can reach the whole world. If there's something going on in another country, like Egypt, and their media is not covering it, the only way to know is through social media. I think it's the future of where every business is going no matter if they're a nonprofit, a for-profit, every type of business needs social media" (Appendix A).

- Sean Murphy: "Completely crucial. It certainly depends on what you're marketing. There are examples of companies and products and industries that can get by without it, but even if you can get by without it, you're still going to benefit from having it. In 90% of all other industries, you have to have it; you will fail, you will disappear, your audience will not find you if you don't exist on social media" (Appendix B).

- Hallory Sindelar: "I do believe that using social media for marketing purposes is very important because everyone is online, everyone has some sort of social

media. Even if they don't have a Facebook, they might have a Twitter or

Snapchat, my mom is on Instagram. So, everyone is connected in some way and

social and digital marketing allows us to reach everyone" (Appendix C).

12. Please describe the digital/social platform that you have the most experience

with and explain why you feel that platform is a good platform for marketing

purposes.

Question #2 was designed to understand the experts a little bit more and what

their experience with social media is. This question was also included to get insight from

the experts about which social media platform they felt was best for marketing purposes.

- Raunika Nayyar: "I have the most experience with Facebook; it's the oldest one

  around. I think I've worked on Facebook since before Snapchat was even around.

  Facebook has actually evolved over the years. When I started marketing on

  Facebook, there were no Facebook ads, you couldn't target by different countries

  or continents or by gender. Now, the Facebook analytics are actually the best

  analytics out there for any social media platform; Snapchat doesn't even give us

  analytics. Facebook has actually done a lot of hard work even though it's gotten

  so much criticism from others saying things like "It's old", "It's for older people",

  "You don't have millennials on it" when rather you have every kind of audience

  on Facebook and they've done a great job at providing numbers and analytics"

  (Appendix A).

- Sean Murphy: "I certainly have the most experience with Facebook and that's

  mainly because it's been used for marketing longer than any other platforms. It

  certainly is great for marketing mainly because that's where the bulk of your

audience is. You're hitting a huge swath of demographic ranges. Essentially, almost anybody in your audience that you're trying to reach is on Facebook in some way or another. So it's basically the easiest way and the most effective and most efficient way to reach a large percentage of your audience" (Appendix B).

- Hallory Sindelar: "I believe that I have the most experience when it comes to social media and marketing with Facebook, just because it's been around the longest. They've had the most time to, kind of, test out what works and what doesn't work, how to reach certain people, certain groups of people, locations and areas, and I think it's very beneficial because Facebook was the first and people are more likely to have a Facebook than, say, a Snapchat or Twitter account."

13. What social media/digital campaigns have you produced and/or managed? Please describe the campaign and your role in it.

Question #3 was asked to further investigate the experts' experience with social media and digital marketing campaigns. It was asked to understand the credibility of the sources before going deeper into the interview.

- Raunika Nayyar: "I've worked on my share of campaigns over the years. Every campaign is different; every new movie brings in new challenges and new marketing tactics. The audience changes, too, so you really have to keep that in mind when designing a digital campaign, especially a digital email marketing campaign. Like for example, I'm not going to put a bunch of little minions decorating an email for a *Fast and Furious* email. You always have to keep your audience in mind and since digital platforms are becoming more and more used,

something like email marketing has to find ways to keep up with the changing trends so that it doesn't go obsolete" (Appendix A).

- Sean Murphy: "I've been involved with some that were really rewarding like being on the San Luis Obispo Sheriff's Department social media campaign, the "Keep Isla Vista Safe" UCSB campaigns, and be able to see campaigns like that actually have a very clear, obvious, real-life practical benefit, you know. We were able to get UCSB Halloween and Deltopia attendances down from 25,000 and riots and car burning, hundreds of arrests, down to, I think just this last Halloween, just over 2,000 people. I mean, they described it as "less action than a normal Tuesday night". That was beautiful, that was fantastic. I couldn't have been happier about that" (Appendix B).

- Hallory Sindelar: The campaigns that I run myself are pretty limited, just because I'm so new to the company, but the first one that I'm running totally on my own in terms of social media is *Bridget Jones' Baby*. And before that, I worked pretty much on my own with the *Popstar* social campaign. Popstar was really fun just because the movie is really fun, and there's lots of swearing in the movie and you can swear on Facebook. It's super important with stuff like that because your campaign, especially with movies, needs to match not only the movie, but also the audience that is going to watch the movie" (Appendix C).

  14. What are some of the best social/digital campaigns you have seen and why do you think they were successful?

Question #4 was asked to see how these experts pay attention to competition. Most traditional marketers pay close attention to what competition is doing, so this question

was asked to see if marketers in digital and social media marketing also pay close attention to competition.

- Raunika Nayyar: "I would say *Deadpool*. *Deadpool* was one of my favorite campaigns. It's an R rated movie, right, and they also had a lot of comedy and the best of their campaign was that they were subtle, but in your face at the same time" (Appendix A).

- Sean Murphy: "One of the best I've seen in recent memory was REI's recent Black Friday campaign. I think it was from just last year, the "Opt Outside" campaign. They started messaging a couple weeks before Black Friday and basically said, "We're not participating. This could be our biggest sales day of the year. We could make a quarter of our earnings just in this one day, but that's not what we stand for. We want to make sure that not only can our employees and our staff be able to go out and enjoy this holiday with their families, but we also want to push that message out to our audience, the people that buy from us. We don't want to sour what could be this beautiful family chance to connect and to unplug and get outside. We don't want our customers to spend their Thanksgiving standing in line at 2 AM". And it worked really well, it worked really strongly, people are still using the hashtag that they created to this day. They were really great about finding people who did use the hashtag and highlighting them, some community and audience engagement there. It was just a really successful campaign all around. And they ended up, financially, doing incredibly well because of it because of the good will that they generated. They took a gamble that completely paid off" (Appendix B).

- Hallory Sindelar: "Hmm, the campaign that popped in my head first was the social campaign for *Deadpool*. They had really good example of integrating *Deadpool* into social media holidays and national holidays like Valentine's Day and just crazy things like that just making Deadpool relatable and topical every single holiday across the board really helped it stick" (Appendix C).

15. What are some of the strategies you use to contribute to a successful digital/social campaign (i.e. community engagement, video, images, etc.)?

Question #5 was asked to gain insight into the tactics and strategies that these experts use within their own social and digital campaigns. This question provides clarity into how each expert believes a successful campaign is created and implemented.

- Raunika Nayyar: "I ran a Doc Brown campaign for *Back to the Future*. So we had a chat bot for Doc Brown and you could actually talk with him. So we had a Facebook page and we set up a messenger system where users could actually message Doc Brown and the bot would reply back to them… We've noticed that engaging with the audience first has proven a pretty successful strategy on social media" (Appendix A).

- Sean Murphy: "The best thing that we're doing right now that I haven't been able to take advantage of in my previous positions is that we're doing a ton of creating our own content, really high level content…We've got a ton of things that we're using to create that earned media that a lot of other companies either don't have the ability or the capacity or the knowledge base to be able to do that so that's what's been putting us ahead in this space. I've noticed that it's had an amazing response from our audiences because we've got something to give them that they

can't get anywhere else and also that's not necessarily shoving our product down their throats" (Appendix B).

- Hallory Sindelar: "We do a lot of audience engagement, especially in the social campaigns that I've run, I'm usually the person that's typing back in the comments and talking to people. For instance, when people ask like 'hey when is this coming out on DVD' or 'is this available in my country', it's really important to respond to those people because those people who are actively engaging with your posts and your page are the ones that are going to buy your product whatever it may be" (Appendix C).

16. In your opinion, how has social media/digital marketing changed or grown in the last few years?

Question #6 was asked to get insight into the experts' opinion on the digital marketing and social media field in general. This question provides clarity on how these experts see the direction of the digital marketing industry going and how they will adapt to the changes.

- Raunika Nayyar: "I still remember when I first joined Universal as an intern, we only focused on Facebook, like Twitter, yeah was in the background and we used it every once in a while, Tumblr was dead, so yeah we started with basically just Facebook… I think back in the day, everyone was kind of just doing whatever they wanted when it came to social media and now people are starting to understand the need for social media and understanding that in the coming times, digital marketing is going to be coming first over all other types of marketing. The priority has definitely changed" (Appendix A).

- Sean Murphy: "More than anything, just the necessity of having to use it. Companies were able to get by; they were able to squeak by for while without having it. Nowadays, however, you really won't survive without it unless you're one of those weird one-off examples. And really the behind the scenes reason for that is because everybody is on it. Everyone has a smart device, people have smart TVs, and people even have smart refrigerators" (Appendix B).

- Hallory Sindelar: "I think the biggest change, though, is just the recent realization from a lot of businesses, not just studios, that social media is becoming a need. Companies are starting to be able to not survive if they are not on social media. In addition, we've noticed that when businesses started on social media a few years back, it was used a lot for blatant advertising and people really hate that. It's become really competitive in this world to be able to create the most integrated content that people will stop and look at and not keep scrolling past because they think it's an ad" (Appendix C).

17. Who are your top competitors when it comes to marketing your films and why do you feel they are competitors?

Question #7 was asked to understand how these experts are using their competition, or if they are using their competition at all, in order to keep up with current trends. This question is helpful in understanding whether or not paying attention to competition is a strategic move in the world of digital marketing and social media.

Raunika Nayyar: "I would say Warner and Disney… I follow a lot of different email updates just to see what other people are doing, because you always want to do new things, you want to make sure you're standing out in a world

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that is so competitive. Like analytics and stuff like that is really important, but competitors is how I can really see what's going on out there so it's super important to pay attention to what your competitors are doing" (Appendix A).

Sean Murphy: N/A

Hallory Sindelar: "I feel like everyone is our competition. I pay attention to a lot of general articles and things like that about the general direction that social media is going, finding different trends and everything, and sooner or later, all the studios end up doing so, its mostly just a race to who can do it first and who can do it best" (Appendix C).

18. What are the steps to creating a digital/social campaign? Walk me through the process.

Question #8 was asked to understand the process of how a social media or digital campaign works from start to finish. This question is important to ask so that insight can be gained into how a digital campaign differs from a traditional marketing campaign.

Raunika Nayyar: N/A

Sean Murphy: "First and foremost, we start with what actually is it that were even marketing. What is the need...We determine what didn't work so that we can completely avoid any time or financial loss from recreating strategies that just were not successful in the past. Once we determine what has worked and what hasn't worked, we refine our budget and make sure that we're allocating enough to the project but we're not overspending… We go into the planning phase on the elements of the campaign. We do that by creating another plan of kind of how long the campaign will last… A lot of people have that "set it and forget it"

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mentality, but we always watch our campaigns and look for spots that we can improve on. We look at what messaging is resonating, what images or video could be doing better, basically always looking at how can we tweak this to make it just that much better… To look at it more simply, it really is just planning, implantation and evaluation with constant optimization" (Appendix B).

Hallory Sindelar: N/A

Social Media Marketing Research Questions

For this project, the following four research questions were created for the study to determine what current practices and strategies are being used among digital marketing, social media and film marketing professionals and collect expert opinions on the use of social media marketing in the film industry.

Research question 1: What is the importance of using social media when it comes to the marketing industry?

- **"**Social media is crucial to the success of any marketing campaign nowadays because of an idea known as network value. Network value is the power or value of the network from a member's perspective" (Evans and Bratton, 2012, p. 52).

- "People can talk in both directions and with more than one conversation occurring simultaneously" (Evans and Bratton, 2012, p. 53).

Research question 2: How can social media be used to create a marketing campaign?

- **"**Social media is best used and is most successful in a marketing campaign when there are two factors involved: fine-tuned targeting and audience engagement" (The Economist, 2015, para. 5).

- "It is unlikely that a social media marketing campaign will be successful if a company merely uses it as another channel of marketing" (Farb, 2011, para. 4).

Research question 3: What are the best uses for each individual social media platform when it comes to marketing?

- "Facebook remains the most-used social networking platform, as two-thirds of online adults say that they are Facebook users" (Duggan and Brenner, 2012, para. 6).

- "Facebook is best used to advertise visual posts, events, or audience interaction and engagement" (Grabowski, 2015).

- "Instagram has obtained 100 million active monthly users. 40 million pictures are being uploaded daily and there are 8500 likes generated per second" (Bergstrom and Backman, 2013, p. 11).

- "For companies, Instagram can be used as a tool to connect and communicate with customers and potential customers. The company can present a more personal picture of their brand, and by doing so the company conveys a more honest picture of itself" (Bergstrom and Backman, 2013, p. 12).

- "Twitter is best used for audience engagement. It is the best platform for that because of its informality and how it's a platform that is made for user response. Images perform better than videos and text outperforms images" (Patel, 2014).

- "Snapchat is attractive to advertisers because it has multiple outlets for creating ads. An advertiser can do video, photos, and even filters and geotags. Snapchat is best for marketing campaigns that desire more of a creative flare" (Benner and de la Merced, 2016, para. 3).

Research question 4: What are some examples of studios using social media to market their films?

- (Disney) "Disney used several successful marketing strategies for their release of *The Jungle Book*, including partnering up with Facebook to create a touring virtual-reality experience and 360-degree Facebook video emphasizing the "Avatar"-like world of its jungle" (Barnes, 2016, para. 14).

- (Universal) "Fan reaction [to the trailer] erupted right on cue, proving that pop music's reigning diva plus first-look footage of 2015's most tremulously awaited erotic drama equals a match made in viral heaven" (Lee, 2014, para. 1).

- (Paramount) "Paramount devised a first-of-its-kind 'Demand It' campaign in which movie fans could 'demand' that movie to come to their hometown. If the film got 1 million demands, Paramount promised, the studio would roll out the film nationwide to all the markets that asked for it" (Hampp, 2010, para. 2).

- "Lionsgate went a step further, helping produce the scripted 'District Voices' videos, which features the YouTube personalities in Hunger Games costumes with props from the movie, blurring the line between fiction and reality" (Barnes, 2014, para. 26).

Social Media Marketing Data

For this study, it was very important to gather responses from each of the experts that related to the research questions. The experts chosen for this study each have a specialized knowledge from their own fields of study. The questionnaire that was designed to gather responses from the experts in this study was crafted to collect personal opinions that would relate back to the original research questions. The following tables

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present the respondents' answers in the form of their individual opinions on the original research questions.

Research question 1: What is the importance of using social media when it comes to the marketing industry?

- This research question was designed to better understand the effect that social media has on marketing in today's society. This question provides the base for why companies today need or do not need social media integrated into their marketing campaigns.

- The experts selected for this study all responded to this question based off of the experience that they have in their respective fields. All the experts agreed that social media is a necessity in marketing campaigns today.

Table 1

Understanding the need for social media in marketing.

Respondent	Need for social media in the marketing industry	Practical reasons to use social media in the field
Raunika Nayyar	The reach is much greater.	It's the future of where every business is going.
Sean Murphy	Your audience will not find you.	In 90% of all industries, you have to have social media to stay relevant.
Hallory Sindelar	Everyone is connected.	Everyone has some sort of social media whether it's Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter, etc.

Research question 2: How can social media be used to create a marketing campaign?

- This question was designed to understand how social media practices and tactics can be applied to traditional marketing practices and tactics in order to create a successful campaign via social platforms.

- Each expert was asked to explain how they feel that social media is best used for marketing purposes and what specifically marketers can do to ensure a successful campaign for their product or service.

Table 2

Analyzing the social practices that create for successful marketing campaigns.

Respondent	Effective social strategies to use in marketing campaigns.	Example of social strategies in a marketing campaign.
Raunika Nayyar	Audience engagement	Doc Brown interactive robot for *Back to the Future* campaign on Facebook
Sean Murphy	Original content	*Ernie Ball: The Pursuit of Music* mini series for social platforms
Hallory Sindelar	Grabbing the user's attention (stop scrolling technique)	Captioned videos and "tap for sound" videos for *Bridget Jones' Baby*

Research question 3: What are the best uses for each individual social media platform when it comes to marketing?

- This question was designed to understand the best marketing uses for each social platform and how each platform is specifically designed to support the marketing strategies that are the most effective for that platform and/or that audience.

- It has been proven that there are many beneficial marketing uses for the several

  different social platforms, but the experts interviewed felt that they only had

  extensive experience using Facebook for marketing campaigns. The other social

  platforms, though very popular among the general populous, are still growing and

  changing when it comes to marketing on them while Facebook has had a lot more

  time to create a platform that is more marketing friendly. The largest advantage

  that Facebook has over other social platforms, according to the experts, is that

  most of, if not all of the audience that the marketer is trying to reach is on

  Facebook.

Table 3

Marketing uses for different social platforms.

Respondent	Social platform	Marketing use for social platform
Raunika Nayyar	Facebook	Every kind of audience is on Facebook.
Sean Murphy	Facebook	Most efficient and effective way to reach a large percentage of your audience.
Hallory Sindelar	Facebook	People are more likely to have a Facebook than any other platform.

Research question 4: What are some examples of studios using social media to market their films?

- This question was asked to better understand how these experts pay attention to

  competition in their field. Social media is an extremely competitive landscape so

it is important to understand if the experts chosen for this study pay attention to the playing field.

- It was concluded that the experts believe that paying attention to competition is one of the most important aspects of marketing on social media platforms. With the ever-changing trends on social media, it is important to make sure that you are not falling behind.

Table 4

Best practices by competing studios/businesses.

Respondent	Studio/Business	Best practice
Raunika Nayyar	Fox	*Deadpool* – Comedy and audience relation
Sean Murphy	REI	"Opt Outside" Campaign – Subtlety and genuineness
Hallory Sindelar	Fox	.Deadpool – Related to audience and topical content

Chapter 5

Discussion and Recommendations

Summary

This study was conducted in response to the growing social media industry and how it has and is currently affecting traditional marketing practices within the film industry. This study explores the need and effectiveness of multiple social platforms when it comes to marketing purposes as well as some crucial social tactics that have the potential to beneficial in creating a successful marketing campaign.

In order to further examine the social strategies and tactics utilized by professionals in the digital marketing, social media and film marketing fields, one expert from each of those fields was chosen to be interviewed in regards to the rise of social media and how they feel it effects them in their work. Each interviews was based on a single questionnaire designed to gain further insight into the following research questions:

1. What is the importance of using social media when it comes to the marketing industry?

2. How can social media be used to create a marketing campaign?

3. What are the best uses for each individual social media platform when it comes to marketing?

4. What are some examples of studios using social media to marketing their films?

Each interview question provided a variety of responses from each individual expert. These responses showed some similarities to the literature reviewed on the topic of social media in the marketing industry.

Discussion

After analyzing the data collected in Chapter 4, ties between the experts' responses during their interviews and the literature review research discussed in Chapter 2, it is understandable to make the following conclusions regarding the following research questions.

Research question 1: What is the importance of using social media when it comes to the marketing industry?

The three experts interviewed responded by communicating their existing knowledge about the need for social media marketing in the film industry and in general. All three experts began their responses by explaining their opinion on the need for social media within the marketing industry. Nayyar explained that social media is important because of its reachability while Murphy and Sindelar both concluded that it was completely crucial to use social media because that's where the majority of any audience trying to be reached is located. The unanimous opinions between the three experts were that in today's society and in the ever-changing world of marketing and advertising, social media is an important, if not the most important aspect to creating a successful campaign and/or promoting a product or film.

The literature reviewed reflects a similar perspective to the experts interviewed. According to Evans and Bratton, social media is crucial because in today's society "people can talk in both directions and with more than one conversation occurring

simultaneously" (Evans and Bratton, 2012, p. 53). Essentially, what Evans and Bratton want to emphasize is that social media gives a company or business the opportunity to reach anyone at anytime, but not only that. Conversations can be started through social media therefore creating a continuous and simultaneous user-generated conversation that helps promote the company's product without anything but the initial influence.

Research question 2: How can social media be used to create a marketing campaign?

This question was asked to narrow the scope of the research by asking not why companies or businesses need social media, but how they can actually use social media. Additionally, this question aims to understand the specific tactics that can be used in a successful way with the goal of designing and executing a successful marketing campaign. The experts Nayyar, Murphy and Sindelar all went over several different types of social media tactics and strategies that they use in their respective fields, but one strategy that was unanimously mentioned was audience engagement, or the idea that communicating with the target audience, whether through comments, interactive video, or whatever it may be, is a strategy that has proven successful in several social campaigns.

The literature reflects similar ideas as well as provides examples of film studios using audience engagement to create campaigns that ended up being successful and financially beneficial for the studio in the end. The Economist said that "social media is best used and is most successful in a marketing campaign when there are two factors involved: fine-tuned targeting and audience engagement" (The Economist, 2015, para. 5).

Disney successfully used audience engagement as a strategy to push their social media marketing campaign for their early year tentpole film *The Jungle Book* (2016).

Disney teamed up with Facebook to create "a touring virtual-reality experience and 360-degree Facebook video emphasizing the "Avatar"-like world of its jungle," (Barnes, 2016, para. 14). This audience on Facebook had complete control over the video and could personally interact with the "jungle" around them. This strategy, as well as many others, proved extremely successful bringing in $103.3 million box office opening weekend according to BoxOfficeMojo.com.

Research question 3: What are the best uses for each individual social media platform when it comes to marketing?

This question was asked to further understand each individual social media platform and discover what makes each platform unique and beneficial for marketing purposes. While the experts interviewed discussed and focused mainly on the uses of Facebook, some examples being sizeable and multi-demographical reach, locational targeting and beneficial evaluation analytics, the literature, goes into more of what marketing purposes several different social media platforms are useful for.

Duggan and Brenner stated, "Facebook remains the most-used social networking platform, as two-thirds of online adults say that they are Facebook users" (Duggan and Brenner, 2012, para. 6). Bergstrom and Backman spoke for Instagram, stating "for companies, Instagram can be used as a tool to connect and communicate with customers and potential customers. The company can present a more personal picture of their brand, and by doing so the company conveys a more honest picture of itself" (Bergstrom and Backman, 2013, p. 12). In regards to Twitter, it "is best used for audience engagement. It is the best platform for that because of its informality and how it's a platform that is made for user response. Images perform better than videos and text outperforms images" (Patel, 2014). Benner and de la Merced stated "Snapchat is attractive to advertisers because it

has multiple outlets for creating ads. An advertiser can do video, photos, and even filters and geotags. Snapchat is best for marketing campaigns that desire more of a creative flare" (Benner and de la Merced, 2016, para. 3).

Research question 4: What are some examples of studios using social media to market their films?

This question was designed to understand the landscape of social media marketing within the film industry as well as other competing industries. It was also asked to look further into some best practices that can be dissecting into their successful parts. Nayyar and Sindelar both mentioned Fox's 2016 tentpole *Deadpool* as a good example of a successful digital and social media marketing campaign. Nayyar discussed the subtlety of the advertising, praising Fox's ability to not make it seem like advertising to the consumer. Murphy mentioned a similar idea when it comes to competition, that the competing campaigns that end up being extremely successful are the ones that don't look or feel like a marketing campaign at all.

The literature discussed several different film studios' successful digital and social media campaigns. Four of the social tactics that found to be successful for the aforementioned studios were social video interactivity, social celebrity endorsement, fan involvement and audience engagement, and blurred social reality.

Barnes discussed how "Disney used several successful marketing strategies for their release of *The Jungle Book*, including partnering up with Facebook to create a touring virtual-reality experience and 360-degree Facebook video emphasizing the "Avatar"-like world of its jungle" (Barnes, 2016, para. 14). When talking about Beyoncé releasing the Fifty Shades of Grey trailer on her Instagram, Lee stated that "Fan reaction [to the trailer] erupted right on cue, proving that pop music's reigning diva plus first-look

footage of 2015's most tremulously awaited erotic drama equals a match made in viral heaven" (Lee, 2014, para. 1). Hampp discussed how "Paramount devised a first-of-its-kind 'Demand It' campaign in which movie fans could 'demand' that movie to come to their hometown. If the film got 1 million demands, Paramount promised, the studio would roll out the film nationwide to all the markets that asked for it" (Hampp, 2010, para. 2). Lastly, "Lionsgate went a step further, helping produce the scripted 'District Voices' videos, which features the YouTube personalities in Hunger Games costumes with props from the movie, blurring the line between fiction and reality" (Barnes, 2014, para. 26).

Recommendations for Practice

After completion of the study, enough information and substantial data has been collected and analyzed on the topic of the use of social media marketing in the film industry in order to provide thorough recommendations for practice. Given the information and the research found, it is important to highlight the most prevalent and useful takeaways and present them for future digital marketing, social media and film marketing professionals. Based off of the overall research, some recommendations for practice include understanding the target audience and how to best reach and engage with them, keeping up with current and ever-changing trends and applying them to the campaign where they best fit and fully encapsulating what it means to be transparent and honest with consumers.

     Understand and engage the audience.

The audience is one of the most important aspects of a successful marketing campaign, traditional or social media. With social media specifically, however, the

audience requires a much higher level of personal connection to the company, product, brand, or whatever it may be. If a company chooses to use social media as a platform for marketing, their audience will almost always expect to be able to interact with that company on a more personal level than if they, for instance, saw an ad in a magazine. Social media provides the perfect platform for real and genuine audience engagement. Audience engagement can come in many forms, as mentioned previously in this research. Commenting back to users, providing a platform for interactivity and/or actual audience involvement in the campaign are just a few examples. When asked about specific strategies the experts interviewed for this study use within the social campaigns that they are apart of, audience engagement was a common theme that proved to be successful for most social campaigns. Sindelar mentioned, "We do a lot of audience engagement, especially in the social campaigns that I've run, I'm usually the person that's typing back in the comments and talking to people. For instance, when people ask like 'hey when is this coming out on DVD' or 'is this available in my country', it's really important to respond to those people because those people who are actively engaging with your posts and your page are the ones that are going to buy your product whatever it may be" (Appendix C). On the same topic of audience engagement, Nayyar discussed a social campaign that she ran for Back to the Future that included a Facebook messenger bot that responded to the audience that messaged in in a personalized and engaging way. Nayyar stated, "We've noticed that engaging with the audience first has proven a pretty successful strategy on social media" (Appendix A). Social campaigns have found to be more successful when the audience's needs are truly understood and that understanding comes from that honest and genuine engagement.

Keeping up.

Marketing in general is an industry that is constantly and progressively growing and changing. When social media is thrown into the equation, however, the growth and change happens much more rapidly and therefore requires companies to be on the verge of breaking boundaries at all times. Becoming obsolete is something that companies that are doing social media marketing have to avoid almost on a daily basis. "Everything is always changing, people, trends, everything," says Murphy (Appendix B). Social media marketers are always kept on their toes as, "there's really no set way to do things, especially with social media, because things are always changing" (Appendix C). Keeping up with changing trends is not always easy or doable 100% of the time, that's why, as the experts stated in this research, it is important to pay close attention to competition to make sure that the company is staying on top and now falling behind. According to Farb, "for marketers who are looking to participate in these [social] communities, best practices that worked as recently as a year ago may no longer apply" (Farb, 2011, para. 3), so it is crucial to keep a close eye on the competitive landscape as well as industry articles, audiences and best practices.

Being transparent.

Social media provides one of the best platforms for showcasing an honest and transparent message through a marketing campaign. This is one of the benefits of using social media for marketing because having the ability to construct and execute an honest conversation with the target audience has proven to be a successful strategy in the creation of a social campaign. Transparency is key when it comes to satisfying a target audience, however there is a fine line when trying to achieve transparency and honesty

within a campaign. If done incorrectly, the audience may feel tricked or may feel like the

company providing the "transparent" content is actually in fact being dishonest. "Subtlety

is definitely the right word…you see this kind of ingenuous way of doing [things], you

see a lot of, especially on websites…sponsored content that's barely labeled as sponsored

content and it's delivered in a way that seems really inauthentic or in a way that seems

that the advertiser is trying to trick the audience. That's the one thing you never want to

do", Murphy mentioned (Appendix B). To avoid this, companies should aim for total

social integration for their campaigns. Audiences don't like to feel like they are blatantly

being sold a product. Instead, subtlety is the key along with honest labeling and genuine

conversation to and from the consumer and company.

Study Conclusion

In conclusion, given the general findings of the study, social media marketing is a

constant and ever-changing field. Continuous research and routine data collection should

be conducted due to this fact and the fact that what is true today for social media

marketing could change in the next few years. Overall, this study provided an in-depth

look into the growing field of social media marketing, specifically in the film industry,

including insightful interviews of experts in this field, specific strategies and tactics that

create for successful marketing outcomes and best practices by some studios and other

companies that use social media marketing effectively. Social media is a platform that is

beginning to become more of the norm in a lot of companies and businesses, which is

why it is so important for companies to implement social campaigns within their

marketing departments to prevent themselves from falling behind. This study could be

used as learning tool for individuals in the respective fields of digital marketing, social media and film marketing who are interested in understanding this field to its full potential and learning how to implement effective social media marketing campaigns that have the ability to be stand out and be successful.

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Interview Transcripts: Raunika Nayyar

The following interview was conducted to get expert opinions from a digital marketing perspective based on a questionnaire about the use of social media and digital marketing in the film industry.

Interviewer: Kate Baker
Respondent: Digital Marketing Assistant Manager at Universal Pictures Home
Entertainment (Raunika Nayyar)
Date of Interview: 11/9/16

Interview Transcription:
Kate Baker: Do you feel that social media and other digital platforms are crucial to creating a successful marketing campaign? Why or why not?

Raunika Nayyar: I really think social media is important for business nowadays. First of all, you can reach not only your country, but people outside of your country which is so easily done by Facebook, targeting, Twitter; you can reach the whole world. If there's something going on in another country, like Egypt, and their media is not covering it, the only way to know is through social media. I think it's the future of where every business is going no matter if they're a nonprofit, a for-profit, every type of business needs social media.

KB: Can you describe the digital/social platform that you have the most experience with and why you feel that that platform is a beneficial platform for marketing purposes?

RN: I have the most experience with Facebook; it's the oldest one around. I think I've worked on Facebook since before Snapchat was even around. Facebook has actually evolved over the years. When I started marketing on Facebook, there were no Facebook ads, you couldn't target by different countries or continents or by gender. Now, the Facebook analytics are actually the best analytics out there for any social media platform; Snapchat doesn't even give us analytics. Facebook has actually done a lot of hard work even though it's gotten so much criticism from others saying things like "It's old", "It's for older people", "You don't have millennials on it" when rather you have every kind of audience on Facebook and they've done a great job at providing numbers and analytics.

KB: That's also what I've heard a lot about Facebook, especially with the research I've been doing.

RN: Yeah, no Facebook is great even though it gets a lot of criticism.

KB: Yeah, a lot of people think it's for another type of audience, an older audience.

RN: And especially since Facebook bought Instagram, they know exactly what they're doing when it comes to making sure there are all types of audiences on Facebook.

KB: What social media/digital campaigns have you produced, managed or worked on? What was your role in it? I know that you've worked a lot with email marketing; can you talk about some of the email marketing campaigns you've worked on for specific films as well?

RN: Yeah, so I've worked on my share of campaigns over the years. Every campaign is different; every new movie brings in new challenges and new marketing tactics. The audience changes, too, so you really have to keep that in mind when designing a digital campaign, especially a digital email marketing campaign. Like for example, I'm not going to put a bunch of little minions decorating an email for a *Fast and Furious* email. You always have to keep your audience in mind and since digital platforms are becoming more and more used, something like email marketing has to find ways to keep up with the changing trends so that it doesn't go obsolete. Like, we just started using animation in our emails, creating gifs and things like that to keep our audiences engaged. Like, it's a film like *Snowden* or *Fast & Furious,* the email itself will be designed to fit that action genre; it'll be darker colors and sleeker looking. Along with that, we have to make sure that our branding in our emails and in our social posts and things like that match our website for that film. Right now, I'm working on the website for *Jason Bourne*, so we've been working really hard on trying to make sure that our digital marketing always aligns the same branding and messaging across all platforms with that project. We're working hard on taking what was done in theatrical and moving it into home entertainment.

KB: And all of that marketing is specific to that particular film, like *Jason Bourne*, for example.

RN: Exactly. And another thing is that sometimes how theatrical markets a film doesn't work out and we'll have tweak or change the marketing to make it work. A good example is like for *The Huntsman*; theatrical marketed it as an action movie and it didn't exactly work for them in that window so in our window (home entertainment), we changed it to market as a family movie instead. We decided that we were going to focus on the "sister" aspect of the film and the love story behind it and the whole messaging was changed. It went from being an action movie to being a family movie.

KB: That's really cool.

RN: Yeah so stuff like that changes.

KB: So how did *The Huntsman* do in the home entertainment window for you guys?

RN: It did pretty well! But yeah, it honestly keeps changing depending on the campaign and the audience.

KB: So based on some competing studios, what are some of the best social or digital campaigns you've seen and why do you think they were successful?

RN: I would say *Deadpool*. *Deadpool* was one of my favorite campaigns. It's an R rated movie, right, and they also had a lot of comedy and the best of their campaign was that they were subtle, but in your face at the same time. It started as small as the movie's opening credits, I don't know if you saw the movie.

KB: No, I didn't.

RN: Well I will just say then the credits at the beginning and the end are worth waiting for. They had, like, little Easter eggs in the credits that were very subtle marketing ploys. Another thing was like for iTunes, I don't know if you saw it, all of the Fox movies had a *Deadpool* logo on the key art. Like it was as simple as that.

KB: Yeah like it's right in your face, but it's so subtle so you don't know.

RN: Right, it's just right there. I loved *Deadpool* marketing. It was very well thought out. And also, HBO and whatever they do for *Game of Thrones* is fantastic.

KB: How does the marketing budget usually lay out when it comes to social media?

RN: So basically, home entertainment budgets are significantly lower than theatrical budgets to start with. All of our budget for social media comes under the digital marketing budget umbrella. The umbrella is basically divided into 3 parts: earned media, which is social, owned media, which is email stuff, and paid media which is all the advertisements on YouTube, Yahoo, the takeovers and stuff like that. So then from there, the budget is divided again. Paid media gets the most money because it's paid; obviously, you have to pay for it. Earned media, or social media, usually gets the least amount of money because most of that media is organic or user-generated. The most money social would get is for a sweepstakes kind of scenario. And in the middle is the owned media. You have to pay for running the email campaigns and website designing. And then the budget changed depending on the film. So a movie like *Jason Bourne* might have a digital marketing budget in the hundred thousands and then a movie like *Bridget Jones' Baby* might have a digital marketing budgets in the ten thousands.

KB: Well that's good to know that the digital marketing and the consumer marketing, or whatever you want to call it, is separate budgets because when I was doing a lot of research for this, a lot of big companies and current marketing agencies right now have one budget for all marketing purposes and digital marketing doesn't get properly allocated funds.

RN: Yeah, not even that long ago, a lot of companies didn't even have a digital marketing department. Even when I started, when I got a marketing degree, most companies didn't even have a digital marketing department. They didn't want to do digital marketing at all.

A few times I started a company's digital marketing from scratch like I created their Facebook page, their LinkedIn page, and I'm not that old! That wasn't that long ago.

KB: Yeah this is definitely considered to be a "new thing".

RN: Yeah I'm talking like three years. Three years is not that long of a time. People were just getting started they had no idea that they needed to get into this, but now, everything is changing. That same company that I started the social media for, they have a full-fledged digital marketing department now. They have a person who writes content for their website and a different person to write content for their LinkedIn. Again, for every product, it depends on what kind of social media you need. Like for a B2B company, they don't need Twitter or Facebook, they probably need a LinkedIn. So it always depends on who is your audience, who you're trying to target. Even for movies, sometimes we see that Twitter is better for us than Facebook or Pinterest.

KB: How do you decide that?

RN: You decide who your audience is. Every platform has a different kind of audience. Facebook is always a must for us because we're in entertainment. Then it goes from Facebook, we start to ask ourselves things like "do we need a Twitter for this" or "do we need a Pinterest for this". Pinterest was always great for movies where things like fashion or food or things like that were at the forefront. A film that comes to mind that would be perfect for Pinterest would be something like *My Big Fat Greek Wedding 2* that just came out on DVD a few months ago. From that there could be recipes and wedding things that would fit really nicely on Pinterest's platform. A female audience mainly uses Pinterest so it's great to use if you're trying to target women. Mostly women and millennials that are either getting married or planning a bridal shower or looking for new recipes; that's the main audience there. So yeah, once you decide what audience you want to target, you go to the best social platform that will generate the most success.

KB: What are some specific strategies that you have used within the social campaigns you've worked on that proved to be successful for the campaign overall?

RN: So when we released the (film cannot be named) trailer, we announced it on Facebook and made a huge deal about it saying that it's a "must-see" and "the best movie" and so on and so forth and we actually started getting a lot of really negative comments saying things like "this movie sucks" and "we want our money back", stuff like that. So we came up with another plan because I replied to some of these people and we did actually give some of them their money back just so that they realize that we're a company that actually cares. We wanted them to know that we still want them to be our customer even though they didn't particularly care for the way that we decided to market that film on Facebook.

KB: Yeah there's a lot of stuff like that that I've been looking at, just showing transparency, like commenting back, replying to people.

RN: Yeah it's that simple. I ran a Doc Brown campaign for *Back to the Future*. So we had a chat bot for Doc Brown and you could actually talk with him. So we had a Facebook page and we set up a messenger system where users could actually message Doc Brown and the bot would reply back to them. But what we realized is that Back to the Future is mostly for an older audience who don't really understand how some of the features of Facebook work so even though we had this really cool idea with creating an interactive experience for users, we didn't think about the fact that a lot of these users were confused about how to make it work. A lot of them were commenting on the page trying to talk to Doc Brown from there even though you had to open up the messenger, it was just a huge miss on our part so we had to figure out a new strategy. So what we did was comment back to these people in the voice of Doc Brown kind of just nicely redirecting them to where they are supposed to go if they want to chat with Doc Brown. At the end of the day, we actually got a lot of traction from it and the bot ended up being successful. We've noticed that engaging with the audience first has proven a pretty successful strategy on social media.

KB: Yeah that's something that I've been seeing a lot, like, studios doing like immersive and interactive things with their characters in the movie or the setting of the movie. Like for Jungle Book, Disney put up like a interactive 360 degree live video on Facebook from the jungle in the movie. And that's something that's really cool because it kind of blurs the line between movie and reality and makes it more relatable. In your opinion, how has social media and digital marketing changed or grown in the last few years when it comes to marketing?

RN: I still remember when I first joined Universal as an intern, we only focused on Facebook, like Twitter, yeah was in the background and we used it every once in a while, Tumblr was dead, so yeah we started with basically just Facebook. My boss let me handle a few campaigns as an intern because he trusted me as a younger person to understand social media better than he did. My first social campaign I did was for *Machete Kills*, and I still remember I watched that movie four times. Anyway, I only used Facebook for that. There was no audience targeting, no geo-targeting, we didn't take advantage of marketing to a Spanish speaking audience, we did nothing. It was all in English, all on Facebook, with no real purpose behind it. But cut to now, three, four years later, if we were marketing that same campaign, we would be doing things like targeting ads to Spanish speaking countries, doing Facebook, Twitter, Instagram posts in Spanish, because the analytics that Facebook provides now would most likely tell us that most of the traffic this this page comes from people who speak Spanish and not English. With that, a lot of best practices have changed, back in the day it was like you could say you have a digital marketing department if you have a company Facebook page, but now its like "great you have a Facebook page but so does everyone else" so you have to spend the time and money making your social campaigns stand out from the rest. It's really competitive now. We say things like "Oh Fox did this, we have to top that" or "Look at what Warner did, we have to come up with something new too". And that's how our meetings usually go. I think back in the day, everyone was kind of just doing whatever they wanted when it came to social media and now people are starting to understand the need for social media and understanding that in the coming times, digital marketing is

going to be coming first over all other types of marketing. The priority has definitely changed.

KB: Yeah, that's super interesting. What I've been really looking into is how there are basically two ways that you can market on social media: you can do it as you putting out the content and then waiting for a response, or you getting the response first—

RN: Yeah, that's called user-generated content and that what most people are going for now, using tactics where you make it so the audience is marketing for you. For example, the people who market for Game of Thrones did this thing where they planted a giant dragon skull on a beach in Britain to make it look like it washed up on shore. People were so confused and generated so much buzz about it on their own without Game of Thrones even claiming they had put it there yet. It was genius because it was essentially free advertising through the comments and posts and shares of social media users. A good example of why this works is Yelp. There are so many people who write comments and reviews on Yelp and we believe what those people say. We trust the content when it's coming from other users that are just like us because you know these people aren't paid to say nice things about whatever they're reviewing.

KB: Yeah it's great that you bring that up because that is something else I've really been noticing trends in, like, people responding better to marketing that doesn't feel like someone is trying to get you to buy something. They don't like it when it's like "oh this is an advertisement, they're trying to sell something to me"—

RN: Right, they don't want that "sale-sy" message. Something my boss taught me once was whenever you're posting on Facebook, keep in mind that you're always trying to post content that is shareable, that you would want displayed on your Facebook page. Not like "Buy this DVD now!" like we still do that to an extent because at the end of the day, that's our purpose, but we want to make sure we are engaging people with content where you would want to hit that "share" button. It usually doesn't really matter about the number of "likes" as it does the number of shares. Because with that one "like", I see it as "awesome this one person saw it", but when you share it, that reaches your 500 friends and if it keeps getting shared then it goes to your friend's 500 friends and their friend's 500 friends and so on and so forth. It's now reaching more people than we initially were.

KB: Who are your top competitors in the social media world when it comes to film marketing? Which studios?

RN: I would say Warner and Disney.

KB: Why?

RN: First of all, in regards to digital marketing as a whole, they are the only two studios that I've seen or noticed that still have an ongoing email marketing program. A lot of other studios are falling behind with that or seeing it as irrelevant now even though from recent studies that I've seen, podcasts, and some research we've actually found that email

marketing and maintaining your CRM database, or your customer relationship management database, it's one of the most important things, even sometimes more important that using Facebook. A lot of businesses are ditching email marketing because they feel that it's tedious and it's not as easy as writing a Facebook post or sending a tweet, but I think especially Warner and Disney have been doing a good job staying ahead in that category because they see the importance of it as well. I follow a lot of different email updates just to see what other people are doing, because you always want to do new things, you want to make sure you're standing out in a world that is so competitive. Like analytics and stuff like that is really important, but competitors is how I can really see what's going on out there so it's super important to pay attention to what your competitors are doing.

Appendix B

Interview Transcripts: Sean Murphy

The following interview was conducted to get expert opinions from a social media marketing perspective based on a questionnaire about the use of social media and digital marketing in the film industry.

Interviewer: Kate Baker
Respondent: Digital Marketing Manager at Ernie Ball and Ernie Ball Music Man
(Sean Murphy)
Date of Interview: 11/10/16

Interview Transcription:
Kate Baker: Do you feel that social media and other digital platforms are crucial to creating a successful marketing campaign? Why or why not?

Sean Murphy: Completely crucial. It certainly depends on what you're marketing. There are examples of companies and products and industries that can get by without it, but even if you can get by without it, you're still going to benefit from having it. In 90% of all other industries, you have to have it; you will fail, you will disappear, your audience will not find you if you don't exist on social media.

KB: Could you please describe the social or digital platform that you have the most experience with and please explain why you think that platform is good for marketing.

SM: I certainly have the most experience with Facebook and that's mainly because it's been used for marketing longer than any other platforms. It certainly is great for marketing mainly because that's where the bulk of your audience is. You're hitting a huge swath of demographic ranges. Essentially, almost anybody in your audience that you're trying to reach is on Facebook in some way or another. So it's basically the easiest way and the most effective and most efficient way to reach a large percentage of your audience.

KB: So what are your thoughts on when people say that Facebook is mostly just for older people?

SM: It's funny, I've had to do a lot of research on that myself, and you know that numbers don't lie. The younger millennial range and, you know, the Gen Z kids are definitely not on Facebook as much as, you know, older millennials, younger Gen X'ers and boomers. That being said, especially with how Facebook has integrated with Instagram after their acquisition, being on Facebook is still also going to help you get out to other platforms and you kind of have a synergy across the digital space that way.

KB: Yeah, I think Facebook is definitely making steps to be with that younger audience nowadays, especially with that acquisition of Instagram and all the stuff that they've been doing recently—

SM: Yeah, I mean, they just rolled out their Snapchat filters so now they are Snapchat's competitor, the Facebook Live video is definitely a direct competitor if not a better competitor than Periscope. Facebook is certainly making moves in a very strategic way in order to keep that young audience coming back to Facebook and not leaving it for the next new thing. Facebook is constantly and consistently a part of that next new thing and that's why it's so successful with marketing especially.

KB: What social media or digital campaigns have you personally worked on, produced, or managed that you really enjoyed or you really thought was successful and just describe your roll in it.

SM: Sure, there's a multi-faceted answer to that question. I've been involved with some that were really rewarding like being on the San Luis Obispo Sheriff's Department social media campaign, the "Keep Isla Vista Safe" UCSB campaigns, and be able to see campaigns like that actually have a very clear, obvious, real-life practical benefit, you know. We were able to get UCSB Halloween and Deltopia attendances down from 25,000 and riots and car burning, hundreds of arrests, down to, I think just this last Halloween, just over 2,000 people. I mean, they described it as "less action than a normal Tuesday night". That was beautiful, that was fantastic. I couldn't have been happier about that. And likewise with the San Luis Obispo Sheriff's stuff, it's getting that positive message out there and helping them to interact with the community in a better way, especially with the current national landscape and how they interact with law enforcement and the general sentiment there. When it comes to my involvement with those, basically in my previous position, I was doing everything so it was the creation of the strategy for the social plan, it was the implementation, it was the monitoring, it was really everything. That's essentially what I'm doing here, I think this is now seven weeks on the job, so there was a lot of things that were already up and running so currently I'm just taking over and tweaking, I guess. But we're actually, I literally just got out of a meeting where we're planning for our 2017 product launches, so getting all of that kind of stuff getting kicked off and started and kind of starting from scratch for the first time for me in this specific position, so that's exciting.

KB: Yeah and I'm glad you brought that up, the Isla Vista and Sheriff's campaigns, I feel like people rarely talk about social media marketing being used for anything other than selling a product or, you know, doing something like that—

SM: Making money.

KB: Right, exactly and those campaigns were campaigns that actually helped people and helped a city and a community.

SM: Yeah most of my history with social campaigns has been for non-directly commercial purposes.

KB: What are some of the best social or digital campaigns you've seen and why do you feel that those campaigns were successful?

SM: One of the best I've seen in recent memory was REI's recent Black Friday campaign. I think it was from just last year, the "Opt Outside" campaign. They started messaging a couple weeks before Black Friday and basically said, "We're not participating. This could be our biggest sales day of the year. We could make a quarter of our earnings just in this one day, but that's not what we stand for. We want to make sure that not only can our employees and our staff be able to go out and enjoy this holiday with their families, but we also want to push that message out to our audience, the people that buy from us. We don't want to sour what could be this beautiful family chance to connect and to unplug and get outside. We don't want our customers to spend their Thanksgiving standing in line at 2 AM". And it worked really well, it worked really strongly, people are still using the hashtag that they created to this day. They were really great about finding people who did use the hashtag and highlighting them, some community and audience engagement there. It was just a really successful campaign all around. And they ended up, financially, doing incredibly well because of it because of the good will that they generated. They took a gamble that completely paid off.

KB: Yeah I feel like some companies try to do stuff like that and it just doesn't work. I feel like REI got lucky with that gamble.

SM: Yeah a lot of them try to do something like that, but it's so obviously for their own benefit. It's frankly just gross. It's even worse than not trying to do anything legitimate in the first place.

KB: Yeah and I think you have to be really careful when you try to do stuff like that. You know, it has to be genuine or else people get pretty angry with the company because they feel like they are being taken advantage of. So actually going off of that, something that I've been looking at a lot are strategies that are used within social media that are really effective when it comes to creating a campaign, are there any specific strategies that you use when working on the social campaigns that you've worked on that have proved to be pretty successful?

SM: The best thing that we're doing right now that I haven't been able to take advantage of in my previous positions is that we're doing a ton of creating our own content, really high level content. We've got our own TV show on Audience Network. It's basically a—I don't know if you've watched that old show called Behind the Music, like those music documentary type things. It's basically that, it's called Ernie Ball: The Pursuit of Tone and it basically follows a musician and documents the steps they took to becoming a musician and their instruments and what not. We also do a lot of shorter, but the same level of quality and kind of filmmaking and kind of assets and all of that unique and original content that we've been putting out is helping with our social presence because

when we share this content on our social spaces, people react to it really well. So we are actually creating the content that people want to see and people want to share and that's the coolest part about it. We've got a ton of things that we're using to create that earned media that a lot of other companies either don't have the ability or the capacity or the knowledge base to be able to do that so that's what's been putting us ahead in this space. I've noticed that it's had an amazing response from our audiences because we've got something to give them that they can't get anywhere else and also that's not necessarily shoving our product down their throats. Sure, you're going to see Ernie Ball strings and Ernie Ball guitars in this content, but it's not an hour long commercial for the product.

KB: Yeah exactly, and that's something that I've been seeing a lot. People don't like marketing that looks like marketing; people don't like advertising that looks like advertising. If you can find a way to make it subtle, then I feel like people respond to it a lot better.

SM: Subtlety is definitely the right word, you definitely see, again kind of what we were talking about earlier, you see this kind of ingenuous way of doing that, you see a lot of, especially on websites, a lot of sponsored content that's barely labeled as sponsored content and it's delivered in a way that seems really inauthentic or in a way that seems that the advertiser is trying to trick the audience. That's the one thing you never want to do.

KB: Yeah and I feel like there is a very fine line between making it subtle and making it like "Oh the advertiser is tricking me".

SM: Absolutely, a very fine line.

KB: And that's where the people who are behind the social media marketing come in, you can't just have anyone doing that job. Most people feel that just about anyone can do social media, but that's just not the case. You need to have a certain kind of mindset and you have to see things a certain way—

SM: Yeah it's easy to say that when you don't know what the big picture is. It's easy to say "Oh I'm on Facebook every day, I could do that" when really it's like "Well have you ever done a social media campaign that had to fit within the legal guidelines of a state's legality?" or "Do you know that legality of running a contest giveaway or sweepstakes?" More often than not, the answer is probably not. And if you don't know how to do that, and you don't and you do it anyway and you're representing a client, you're putting them in potential legal trouble. I mean, that's just one example, but it just goes to show that with social media marketing, the stakes are a lot bigger than people usually realize.

KB: Right, and that's another thing that I've been looking into a lot is how the big problem with social media marketing is that older, more traditional marketing guys at big companies don't really take it seriously. They don't take their social campaigns seriously, you know, they want to go with and put most of their money into their traditional marketing and their traditional advertising and depending on who they are, it might work,

but ten years in the future, it probably won't and they might be thinking "Maybe we should've started taking social media seriously ten years ago".

SM: Yeah it's definitely frustrating to see the lack of drive within a lot of companies to really branch out and use social media to it's best effect for their own companies and instead going with "the thing that's worked in the past" instead of "the thing that is going to be the future".

KB: Yeah in the past year, I've really been seeing the importance of using social media within marketing and such and so even though I don't necessarily have a product to sell myself, I have been working on practicing branding myself on my own social media, especially when it comes to my Instagram. You know, I don't exactly have the most real-life work experience in social media and it's not as easy as it seems, so I'm just trying to take it on to myself and on to my own personal accounts to gain social media branding experience that way. And it's a lot harder than it seems, you know, you have to pick a theme or like an overlying idea or theme and just run with it.

SM: Right, it's strategic. You've got to strategize your own personal brand. You've got to plan it out and it's certainly not an easy task.

KB: Ok, a little bit more specific. Are there any social trends that you've been noticing whether it be from your competitors or from your company? Like for example, for me, on Facebook I've been seeing a lot of videos that have like words on the screen so that when you're scrolling, you instantly become engaged in the video because you can read what's on the screen and you won't just scroll passed the video because you can't listen to it at the moment. Anything like that?

SM: Yeah, I mean that sort of thing is definitely big. I'm seeing a lot more, and this is absolutely necessary, things that differentiate from the pack. Even things that are kind of doing, for the most part, what the current standard is, a lot of other people are doing that too so you're still not really cutting through most of the noise. What I like that I'm seeing, and it's not as often that I'd like to see it, are more things like cinemographs, more things that are interactive—

KB: Would you mind explaining really quick what a cinemograph is?

SM: Absolutely, so a cinemograph is essentially a video that you take one static still image, isolate that, and only have one element of that frame that stills moving. So it's looks very much like the pictures from Harry Potter that just move a little bit and it takes you a second to be like "Whoa, that picture is actually moving". And there's actually a lot of psychological research behind it, our primitive areas of our brain are hard wired to be in this "fight or flight" and "hunting for your food" mode to notice when there is a very small piece of movement within a larger still area. So because of that, when we're scrolling through a feed and we see something that looks totally normal but then we see just a little something that catches our eye we are like "Wait". It pulls our attention, it pulls our eye and we are suddenly engaged in the content. The reason it's really done

well in the social media world is because of this idea of disruption. Disruption to your scrolling.

KB: Yeah, and that "Wait" is exactly what every social marketing person wants because that's what drive consumer engagement. That's what gets your product sold and it's as simple at that. Even if it's only for a pause.

SM: Right, and it is a race to the next new thing and that race is never going to stop. The closer and closer companies feel like they're getting to the end, the audience and the consumer keeps on moving the finish line.

KB: How do you feel that social media has changed or grown within the last few years?

SM: More than anything, just the necessity of having to use it. Companies were able to get by; they were able to squeak by for while without having it. Nowadays, however, you really won't survive without it unless you're one of those weird one-off examples. And really the behind the scenes reason for that is because everybody is on it. Everyone has a smart device, people have smart TVs, and people even have smart refrigerators. Refrigerators are literally tweeting you when you're low on milk. That's why it's changed and it's grown because it's become the norm. People can't remember a time when that wasn't' the case and can't function without it. And as days and days go by, it becomes more engrained and there are less and less things that they can get by without it. It's exciting and scary at the same time.

KB: Ok, last question. Could you walk me through the process, start to finish, of a social media marketing campaign?

SM: Awesome. So this is perfect timing, like I said earlier, we are just kicking off the planning phase for our 2017 campaign. First and foremost, we start with what actually is it that were even marketing. What is the need? For example, for this one, we are launching new versions of some particular guitars that we have, so essentially we're trying to figure out what the messaging is what as working previously is previous campaign, what can we cherry pick from that. We determine what didn't work so that we can completely avoid any time or financial loss from recreating strategies that just were not successful in the past. Once we determine what has worked and what hasn't worked, we refine our budget and make sure that we're allocating enough to the project but we're not overspending. We are always very careful about our budgets. Budgets are a major concern before kicking off a campaign and one that needs to be settled to its full extent before you get started.

KB: And that's also something I feel like people don't think about. A lot of people have this notion that all social media is organic and is essentially just free advertising—

SM: Right, exactly, but in order to do it right, there are quite a lot of financial aspects to campaigns whether it's in the form of paid ads or sweepstakes or giveaways or even just creating the content itself.

KB: Sorry so continuing on the process, you were at budgets.

SM: Right, so once we've got the budget in place, we will decide how the budget is going to get spent and broken up. What assets do we need? Where are those assets going? What do we need to get to support the assets? We go into the planning phase on the elements of the campaign. We do that by creating another plan of kind of how long the campaign will last. So the 2017 campaign that we're planning is going to be a year long so we're going to be separating it by quarter. In the first quarter it's going to be the kick off. IT's the key art, it's all of the initial branding that this product is going to need. In quarter two, we're going to do all the follow up with artists that are using these in real time. More of the real-world use and applications—shifting more over to that approach. In quarter three, we're going to be talking more about lifestyle, like "You're favorite artists are using this, now this is something that you can use" sort of thing. So we're kind of looking at all of those boxes for the quarters of the year, making sure that we've got all of that outlined for what's going to be needed for each one of these time periods and then filling in the gaps with what those assets look like and whether they are going to be used for ads or organic posts or whatever it may be. Once it gets planned out, we'll start to implement just before the start of the year and actually get things plugged in and get rolling. We make sure that everything on the back end has been done like landing pages and getting things categorized in YouTube and Facebook video playlists and kind of doing all of the foundational, fundamental and organizational type stuff to make sure that when the campaign goes live on day one, there's nothing that has been left hanging. And then from that point, we're just keeping engaged with everything and making sure we are continuously and consistently optimizing. A lot of people have that "set it and forget it" mentality, but we always watch our campaigns and look for spots that we can improve on. We look at what messaging is resonating, what images or video could be doing better, basically always looking at how can we tweak this to make it just that much better. And that's only within one segment of the campaign. Let's say we find all of these optimization techniques during Q1, we're going to meet and discuss how we can apply what we learned from Q1 to Q2. To look at it more simply, it really is just planning, implantation and evaluation with constant optimization.

KB: That's really cool to hear that there really is no cookie cutter way to plan out a social campaign—

SM: Oh definitely not, everything is always changing, people, trends, everything.

KB: Right, so you'll for sure fall behind if you aren't constantly looking for new ways to improve.

SM: Exactly, and that's why we see optimization as something that is so incredibly crucial when it comes to social media. It's a very fluid process. Everything we do in social media could change the very next day so it's important to be looking out for those changes.

KB: Yeah and that's why I see social media marketing as so crucial and so important for companies to jump on board with because eventually, the traditional marketing tactics are going to die out and this social media race is going to be even more competitive.

SM: Exactly, one hundred percent.

KB: Well thank you so much, Sean, that's all I got for you.

SM: Thank you, it was great talking with you.

Interview Transcripts: Hallory Sindelar

The following interview was conducted to get expert opinions from a film marketing perspective based on a questionnaire about the use of social media and digital marketing in the film industry.

Interviewer: Kate Baker
Respondent: Digital Marketing Coordinator at Universal Pictures Home Entertainment (Hallory Sindelar)
Date of Interview: 11/9/16

Interview Transcription:
Kate Baker: Do you feel that social media and other digital platforms are crucial to creating a successful marketing campaign? Why or why not?

Hallory Sindelar: I do believe that using social media for marketing purposes is very important because everyone is online, everyone has some sort of social media. Even if they don't have a Facebook, they might have a Twitter or Snapchat, my mom is on Instagram. So, everyone is connected in some way and social and digital marketing allows us to reach everyone.

KB: Can you describe the digital/social platform that you have the most experience with and why you feel that that platform is a beneficial platform for marketing purposes?

HL: I believe that I have the most experience when it comes to social media and marketing with Facebook, just because it's been around the longest. They've had the most time to, kind of, test out what works and what doesn't work, how to reach certain people, certain groups of people, locations and areas, and I think it's very beneficial because Facebook was the first and people are more likely to have a Facebook than, say, a Snapchat or Twitter account.

KB: What social media/digital campaigns have you produced, managed or worked on? What was your role in it?

HS: The campaigns that I run myself are pretty limited, just because I'm so new to the company, but the first one that I'm running totally on my own in terms of social media is *Bridget Jones' Baby*. And before that, I worked pretty much on my own with the *Popstar* social campaign. Popstar was really fun just because the movie is really fun, and there's lots of swearing in the movie and you can swear on Facebook. It's super important with stuff like that because your campaign, especially with movies, needs to match not only the movie, but also the audience that is going to watch the movie. *Popstar* was rated R, so we always used to joke around and say that our social campaign was a "rated R campaign". With both of these films, I always start with creating a deck based on the theatrical findings and how it did in the theatrical window and how the theatrical social

media team handled everything and the results of their campaign and then I base it off of their numbers and everything that they found and create different themes of assets that I would create or have an agency create. From there, I work to get all of that approved with the brand marketing team. Then I schedule everything, I post everything and based off of how each of those posts perform, I either continue with what I'm doing or I tweak it or make new or different content to target the fans more directly.

KB: So when you're doing a campaign for a specific film, you can change the campaign around based on the film? Like it's not exactly a cookie-cutter process? Like would something like *Popstar* would be marketed and gone at a completely different angle then something like *Bridget Jones' Baby*?

HS: Yeah exactly, it would be a totally different audience and not all audiences respond the same way to the same types of marketing. There's really no set way to do things, especially with social media, because things are always changing. With *Popstar*, I did a lot more Instagram and Snapchat stories then I was doing with Bridget Jones' Baby. It all really just depends on the trends we saw in the theatrical marketing window, the audience that we're marketing to and just the social platform in general that we're working on. All of those factors combined are what determines how we market the film.

KB: So based on some competing studios, what are some of the best social or digital campaigns you've seen and why do you think they were successful?

HS: Hmm, the campaign that popped in my head first was the social campaign for *Deadpool*. They had really good example of integrating *Deadpool* into social media holidays and national holidays like Valentine's Day and just crazy things like that just making Deadpool relatable and topical every single holiday across the board really helped it stick.

KB: What are some specific strategies that you have used within the social campaigns you've worked on that proved to be successful for the campaign overall?

HS: We do a lot of audience engagement, especially in the social campaigns that I've run, I'm usually the person that's typing back in the comments and talking to people. For instance, when people ask like "hey when is this coming out on DVD" or "is this available in my country", it's really important to respond to those people because those people who are actively engaging with your posts and your page are the ones that are going to buy your product whatever it may be. We want to make sure we don't miss out on a chance to reassure them that they should buy it instead of ignoring them and discouraging them. It always helps to show your appreciation to fans. It's cool on Instagram as well because a lot of people direct message our accounts and that's cool cause you get the chance to actually talk one on one with your audiences and you can have like a full on conversation and maybe drop some hashtags in there, maybe some advertising. But in terms of other sorts of trends in social media, caption video is really big right now or like "tap for sound" videos, because there are a lot of users who still watch the video without the sound but they are still very much engaged in the content.

Mostly trends like that really are just aiming to grab the user's attention when they are scrolling through their social media feeds in whatever way they can. Using square video on Facebook and even Twitter now is becoming a must-do strategy for social media marketers. Also, what we like to do with smaller titles to engage with the community is run sweepstakes. Instagram is the easiest for sweepstakes because you can genuinely attract people by running a smaller contest where you will actually be sending something to three to five people and then, you know, they'll post whatever prize they get from us and that will further the conversation even more.

KB: In your opinion, how has social media and digital marketing changed or grown in the last few years when it comes to marketing?

HS: Oh man, it's changed and grown like crazy. I think the biggest change, though, is just the recent realization from a lot of businesses, not just studios, that social media is becoming a need. Companies are starting to be able to not survive if they are not on social media. In addition, we've noticed that when businesses started on social media a few years back, it was used a lot for blatant advertising and people really hate that. It's become really competitive in this world to be able to create the most integrated content that people will stop and look at and not keep scrolling past because they think it's an ad. Like for example, recently we stopped putting the bottom dates on the right and left-hand corner of still images and videos. Normally we have like "EST" or "Coming out on Digital HD on this date" or the "Blu-ray and DVD" dates on the bottom corner of all of our assets, but we've started cutting back on that just to make it look like a normal video or a normal asset. For example, for *Bridget Jones' Baby*, I'll put something like "#BridgetJonesBaby" at the bottom, but just the hashtag, nothing else—no dates or anything that looks like advertising. And then also, we here have been taking steps to really connect with a global audience, something that people didn't really think about when they first started on social media. We want to try to reach the largest audience possible and so we have been integrating a global social team into our digital marketing campaigns to really help us reach those audiences that hadn't been reached before. Because when it comes down to it, a film doesn't only get domestic success, so why should the social campaign be only domestic? So talking about reach to other countries and marketing to them whether they are Spanish speaking or whatever it might be, now we have global pages for our films where you'll have one default page and then under that page you'll have a Spain page, a France page, a Germany page, and then all those analytics for those countries are underneath those individual pages so it's easier to market to specific countries that way. But because of the geo-targeting, if you're in Spain, when you click on the *Bridget Jones' Baby* Facebook page, you're going to be the Spanish page. So each of those pages is individually run by our global social teams, but they are all underneath the umbrella of the main title.

KB: Who are your top competitors in the social media world when it comes to film marketing? Which studios?

HS: I feel like everyone is our competition. I pay attention to a lot of general articles and things like that about the general direction that social media is going, finding different

trends and everything, and sooner or later, all the studios end up doing so, its mostly just a race to who can do it first and who can do it best. Like for example, I saw Warner do a 3D looking Instagram post for *Tarzan* when it came out over the summer and I thought "wow, that is so cool we have to do something like that, I've never seen that before" and then in the coming weeks I saw it everywhere. All the studios were doing it.