

Supporting Informed Recommendations for an Organization in Transition



Management Without Borders – Paradise Cinema Project

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Executive Summary

Project Overview

The Paradise Sisters Cinema Society is in transition. The Society's new Board needs to present an informed recommendation on the Society's future to the membership body. This research is meant to support the Board in formulating this recommendation.

Methodology

Organizational histories were collected from board members Emmanuel Jannasch and Dan Mackay. Eighteen North American cinemas were contacted. Responses were received from nine cinemas: five by e-mail, four by phone. Information on the remaining cinemas was obtained through their websites and sources such as newspaper articles and other promotional material. Information was retrieved regarding sixteen (89%) of the cinemas contacted. Complementary information from a variety of resources was used to add value to cinema responses, and to contextualize responses in the larger context of the industry.

Summary of Findings

Seven respondent cinemas own their building while four rent space to show films. Ten cinemas are non-profit organizations, while five are for-profit. Volunteers are used highly by six cinemas, five report some use, and three respondents use none. Formal market research was not used by any responding organization; three conducted some research at their cinemas inception. Membership dues and the associated benefits vary widely. Dues ranged from no cost to \$500, with associated benefits including discounted ticket prices, free movies, and tax receipts. Ticket pricing varied across organizations between \$7 to \$10 for full price, and \$5 to \$7.50 for discounted prices. Average attendance reported by the three respondents ranged from 4% to 62% of capacity. Films were screened between four times daily and once per month. The cinemas use a combination of 35mm projection and digital projection capabilities to show films. Two respondents use the Toronto International Film Group (TIFF-G) for booking films. Of twelve respondents in this category, six organizations have partnerships with other organizations. Nine out of fourteen cinemas used online social networking in some dimension of their promotion. Three organizations keep regularly licensed concessions, while five license

(III)

concessions occasionally. Government funding was reported by seven of twelve respondents; six out of ten responding Canadian cinemas received government funding.

Key Conclusions

There are many different models of independent cinema that are working across North America. Success depends on creating a model that will be sustainable within a community. The cinema industry is in a time of transition, and it is wise to consider revenue streams other than ticket sales.

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Introduction

Brief History of Repertory Cinema in Halifax

Repertory cinema was established in Halifax by Gordon Parsons and Ken Pittman (later replaced by Peter Gaskin) with the Wormwood's Dog and Monkey Cinema. This theatre started in the National Film Board theatre, then moved to the upstairs of the Khyber building, to what is now the Propeller Brewery; all of these locations were rented space. The Wormwood theatre held 93 seats, which grew to 151 seats and a concession stand. It was generally very popular, often filled to capacity, but also had its share of issues such as public protests for film content (D. MacKay, 2007).

In 1993, Gordon Parsons died. The theatre experienced not only the blow of his passing, but also an unstable lease. The owners of the theatre's location went bankrupt. Gaskin took the opportunity to purchase a permanent location, buying the Old Vogue, which is now the Boxing Club. The building turned out to be a bad investment and after struggling to remain operable, Peter left the theatre in 1997. It closed in early 1998. The art and theatre community of Halifax were great supporters of Wormwood's and remember it fondly, most with anecdotal references to a better time in repertory cinemas in Halifax. There is an identifiable desire in the community for the development of a new repertory cinema (D. MacKay, 2007).

Start of Paradise Sisters' Cinema Society

After Wormwoods's closing, a few individuals got together to try to start a new repertory cinema in Halifax. Kate Delmage was the head of this group, forming the Paradise Sisters Cinema Society (incorporated in 2002). The first board occupied itself with determining how much community support was available, started fundraising, and created a business plan (D. Mackay, personal communication, October 30, 2008).

Original Cinema Model

Design

The Paradise Cinema was conceived to fill a niche market by screening a repertory program as well as independent, foreign, and art house films seven days a week.

The Cinema itself would be located in downtown Halifax at 1593 Market St., with a seating capacity of 112 seats and would be open only for members. This building was originally a warehouse that would be leased and converted into a theatre at a cost of between \$10,000 and \$40,000. A detailed architectural plan is located in the Business Plan material available via the Resources page (Paradise Sisters Cinema Society, 2003).

The Paradise Sisters performed preliminary market research. The group examined models in other cities in order to determine the best model for Halifax and to obtain information on how other cinemas operated. They determined a rep cinema needed support from 1% of the city's population, which in Halifax would be 3500 members. Since the membership of Wormwoods was 3000, they felt that this number was attainable (Paradise Sisters, 2003).

The Society also negotiated a partnership with "The Coast," the local alternative newspaper. The Coast would act as a publicity vehicle and provide free advertising. Part of the business plan included a letter from the Vice President (Academic) of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, stating that NSCAD was supportive of the project and would work with the Society over future years (Paradise Sisters, 2003).

Funding Formula

Paradise Sisters' determined their cinema model design would cost \$250,000. They anticipated receiving these funds through the following vehicles:

- \$50,000 through selling memberships from members called "Founding Members": 500 members @ \$100
- \$100,000 through obtaining sponsorship/partnership money from members called "Angels" (community contributors): 100 angels @ \$1000
- \$100,000 through loans/government funding (Paradise Sisters, 2003).

The society was able to raise \$50,000 in this first category very quickly, and have the pledge of approximately 17 community members prepared to act as "Angels." The society then began selling what were called "popcorn" memberships, which are \$100 memberships sold after the original goal of 500 "Founding Members" was reached (D. Mackay, personal communication, October 30, 2008).

Despite early gains, it became clear that the Society would not be able to reach the ultimate goal of \$250,000. Though the first \$50,000 came very quickly, the additional funds were quite difficult to obtain. During 2003-2004 the fundraising scheme was exhausted and the goals unattained. Furthermore, the society spent some of their funds on leasing the Market Street property. This property was never used. The Society purchased equipment to run the theatre, including a digital film projector, DVD player, speakers, and microphone (D. Mackay, personal communication, October 30, 2008). Alternative models for fundraising and space

rental were not explored. The concept was tied to the Market Street property, which became an increasing untenable option both because of the costs of renovation, and the impracticalities of investing substantial funds in a lease hold (E. Jannasch, personal communication, September 26, 2008).

Recent Developments and the Current Project

In 2008, members were called for an Annual General Meeting where the executive proposed that the cinema be dissolved and the money given to the Atlantic Film Festival. Members were upset by this prospect and another meeting was held on September 30th. During this meeting, a new board came forward to explore alternative possibilities to be decided at the end of February, 2009 (E. Jannasch, personal communication, October 1, 2008).

To support the new Board of Paradise Sister's Cinema Society, a team from Halifax's Management Without Borders graduate course has researched current independent cinema models and obtained information about the current state of the industry and of the Halifax market.

Scope of the Report

The current report looks at information available through Dalhousie Library Resources, and via interviews with cinema owners and operators. The report provides a general overview of trends and the range of cinema models, with a focus on Canada. Gaps in the report may be attributed to a lack of response from 50% of the 18 cinemas. Responding cinemas did not always have access to all of the information requested in the cinema survey.

A Glance at Halifax

Are We Ready for an Independent Cinema?

The Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) is the largest urban area in Atlantic Canada. According to the 2006 census, it has a population of 372,858 ("Halifax Quick Facts", 2007, p. 1). 40% of Nova Scotia residents and 15% of Atlantic Canadians live in Halifax ("Demographics", 2007, para. 1).

Halifax is has one of the most educated populations in Canada: 67% of the population have trade school, college or university qualifications, with 35% having a university education ("Halifax Quick Facts", 2007, p. 2). Its population may be considered progressive; 78% of households are wired to the internet. This is the highest percentage of Internet users in Canada ("Halifax Quick Facts", 2007, p. 4). The highest proportions of composters in Canada are also in Halifax, with 68% of residents composting ("Halifax Quick Facts", 2007, p. 6). These statistics indicate that Haligonians are both outward-looking, and civic minded.

Halifax is a leader in the retention of creative, technically skilled and mobile youth, according to Statistics Canada ("HRM Cultural Plan", 2006, p. 56). HRM is home to six degree granting (4-year) universities and three community college campuses providing a full range of high-quality post-secondary options to almost 30,000 students. There are 81.1 students per 1000 people in Halifax, three times the national average ("Halifax Profile", 2007, para. 3). This may account for the overall education level of the population ("Education", 2007). The proliferation of post-secondary institutions may also account for the relative youth of the Halifax population: 50% are under the age of 40 ("Demographics", 2007, para. 4).

In addition to having an educated workforce, the labour force participation rate was 3.0% higher than the national average in December 2008, corresponding to a lower average unemployment rate than the National average ("Labour", 2007, para. 1). Approximately 6000 people in Halifax work in the art, culture, recreation & sport sector ("Labour", 2007, para. 4). The average household income in Greater Halifax is estimated to be \$66,325 ("Household Income", 2007, para. 1). Household expenditures are estimated to be \$65,439, ("Household Income", 2007, para. 2). This indicates a high level of disposable income among residents.

HRM has also implemented a Cultural Plan ("HRM Cultural Plan", 2006). Finalized in 2006, the plan identified five strategic directions and 19 goals for the municipality to pursue to protect and promote its cultural heritage. Two of the goals, Arts Development (#16) and Cultural Investment (#19), appear to be relevant for the purposes of this project. Access the community's plan via the Resources link.

Halifax's demographics and growth suggest that the city is a viable location for developing arts venues. The population is highly educated, a first mover when it comes to new

technology, and committed to culture. The population has a large student/younger base, and the median income suggests that Haligonians do have disposable income available for entertainment. That said - statistics can be misleading. Interviews were completed with two members of the Halifax arts community: Lee Ann Poole, the manager of the Bus Stop Theatre, and Garry Williams, artistic director of DaPoPo Theatre Company.

Bus Stop Theatre

Ms. Poole has a background in theatre and public relations. She has been running the Bus Stop Theatre space for about a year. The Bus Stop Theatre is located in North End Halifax, on Gottingen St. A standard black-box theatre, it has become a space for many different types of performance art including: theatre, music, dance, and film. The Bus Stop Theatre also show visual art in their lobby and have a full bar onsite (L. Poole, personal communication, January 12, 2009).

Ms. Poole has used the Bus Stop Theatre for events such as the Jewish Cultural Festival and Halifax Pride. To draw in diverse audiences, she targets media accessed by target markets. Poole's central responsibility is to rent the space. While most promotion for events is developed by renting organizations, Poole also uses the social networking tool Facebook to promote events. She has a Fan Page, which provides extensive statistics on who visits the page, including new visits (L. Poole, personal communication, January 12, 2009). Access to this information may help Paradise Sister's determine the size of a target market.

In Poole's opinion, there is a clear public interest in events such as the Atlantic Film Festival and Halifax's Fringe Festival. However, sustained interest in arts groups is hard to develop (L. Poole, personal communication, January 12, 2009).

DaPoPo Theatre Company

Garry Williams is the artistic director of DaPoPo Theatre Company, which often performs at the Bus Stop Theatre.

The mission statement of the company is as follows:

"We bring the energy and spirit of Popular Theatre to our work, while embracing the idea of a Poor, Political and Poetic theatre. We reject the commercial definition of art as product and see art as a vital service to society. We have retained an "open door policy" for emerging and pre-professional artists, while working with professional directors,

designers and performers. We are committed to making theatre accessible to the wider Halifax audience, as well as other national and international audiences" (DaPoPo, n.d.).

Mr. Williams lived and worked as an actor in Berlin and New York before moving to Halifax. He believes that there is a large actor core in Halifax; however, there are very few venues available for theatre, leaving them to perform often in art galleries, bars, and buses. Of these, bars are the most affordable option. He agrees that the opportunities for quality cinema are rare in Halifax. DaPoPo's programming may be viewed as non-commercial, and non-mainstream. Williams indicates that the core audience for his shows is about 300 people, an audience that can be serviced by a 1-2 week run of any given art event (G. Williams, personal communication, January 22, 2009).

Williams sees DaPoPo as servicing a different market than Neptune and the Eastern Front theatre, citing limited access to the mainstream audience that frequents these theatres, though DaPoPo's ticket prices are substantially lower than other Halifax Theatres: While the maximum ticket price for their typical audience is \$20, Neptune and Eastern Front often charge \$80 per ticket. Williams believes that this is because a mainstream audience often associates quality with cost. Williams also notes that DaPoPo's location in Halifax's North End may be a factor affecting the nature of DaPoPo's audience (G. Williams, personal communication, January 22, 2009).

In William's opinion, there are a limited number of people seeking out true artistic theatre experiences. Though he has not worked in film exhibition, he believes that a cinema would draw a larger audience because of the familiarity of the film format. Williams believes it is important to build grassroots support and to build a programming strategy that mixes audience favourites with new material (G. Williams, personal communication, January 22, 2009).

Conclusion

In conclusion, though statistics support the claim that Halifax is an appropriate location for a cinema, the experience of live theatre in the city suggests competition for markets and difficulties in developing sustained interest in new cinema projects. What seems clear is that community support and developing an audience are key factors in sustainable artistic exhibition in the city.

The Cinema Industry

"Under the Glamour"

As Kirby Wirchenko suggests (and Harold L. Vogel confirms in his 2001 study of Entertainment Industry Economics) the business of film exhibition has been notoriously inefficient in operating procedures and practices. However, challenges posed by the incremental development of home cinemas and other alternative channels of movie viewing (including movie piracy) have promoted developments in the industry towards amalgamation, diversification of revenue streams, and overall organization. Of these trends, the most significant appears to be the remaking of revenue sources for the space of the cinema, as large cinemas expand into site rentals, bowling alleys, alternative concession offerings, and new advertising spaces. Cineplex's recent annual report is titled "Beyond the Movies," and certainly, for both large and small cinemas, beyond the movies has become a necessary and often lucrative place to go.

Industry Snapshot

The overall industry perspective is filled with mixed messages. Positive and negative outlooks seem informed by a number of statistics, but overall leave the impression of an industry going through significant transition. In 2007, the overall Canadian movies and entertainment market shrank by 2.4% to \$3.7 billion, and the market is forecasted to decline further, to \$3.5 billion in 2012. In Canada, movie box office taking account for 21.8% of the revenue generated in this market (Datamoniter, 2008). Canada's market is dominated by Cineplex Galaxy, which controls the bulk of the market share, followed by Empire Co, which owns many Atlantic Canadian cinemas, and AMC Entertainment, a major American private company. In good news for Independents, Statistics Canada reports that smaller theatres garnered more market share in 2006 and saw a rise in profit margin, but not to the same extent as their larger chain counterparts. Profit margins for the small companies rose from 3.0% in 2005 to 4.8% in 2006 (Statistics Canada).

The key demographic for new moviegoers is younger, between 12-29 years of age. This is the biggest and most rapidly expanding market segment. There is an air of optimism in the general industry, bolstered by the development of ever more sophisticated projectors and formats for film viewing (digital projectors, IMAX, 3-D projectors). The advent of new and better technology widens the gap between material viewed in the theatre, and material viewed at home, providing additional incentive to leave the house and visit a theatre (Beyond Movies). As a result, despite projections of an overall industry decline, the North American box office is

projected to grow between 5 per cent to 7 per cent over 2009 and 2010, despite projections of an overall decline projected in the entertainment industry (CGX NP, December 10, 2008).

Film-Exhibition: One Link in a Chain

The challenges facing film exhibitors both large and small have affected the industry as a whole. In response to the challenges of competing technologies and concomitant drops in film attendance, film producers are making films in a new way. The traditional film "season," which contained lulls and peaks is disappearing in favour of a more evenly distributed film distribution schedule. Producers are also devoting more attention to serials, and guaranteed money makers. The price of making movies has also gone up, with producers spending more money per film. Average spending on producing and marketing new theatrical releases has grown from US \$78.2 million per title in 2002 to US \$106.6 million per title in 2007, a compound annual growth rate of 6.4% (Beyond Movies, n.d.).

Certainly these tactics have produced results. One indicator is the recent success of the movie *Twilight*. Pre-release ticket sales for *Twilight* broke records at over 1 million tickets sold. The fact that over 1 million people paid to see a film that had not yet been reviewed indicates that studios are growing ever more deft at determining what will sell to potential movie attendees, and that people are still willing to go to the movies (Cineplex Galaxy Income Fund, 2008).

These trends towards ever-more commercialized, expensive films would seem to indicate a residual niche for the merit-not-money based programming strategies of most independent cinemas, this is not the case. Large film exhibitors grow ever-more attuned to the continuing success of independent or "indie" films. Not only do most large studios now have an "independent" brand, exhibitors continue to make large profits on indie cinema. Forbes just released a list of some of the best returns made on film investments, with last year's *Juno* topping the list by generating over 15\$ for every dollar spent in production (B. Daly, 2009). This year, *Slumdog Millionaire* has set records in the UK box office and continues to perform beyond expectations (U.K. box office, 2009). The success of these films speaks to the continued desire by the public for less commercial offerings, but the financial success of these productions does not go unnoticed by big-box chains and film production companies.

Diversification of Revenue Streams

For movie exhibitors, attendance is not the primary revenue generator. The traditional box office take split is 52% to the distributor, and 48% to the exhibitor. This means that exhibitors depend upon additional income from concessions, which have an estimated 80%

profit margin. Concessions have expanded among larger chains to include things like sushi, french fries, and liquor (T. Wong, 2008). Revenue from alternative use of the cinema space has also become significant, with Cineplex building a bowling alleys, renting for corporate activities, and showing alternative programming such as live-feed sports and theatre events. Advertising is also becoming primary revenue generator for the cinema industry.

Expected increases in revenue and attendance will be driven by new technology in theatres, including 3-D. Experts cite the success of last year's "Beowulf" which generated more than half of its box-office receipts from 3-D screens, accounting for 22% of box office sales last year, overall. There are approximately 1,500 screens that can show 3D in North America, but there are plans for a rapid expansion to increase the number of screens to 2,500 in the next few months. Raymond James analyst, Andy Nasr, views 3-D as "one of the biggest innovations in the exhibition business"(CGX NP, 2008, p.3). . Cineplex, Canada's largest Film Exhibitor, plans to have around 10% of its screens capable of 3-D technology by 2010 (CGX NP, 2008).

Logistics

"If You Build It, Will They Come?"

Location

Independent cinemas in today's market have many issues to consider when establishing their physical presence. Among the cinemas researched, status as a renter versus owner of the building in which they showed films was divided fairly evenly. The number of seats in a cinema ranged from 75 to 670, with an average of about 250 seats. Cinemas are often located downtown or in other cultural centres/neighbourhoods. Independent film suggests a lifestyle, and should be situated in environments populated by people who seek that lifestyle.

Many cinemas/spaces housed more than film. Even the largest exhibitors in Canada: Cineplex, Empire, and AMC, are creating increasingly diverse spaces, adding things like bowling alleys, and renting their screens for corporate and live-broadcast events. The overriding impression is that any initiative to build space for film exhibition should also consider other activities; many cinemas also provide space for live theatre or music events.

Volunteers

Independent cinemas often use volunteers as an integral part of their staff, with only two of the cinemas reporting no volunteer involvement. All successful cinemas have at least one full time staff member/manager. It should be noted that where volunteers are used, someone has to coordinate volunteer activity. Volunteers are typically used for front-of-house activities or for promotional work (postering, etc), usually in exchange for free film passes. Some cinemas use interns, who are better able to help with the inner workings of the cinema. Interns can complete more intricate tasks than many volunteers are willing or able to commit to, such as design work, development/fundraising (such as grant research and proposals), and PR/marketing.

Partnerships

Partnerships happen at many levels in independent cinemas. Some of the most successful partnerships involve teaming up with other institutions (such as arts centres) to share space and programming activities. Other very successful partnerships involve sharing space with cafés; this takes a load of work off the shoulders of the cinema, and creates

community spaces where people with similar interests can meet and relax. Anything that creates a sense of community is beneficial because the greatest partnership that any successful film-exhibition society or group has is with the surrounding community. Without being able to leverage goodwill and trust from the community, all of the cinemas researched would be unable to succeed. Positioning oneself as a cultural institution and being open to community initiatives and projects is essential to sustainability.

Funding and Revenue

"There's No Business Like Show Business!"

Traditional for-profit cinemas derive income from box office ticket sales and concessions. Concessions have a much healthier profit margin (estimated as high as 80%). These industry truths were evident in research conducted about the current independent scene, but context and audience were important. Seven of thirteen respondents reported that they owned the property where films were exhibited. Where property is owned, revenue often comes from rentals to other groups, particularly for live performance. Ten of fifteen respondents reported that their cinema was a non-profit or charity organization. In these cases, a substantial portion of income is derived from government funding (seven out of twelve respondents derived substantial operating and project funds from government grants.) Community fundraising was also a substantial source of revenue for non-profit cinemas.

Only two of the cinemas polled reported deriving 100% of funding from ticket sales. Where ticket sales are significant, they are very significant (as with Bytowne cinema, which derives 70% of revenue from ticket sales). However, ticket sales were often less significant than grants, fundraising, and rented space. Kirby Wirchenko (Broadway) views ticket sales as less significant than other revenue streams, and believes that there is always a time that you will lose money on film. At the Broadway, film showings account for 70% of the year's events, but bring in less than half of the total revenue. This runs somewhat contrary to the assumptions of Bonavista Theatre, which anticipates Film as a vehicle for sustaining the building during gaps in the live performance schedule. These different perceptions of the reliability of film and theatre, respectively, to form the backbone of an operating budget highlight the significance of context in determining where money comes from. What may work in Bonavista (based on this cinema's research) does not work in Saskatoon.

Respondents reported a small percentage of income generated through memberships (10% or less of total budget). A discussion of the income generated through membership fees is also complicated by the discount received by members throughout the year. Kirby Wirchenko noted that memberships are less about the revenue, and more about generating the commitment from the audience (K. Wirchenko, Personal Communication, February 21, 2009).

Concessions

Seven of thirteen respondents reported that they run concessions. Two were able to estimate that they receive 10 and 15% of total revenue as a result of concessions. Others reported concession as a "substantial" portion of their operating budget. Concessions are

changing as film exhibitors focus on making the cinema experience unique from the home-theatre experience. Some cinemas have already introduced liquor as part of concessions sales. Cineplex manages liquor sales through "VIP auditoriums" where audiences under 19 are not allowed to enter.

In Ontario, the Alcohol and Gaming commission has established rules for theatres that involve separating the licensed area from the non-licensed area and limiting drinks to two single-drink servings per individual in one order.

While Nova Scotia's Gaming and Liquor board does not publish materials speaking specifically to the issue of licensing theatres, information about available licences is available on the Wiki. Three of twelve respondents reported that they ran licensed concessions, with two other cinemas reporting that they licensed occasionally for private events. Clearly there is money to be made selling liquor, but the possibilities of success are very dependent upon the legalities and logistics involved in selling liquor.

While Kirby Wirchenko (Broadway) notes that liquor sales generate a substantial portion of concessions revenue during private/live events, he calls the prospect of organizing liquor sales for everyday film showings "a nightmare," likening it to the logistics of arranging all-ages shows.

Advertising

For independents, one under-utilized opportunity for generating revenue appears to be advertising. Cinemas that indicated a portion of advertising revenue put it as 5% or under of total revenue. According to Stu Ballatt, president and chairman of the Cinema Advertising Council (CAC), cinema is among one of the fastest-growing advertising mediums (2008, Film Journal International, p.35). Overall industry revenues generated from a of the trade association's members (representing 82% of US theatre screens) grew 18.5% to \$539,946,000 in 2007, as compared to a total of \$455,661,000 in 2006. Further details are available via the chart at left. Moreover, digital technologies mean that pre-show advertising can be tailored to local needs for much less money.

This is true globally, as well as in the US. according to Cheryl Wannel, general manager of the Screen Advertising World Association (SAWA). According to the global media consultancy Screen Digest, members of SAWA will have access to an advertising market accounting for more than 3.3 billion dollars in 2010. Furthermore, off-screen advertising revenues (accounting for 8% of last year's US advertising total) are also expected to quickly jump. For advertisers, the cinema experience "now encompasses the total cinema environment. Digital billboards, gaming on the screen, live events, Blue-tooth activity, and even the sense of smell are just the start of an industry that understands the need to innovate" (2008, Film Journal International). Concession-area marketing, in-lobby and in-auditorium audio programming (up 207%), and in-

lobby sampling programs (up 374%) (2008, Film Journal International).

Leveraging Community Capital into Operating Revenue through Business

The size and rapid expansion of advertising in cinemas may provide independent cinemas with a way to generate revenue through corporate sponsorship (like Winnipeg Cinematheque).

Corporate responsibility is increasingly significant, due to top-down pressure from securities regulators and large institutional investors, and bottom-up concerns from consumers and stakeholders (Maxwell, Judith, 2008). Judith Maxwell, former head of the Economic Council of Canada and the Canadian Policy Research Networks, calls this an "evolving social dimension" to the way that companies do business, the idea that "doing good and doing well are not mutually exclusive" (Maxwell, Judith, 2008).

As a result of this evolution, appropriate businesses may build goodwill with local communities by sponsoring appropriate cinema. Where high quality cultural content selected for the local community prevails, corporations can leverage this social capital into personal gain while independent cinemas retain operating revenue.

Leveraging Community Capital into Operating Revenue through the Government

A number of respondents reported receiving government grants to build, renovate, and operate cinemas. For example, the Cultural Spaces Canada Grant just paid for Broadway Theatre's renovation, and the Bonavista expects substantial government funds for its building project. Kirby Wirchenko (Broadway Theatre) notes that it is easier to get project funding than operational funding. Funding programs applicable to Paradise Sisters Cinema Society are available via the "funding opportunities" link below. Please note that further resources are available via the Small business finance centre and Canadian Council for the arts.

Programming

"Lights, Camera, Action"

Film Frequency and Turnover

When it comes to film frequency and turnover, the researched cinemas exhibit a wide range of different strategies. As such, determining how often films should be screened and for how long are situation-specific decisions. In making these decisions, the factors are important to keep in mind: relationships with movie distributors; extent of membership/popularity of cinema; trends in demand/consumer preferences for particular films; and whether the cinema operates out of its own building or rents.

Cinemas operating out of their own facilities generally screen films much more frequently than their counterparts who rent space. This is because those who rent are more likely to be placed under limitations from the owner of the space - for example, Film Brockville can only screen during certain parts of the year because Cineplex imposes a black-out period during the busiest times of the year (D. Chisamore, personal communication, January 5, 2009). Thus, it is important to keep in mind that renting space can constrain a cinema (with regard to programming), especially if the rentee has a less powerful bargaining position than the rentor.

Also, almost all of the cinemas researched screen different films for different amounts of time, based on the film's popularity. Although how long a film is screened for is partially dependent on the outcome of negotiations with the film's distributor (see below), most cinemas make the decision to screen films for longer blocks of time on the basis of consumer demand. For example, Moxie has been screening "Slumdog Millionaire" for three consecutive weeks at time of writing in order to meet the demand for this particular film. Therefore, determining film turnover should be based foremost on the preferences of the targeted audience.

Frequency of screening is informed by the agreements that cinemas have with their distributors. Moxie indicates that some acquisitions involved several films. For example, in order to get one movie at a particular price, a certain other (typically less popular) movie has to be screened for a particular amount of time (<http://blog.moxiecinema.com/>). In this way, distributors also play a key role in determining what films are screened. This makes determining which distributor to deal with a highly important from a programming standpoint, because this informs the flexibility and amount of leverage a cinema may have with regard to its programming.

Pricing Strategies

The vast majority of the cinemas researched use a graduated, or segmented, pricing system. What this means is that different prices are charged for different types of consumers, or for different dates. For example, Vogue cinema charges \$8.50 for Adults, but only \$5.50 for children. Other cinemas have this type of system based on membership: different prices are charged for members as opposed to non-members of the film society or theatre. This type of pricing strategy is advantageous for two reasons: it may provide incentive for groups of consumers that would otherwise not regularly attend screenings, and it acts as a promotional tool.

A useful competitive strategy is to develop a segmented pricing strategy based on demographics, or special "events" (e.g. a "cheap" night). However, pricing based on membership is a more context-sensitive decision, and should only be adopted if this strategy would further the vision of the cinema. In other words, money from membership typically does not represent a significant source of profit among responding cinemas, so this is less of a consideration in deciding whether to adopt membership pricing. According to Kirby Winchenko from Broadway cinema, memberships are most significant for the commitments they denote between the community and the theatre. Revue cinema demands that all first-time movie goers purchase a membership alongside their ticket, using membership to forge ties with attendees rather than leverage additional funding.

The Hardware: Equipment Used for Screening

Almost all cinemas have unrestricted access to projecting equipment (whether or not the viewing premises are owned). In other words, whether the cinema rents its premises (such as the Revue, Moxie, Film Brockville), or owns them (e.g. the Vogue, or ByTowne), it has projecting equipment on site. The only exception to this is ByTowne Cinema, which rents digital media equipment from time to time (i.e. a digital projector and DVDs). Wendy Huot from Cameo Cinema borrows a digital projector for her monthly showings.

All of the cinemas primarily use 35mm film, with some of them occasionally screening 16mm films. Almost all have the operational ability to screen digital film as well. The digital technology used ranges from DigiBeta, DVCam, MiniDV, DVD, and computer (see, for example, the personal communication from M. Murphy, the Executive Director of Metro Cinema), to HD Cam and Blu-Ray (see Fundy Film Society and Acadia Cinema Cooperative). In fact, some very old mediums are also used (albeit occasionally and begrudgingly), such as VHS, to allow for the screening of older films.

Although digital equipment is widely used, it is important to note that newer, digital technologies are not mainstream as of yet, but may become increasingly important as distributors become committed to the digital model. Certainly, respondees indicated that digital formats are increasingly significant, though still prohibitively expensive. There are benefits to mixed capability, that is, to be able to screen films on traditional equipment and on newer digital mediums. There are two other main advantages to having both types of equipment: flexibility in programming, and having a greater ability to screen all types of films (for example, some films may be distributed on exclusively digital or older mediums).

The ABCs of Marketing: Promotional Activities

As can be expected, promotion of the cinema (and its program), is absolutely necessary for a successful repertory cinema. Because a repertory cinema does not cater to as large a segment of the population as a common (mainstream) theatre does, a hefty and ongoing promotional campaign is needed to ensure that the target market is informed. While cinema promotion must be energetic, it need not be expensive. The promotional tools used by responding cinemas tend to be informal. Every cinema polled reported promotion activity carried out on several fronts. The following trends can be observed regarding how the cinemas promote themselves and their programming:

Every cinema and film society has a website that acts as an information portal and acts as an initial point of contact for inquiring or potential customers. Although the level of detail and breadth of information varies from website to website, every cinema posts what films are playing, when they are playing, and where the cinema is located. Also, every website acts as a point of contact in that up-to-date, accurate contact information for people involved with the cinema is available. This, therefore, is the bare minimum threshold for promotional activity that any potential repertory cinema should meet.

Many of the cinemas also use an electronic mailing list for promotional (and informational) purposes. Typically, if this option is offered, subscription to the email list is available on the website. This is an effective and inexpensive way to reach many people instantaneously; however, it is limited in that it only contacts those who have actually expressed interest in the cinema and its programming. Use of this tool is highly recommended, especially if the cinema adopts a membership-based model (as being included in such a list enhances a "community feel").

Other inexpensive electronic mediums are available for promotion, including: Facebook, online discussion forums, blogs (which have in recent times become incredibly popular, see for example Moxie's blog), RSS feeds, online multimedia capabilities (e.g. create your own advertisement on Youtube, then link it to your website), and free electronic advertising (i.e. it is possible to find free ad-space on the Internet). The more of these mediums used, the better,

since greater proportions of the target market will be reached. Moreover, many of these tools provide opportunities for community engagement through logging in and commenting. However, it is important to note that many of these mediums require consistent maintenance and updating, so it is necessary to consider the trade-off between such time commitments and the level of technological expertise/equipment that people using the medium are expected to reach. The results of this study indicate that the medium with the least effort required is Facebook (especially since this interface may combine many of the other elements), and so it is generally a good idea to use Facebook as a promotional tool.

Alternative methods of promotion include the following (all of which have been used by one cinema or the other): using printed publications and posters; having a physical presence at local arts events; encouraging word-of-mouth; community radio; and hard-copy or "snail mail" distribution. Consistent use of these mediums is also encouraged. However, budget and time constraints may make this very difficult. Accordingly, the best time to make use of these mediums is during the initial start-up phase. The main message of this initial promotion is to steer the targeted market towards the cinema's website and mailing list, and from this point onwards they can act as the customer's main reference point for information. Of course, if the targeted market is not likely to spend a lot of time online, then use of the more traditional communication mediums listed here becomes more important.

Finally, programming itself can be used as a promotional tool. The same applies for pricing strategy. Thus, for example, Vogue Cinema uses pricing as an aggressive promotional tool; it offers the "Dinner and a Movie" package and highly discounted prices on "Friday Midnight Movies." Similarly, Revue uses pricing to promote itself by offering a "Reelcard," or a package price (\$5 savings for 5 screenings). Moreover, several cinemas not only screen films, but also host special events or speakers - see, for example, Moxie, Ragtag, Metro, Garrick, and particularly Cameo, whose programming strategy is completely centered around the concept of special events. Others offer perks for attending screenings - see, for example, Film Brockville. It is important to note that such mechanisms do not necessarily attract customers *per se*, but are designed to increase the number of repeat customers. This said, it is still possible that the strategic use of pricing and programming will attract people who would not normally attend a repertory cinema, and so the use of such strategies is recommended because of this ability to meet dual objectives. As to how programming or pricing should be used to promote the cinema, this is a context-specific decision.

The Ins and Outs of Getting Films: What Films Should Be Screened?

In determining what films should be screened, two issues arise: the planning process - who decides what films are shown and how is this decision made; and where do the films come from/how do you get them?

Planning What Films are Screened

With the exception of the Bonavista Cinema (which is not yet active), almost all of the cinemas studied did their programming through a single individual (or a small group of individuals), and did not use a booking agency. This independent process of planning the program of a cinema typically begins at large film festivals, particularly the Toronto Film Festival for the Canadian theatres. This is the first step in gauging interest in specific films, and establishing a network of contacts with distributors (as explained by Kirby, from Broadway Cinema, and Bruce from ByTowne).

After this step, once a general idea of what films are required has been formed, it is a matter of contacting distributors (which can often happen over the internet) and having the films shipped. It is important to note that the negotiation process with distributors can be lengthy - this is chronicled in Moxie's blog and supported by the comments made by Bruce, from ByTowne. Rarely will places like Halifax get to open a film, so there is some delay. Shipping costs can be prohibitive and are always paid for by the cinema. Accordingly, it is typically beneficial for cinemas to negotiate having several films shipped at once, as this may (to a limited degree, anyway) reduce shipping costs, or to deal exclusively with local or nearby distributors. Once in a distributor's system, programmers receive catalogues and emails from them detailing the movies that are available. The pricing of films is touched on below, under the "Legal Stuff" heading.

One key point is that this process can be time consuming. Bruce White of ByTowne Cinema reports: "To see movies in advance of their release, I attend film festivals, and in many cases distributors of films send me advance copies to screen... I probably spend about half of my working week, on average, learning about new movies in one way or another" (S. K. Ma, 2009).

Therefore, the market research shows that using a booking agency is not required, and if a cinema has individuals that have the ability to devote the requisite amount of time to planning what films are to be shown, it can do so successfully. However, it is important to keep in mind that this is an ongoing, rather burdensome commitment, and that there are more convenient sources for getting films (see below) available.

Where to Get Films?

If the independent approach is taken, then films are acquired through the distributors that have contact with the particular cinema. Such contact is typically made via networking - as Kirby Wirchenko describes it, a cinema must be "in the loop" to have access to particular distributors' catalogues and collections. A list of some of the more prominent Canadian distributors websites can be found below (under the "Useful Contacts" heading).

Alternatively, a few of the cinemas researched use the Toronto International Film Festival Group (TIFFG) as the source of their movies. The TIFFG represents a convenient source for films, and through its Film Circuit division represents an important resource for repertory and independent cinemas. Information regarding the TIFFG, and the circuit in particular, can be found on the resources page of the Wiki prepared in conjunction with this report.

Although this is an important resource that may be accessible, it is important to note that AFSCOOP is already constituted as a "Film Centre" (falling under the umbrella of the Film Circuit) in Halifax. Thus, AFSCOOP already has ties to this resource for independent film, and so a strategic partnership or alliance with this organization may be beneficial. It is unclear whether the Film Circuit would allow another Film Centre to operate in Halifax under the auspices of the TIFFG.

Legal Stuff: Licensing Costs and the *Copyright Act*

The prices that a cinema pays for a movie obtained from a movie distributor may include a number of charges (such as shipping, for example). A significant portion of the cost of showing film is derived from licensing charges. As Kirby from Broadway explains, licensing costs vary from film to film, but generally films cost a minimum of \$150 to \$200 or, alternatively, a percentage of the house take for screening the film (whichever is greater).

However, it is possible to get films more cheaply by screening a film for a private event - this is because distributors charge a flat rate for private screenings. This occurs because of the provisions of Canada's *Copyright Act*; in effect, showing a film at a private event (for example, watching a film in your own home, for your own enjoyment) does not constitute a violation of the copyright of the creator of the film, and so there is no need to levy additional licensing costs (which are meant to compensate the creator for his or her effort in the creation of the film) when distributing it for this purpose. This point is explained by the Canadian Intellectual Property: copyright in an original work, as applicable to cinematographic works (i.e. films), consists of the sole right to "reproduce, adapt and *publicly* present a cinematographic work" (emphasis added, CIPO, 2008). The word "publicly" is key: if someone presents a film privately, then no violation of copyright occurs. There are also "fair dealing" provisions in the Act which detail additional exceptions to copyright infringement. This has important implications for a prospective repertory cinema. For example, the prohibitive costs of acquiring films for screening can be reduced substantially. Alternatively, it would be possible to rent digital media (such as DVDs) and screen those without penalty (and rental fees are monumentally cheaper than acquiring films from distributors). However, as discussed above, the prerequisite to doing this is that the cinema must operate as a private venue.

What constitutes a "private venue" or a "private screening" is determined on a case-by-case basis. Therefore, it is impossible to list all of the factors that might be taken into account in making this determination. However, it is likely that the following sorts of conditions would have to be met in order to be legally considered "private": tickets cannot be sold for screenings (therefore revenues would need to be based primarily on membership dues and concessions); the cinema cannot be constituted as a public entity; and promotional activities should be limited to private or semi-private mediums (such as distribution lists).

Operating in such a manner is not popular among the cinemas researched, however, one cinema (Cameo) has adopted this operational strategy, and has encountered no resistance thus far. Organizer Wendy Huot does plan on reviewing the organization's legal status in the immediate future.

Audience

"Waiting in the Wings"

Market Research

Out of the sixteen theatres included in our research, only three claimed to have done market research as a start-up aid: Broadway Theatre, Garrick Theatre and Moxie Cinema. Of the remaining thirteen theatres, seven did not do market research at any point and six are unknown. Unfortunately, market research is expensive and time-consuming and independent theatres are characteristically short on both time and money. Broadway Theatre did a Membership Assessment Report in 2008. To sum, the findings were:

In an age where the heavily advertised "buzz" movies gross a possible \$20,000,000+ on their opening weekend and people would rather stay home and see a movie on TV, the future of independent theatres is uncertain (Moneo, Basualdo, Findlay, and MacDermott, 2008, p. 5).

Many repertory theatres are unable to stay open with current low-attendance and need to be rescued by the community (Moneo, et al., 2008, p.6). Conversely, some theatres like the ByTowne in Ottawa are doing a steady business on a regular basis: "ByTowne may just be fortunate to exist in a city and a neighbourhood with a healthy population of cinephiles who appreciate a night out at the cinema, who still love the art of cinema passionately enough to want to see films—good ones—where they were originally meant to be seen" (Moneo, et al., 2008, p.8).

External communication and local partnerships are necessary and important (Moneo, et al., 2008, p.26-7).

In order to correctly interpret this data and apply it to Paradise Cinema, one must appreciate the fact that neither Saskatchewan nor Ottawa are the same city as Halifax and the Broadway and ByTowne theatres are not the Paradise (Moneo, et al., 2008, p.8). Each city has its own cultural, community, and market niches which directly influence the success of its businesses. Each theatre owner creates a different cinema experience within that market (Moneo, et al., 2008, p. 8). Knowing the Halifax community and working within it is just as important to making Paradise a successful business as understanding the greater film industry.

The seven theatres which did not undertake market research do not seem to view it as a necessity and did not utilize it either upon their inception or afterwards. Most theatre owners or managers have their own ideas of what people want to see in a cinema and what the local market and communities will support, and they use this insight to support their business decisions (Moneo et al., 2008, p.8). This creates a situation where each independent theatre differs from others in their audience, programming, and membership, and illustrates the

significance of a mandate developed with the community in mind. Some theatres are open to including popular films in their programming, while others wish to create an atmosphere where the audience can view otherwise inaccessible independent films. As the Ragtag mission statement asserts: "First and foremost, Ragtag exists to provide a venue for the best in U.S. independent and international filmmaking. We believe that film is the dominant art form of our age and that it has the power to change minds and hearts. It is therefore critical that audiences have a breadth of film options" (Ragtag Cinema, n.d.). Ragtag and other cinemas operate on the premise that they offer audiences what they want and need in a cinema (Ragtag Cinema, n.d.). Independent cinema owners are relying more on feelings and a personal desire to bridge a perceived gap seen in the cinema industry. This underlying attitude may account for the lack of structured market research as much as a dearth of funding. Therefore, the act of viewing a gap or noticing that the theatre industry does not meet the needs of a demographic of film-goers is a form of informal market research. This is characterized by a response from Marsh Murphy of the Metro Cinema, who qualifies a negative response to the question of whether or not his organization has utilized market research by saying, "No, not formal market research" (M. Murphy, personal communication, January 20, 2009).

Whether the research is formal or informal, an important aspect of successful cinema programming and drawing in an audience is to understand what the audience wants. In order to do that, knowledge of the community and audience demographics are integral. Unfortunately, the audience is also one of the most difficult things to define.

Audience Demographics

A study of market demographics may include a range of considerations, from everyone and anyone willing to pay admission to see a movie to an elite group of people willing to buy into membership or stakeholdership of a theatre. Audiences differ from film to film and from cinema to cinema. The Metro Cinema sees their audience as being made up of "students; hipsters; committed older cinephiles; grassroots community partners" (M. Murphy, personal communication, January 20, 2009). The persistence among respondents of the importance of serving the surrounding community should be key in the conceptualization of any market.

In contrast to the Metro Cinema's wide ranging audience, Film Brockville reports that its main audience demographics consist of people above 40, with the bulk of membership in their 50s and 60s (D. Chisamore, personal communication, January 12, 2009). The Ragtag audience is made up of both people who love film and believe it is an art form and those who simply enjoy the Ragtag atmosphere, especially the availability of beer in the movie theatre (Coleman, 2005). Some theatres support film as an art form and offer their viewers a place where they can see a film and discuss it with other like-minded film connoisseurs, while some simply supply current popular titles to their audiences. Much of this has to do with what the theatre's sense of purpose.

Many independent theatres build up a select audience of like-minded individuals who are loyal to the theatre not only because of programming choices but also because of the atmosphere and sense of community. Lee Ann Poole of the Bus Stop Theatre feels that the audience for arts organizations is limited (L. Poole, personal communication, January 12, 2009). Paradise has an established member base in Halifax. The challenge will be to bring new audience members in and reconnect with the old.

Many of the theatres in this report utilize social networking and other informal communication processes to keep connected to their audience. Of the thirteen respondents in this field, 9 use an online social network, 7 specifying Facebook, while others use blogs and forums. The overall impression is one of bottom-up organic audience development, rather than top down decision made on the basis of formal market research.

Membership Programs

Membership in independent theatres range from expensive, tax-deductible membership costs that entail private showings and other benefits, to inclusive and cheap memberships that provide discounted ticket prices. Brattle Theatre offers regular memberships for \$75 annum, which includes 12 free passes, \$1.50 discount to movies, and discounts at local stores and restaurants. Brattle also has a Producer Membership for \$500 annually, which offers unlimited free admission as well as the discounts listed above. Conversely, Pacific Cinematheque requires membership for admittance to movies, but only charges \$3 a year. Metro Cinema has approximately 200 members, who gain membership by buying one of two kinds of membership pass. One is an annual all-access pass - for \$125, the holder gets to attend every film screened without paying admission. The second is a '6 for the price of 5' pass. Ten of the sixteen theatres offer memberships, ranging from \$3 to \$500 in cost.

For the most part, these membership programs are used in conjunction with ticket sales and are affordable. As noted in the Programming section, money from membership does not typically represent a significant source of profit but is used to further the vision of the theatre. More research could be done to determine whether the membership fees are considered a benefit or an encumbrance. The structure of membership fees was found in the current study to be context dependent. The form an organization takes (from for-profit incorporation to co-op) has a notable affect on the structure and perceived success of different membership models. For more details on membership fees per cinema, view Cinema Comparison Chart I.

Conclusions

Based solely on statistics, Halifax seems to be ideally suited for an independent cinema: the population is young (50% under the age of 40), with a high number of students, and the average household has enough disposable income to support recreation activities. The population is also very educated and progressive, taking the lead in Canada on items such as internet use and composting, which also suggests that the population is engaged and open to new ideas. The municipality has also taken a lead in the culture sector by creating the HRM cultural plan.

However, the artists in Halifax find that the support for the artistic community is often focused on festivals and special events targeted to specific communities; sustained commitment to arts groups is reported as difficult to maintain due to competition in the community for audiences.

Industry/ Funding & Revenue

The cinema industry faces a number of challenges and is undergoing a number of transitions largely due to changes in technology and alternative media. Larger Canadian cinemas are consolidating property and debt load to introduce new initiatives that increase value for consumers. The focus is on diverse revenue streams and the unique cinema experience. These latter two strategies are also common sustainability strategies among responding cinemas, which reported strong partnerships with other organizations and forms of entertainment, particularly live theatre and music. Given the potential for advertising recognized by larger cinemas, corporate sponsorship is an underutilized revenue stream among independent cinemas. However, many cinemas reported some level of government funding: 10 of 15 respondents were not-for-profit societies and 7 of 12 respondents derived substantial funds from government grants. No cinemas reported feeling that the conditions of these grants impinged upon programming freedom, but many appeared to have a mandate in keeping with promoting Canadian independent content. Also, several indicated that they ran community fundraisers. Industry trends reflect a continued commitment by consumers to movies as an entertainment activity.

Overall, few cinemas can make it on ticket revenue alone. Concessions were reported as a significant source of revenue in cinemas that had a concessions stand. Larger cinemas offer increasing choice and quality of concessions, including liquor sales. However, the logistics of offering regular licensing at concessions stands may be hard for some cinema models to navigate. Licensed concessions appear to be easier to run for private events.

While the independent cinema industry has a narrowing niche, due to recent recognition of the profitability of "indie" films by larger chains, independent cinemas can still leverage social capital through strong community connections. By addressing the desires of a community and building a programming process built on merit rather than profitability, independent cinemas obtain something closer to the status of a local cultural institution.

Logistics

The most important consideration when developing a cinema is the prospective for partnerships. Cinemas thrive when they connect with others in supporting a joint vision. These potential partnerships must be considered when seeking out or building a space in which to house their cinema.

Potential partnerships include:

- Pairing with an in-house café: this takes some of the pressure off cinema staff with regards to organizing concessions, decreases rent or mortgage costs by sharing the payment, and creates a sense of community where people can meet to discuss a film after it has been shown.
- Partnering with other arts and cultural groups to share space: if a stage is built into the cinema it becomes an ideal location for live theatre and music performances, author readings, and a multitude of other cultural events. This again adds to a sense of community, further situating the cinema as an integral part of a community's cultural makeup, and renting out the cinema can provide an important source of revenue. It is also important to consider finding space within an existing cultural space/organization, rather than putting out the full cost of buying or renting a space.
- Internships: Almost all surveyed independent cinemas utilized volunteers for cinema operations, but some are developing internships for students who are better able to contribute to more intensive projects, such as grant research and IT development.

Programming

Determining how frequently to screen films (i.e. once a day/week/month?) and how long to screen each particular film are decisions that are strongly linked to the context in which a cinema operates. The following factors play key roles in making such decisions: relationships with movie distributors, renting or owning facilities, and consumer demand for particular films.

To be competitive, it is probably necessary to adopt a segmented pricing system based on social demographics and/or time of screening. Adopting a membership-sensitive pricing

system depends on whether this furthers the vision/model of the cinema, more than on anything else.

Renting projection equipment is rare, and 35mm is the current industry standard. It is probably a good idea to have the ability to screen multiple technologies. It is possible to save costs of acquiring films by screening them privately. A privately-run enterprise can be the quickest and most cost-efficient way of proceeding, but to do so legally, it is critical to operate on a private level and as a private entity. A booking agency is not required, but planning what films to screen can be a time-consuming process. A well-established network of distributors is vital when independently sourcing films. To cut on time, the TIFFFG is a good Canadian resource, but AFCCOOP is already a member of the TIFFFG's Film Circuit, and so this may limit access to the TIFFFG.

It is imperative to have a website that acts as an information portal, and is an initial point of contact for potential customers. Using an electronic (or other) distribution list is also recommended, especially with a membership-based model. It is important to explore electronic mediums (such as Facebook) for promotional purposes, as these are powerful, yet inexpensive, tools. Promotion is extra important during start-up, and the way promotion is undertaken depends in part on the targeted audience. Exploring options on how to use pricing and programming for promotion is also a good idea.

Audience

Of the sixteen theatres included in our research, only three reported having done market research as a start-up aid. Each city is made up of individual markets and cultures specific to that locale and this influences the development and success of its businesses. Market research appears to be an informal process for many of these theatres; owners and managers perceive current cultural and community needs in the local cinema industry and act accordingly. Understanding and working with the Halifax community is just as important to making Paradise a successful business as understanding the film industry as a whole.

Many of the theatres utilize social networking and other informal communication processes, including Facebook, blogs and forums, in order to keep connected to their audience.

Membership in independent theatres range between two extremes: exclusive, with expensive, tax-deductible membership costs, private showings and other benefits, and inclusive, with low membership costs that benefit those who frequent the theatre on a regular basis by providing them with discounts. These membership programs are typically related to ticket prices, but are not a main revenue-generator for theatres.

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Appendices

Joint Project Agreement (JPA)

MGMT 5000X/Y: Interdisciplinary Group Assignment Project Proposal

<p>Project Title: New Directions – Supporting the Board and Membership of Paradise Sisters Cinema Society in a Period of Transition</p> <p>Organization: Paradise Sisters Cinema Society Website: http://www.paradisetheatre.ca/</p>
<p>Contacts:</p> <p>Emanuel Jannasch: Primary contact, but MWB meets and has documents reviewed by a six person board.</p> <p>paradise-board@mercury.bonmot.ca</p>
<p>Background: The Paradise Sisters Cinema, formed in 2002, finds itself at a key juncture. A newly instituted Board needs to present an informed recommendation on the Society's future to the membership body within six months. This recommendation will inform the membership of their options considering a full range of possibilities: from moving in a new direction to the complete dissolution of the Society and the redistribution of its assets to another film-related organization. The Board will consider a range of options for showing movies, and is not limited to the idea of owning/operating a permanent theatre location.</p>
<p>Purpose: To facilitate the informed recommendation of the new Board to its membership.</p>
<p>Scope: (including linkages with a "sustainable Nova Scotia")</p> <p>The MWB team will support Paradise Sisters in assimilating past research, understanding stakeholder interests, and researching current market trends and forces so that the Board has relevant and expansive material upon which to base its recommendation.</p>

(iii)

Project Description: (Break down project into basic steps – details can be described in the workplan)

1. Assimilating the research and experience of the society to date, including past work in fundraising and space-seeking
2. Researching current market models and trends.

Contribution to Student Learning Objectives: This project aims to contribute to the following MWB learning objectives, in a broad sense:

1. Gain practical skills relating to leadership, team-building, negotiation and project management.
2. Understand the need to engage with varied communities to address common objectives, incorporate diversity and deal with complex issues.

More specifically:

Learning Objective #1 - The current project will aid students in understanding how independent, grass-roots organizations are developing plans for sustainability in an increasingly complex economic and cultural framework. Of particular interest in this project is the issue of communications and media technologies and their impact on businesses.

Learning Objective #2 – The current project will aid students in understanding the impact of organizational history, and how difficulties raised by such impacts are navigated during the course of future decision-making. As such, the Paradise Sisters Cinema presents the students with the opportunity to experience first-hand the challenges and opportunities provided by rapid changes within an organization. In addition, the project requires research and knowledge development in multiple sectors, developing the students' ability to think beyond the confines of their discipline to find solutions. Finally, this project offers students the ability to experience the ways that one organization is challenging public/private sector divisions, and traditional notions of a bottom line.

Deliverables:

Report 1 - "History of the Paradise Sisters' Cinema Society: What options have already been explored and why were they determined to be unfeasible?"

Report 2 - "Surveying the Landscape: Successful Repertory Cinema Models" (including a quick-comparison chart)

Report 3 - "The Cinema Market and Halifax – Supporting Paradise Cinema in planning market research"

(iv)

How results will be used:

To help the Paradise Sisters' Cinema Society understand its history, environment, and stakeholders so that it is able to make an informed recommendation on the future of the organization.

MWB Privacy Policies

Privacy Policies

1. Binding the MWB team to the confidentiality of information that was (1) provided by Paradise Sisters, or (2) otherwise acquired during the course of the Project. Note that this agreement protects information that is detrimental to the Organization's interests, not all information.
2. Informing interviewees of how their information may be used in connection with the Project.

(vi)

I, _____ of _____
(name) (address)

in the Province of Nova Scotia, agree that my involvement with the Paradise Sisters Cinema Society (“the Organization”) shall be strictly on the following terms and conditions:

1. I acknowledge that I have been advised by the Organization that all information and documents that I may have knowledge of or access to through my involvement with the Organization, that are detrimental to the Organization’s interests, are strictly confidential.
2. I agree at all times to treat as confidential all information acquired through my involvement with the Organization, that is detrimental to the Organization’s interests, and not to disclose same **except as authorized** by the Organization or by law. This means that I will not discuss such information with any party, nor will I participate in or permit the release, publication or disclosure of such information, nor will I copy, distribute, or disseminate such information, **except as authorized** by the Organization or by law.
3. For greater certainty, the confidentiality obligation outlined in clause (2) shall **not** apply to:
 - (a) information which is, or later becomes, legally obtainable from other non-confidential sources; and
 - (b) information of which the undersigned knew prior to involvement with the Organization, evidenced by written records.
4. I agree to be bound by the provisions of this Agreement and will **continue to be so bound** following the completion of my involvement with the Organization.

SIGNED at _____, Nova Scotia, this _____ day
of _____, 20_____.

Signature

Witness

(vii)

I, _____, a person engaging in research and development, as consultant to, or in collaboration with, the Paradise Sisters Cinema Society (the “Organization”), intend to use the information provided by you (the “Information”), _____, the Interviewee, on the following understandings, terms and conditions:

1. The Information will only be used for research and development purposes. The scope of such research and development is on the viability of the Organization establishing a repertory cinema in the Halifax Regional Municipality, and the purposes for which the Information is used will **not fall outside this scope**.
2. Summaries, analyses and interpretations of the Information may be derived and disseminated by persons involved in the aforementioned research and development.
3. The Information may be displayed to others or published, solely for the purpose of the aforementioned research and development. Any conditions of publication required by you, the Interviewee, written in the space below, will be duly followed.

Conditions for Publication

<p>Signature of Interviewee: _____</p>
--

4. Reasonable efforts will be made not to infringe the rights of any third party. No liability for any such infringement will flow to the undersigned, or to the Organization, unless it can be demonstrated that reasonable efforts were **not** made to protect the infringed rights.
5. Upon the reasonable request of you, the Interviewee, or any person acting on your behalf, or any third party, to remove the publication of the Information, or any part thereof, such removal will be undertaken within thirty (30) days of receiving such request.

(viii)

SIGNED at _____, Nova Scotia, this _____ day
of _____, 20_____.

Signature

Witness

Cinema Questionnaire

Getting Started

How did your cinema get started?

What is your incorporation model? Sole proprietorship? Non-profit society? For profit co-op? Non-profit co-op? Limited co.? Other?

Would you incorporate the same way if starting up today? Why or why not?

Logistics

Where do you show your films?

How many seats do you have?

How many seats are typically filled?

If you own your building, how did you get funding?

If you rent, do you pay commercial market rates?

Do you share space with any other organizations or groups?

What positions in your cinema are volunteer? Who is paid?

Audience

What do you think your audience demographics are?

What kind of market research did you do before opening?

Do you do any ongoing market research?

Do you have a membership-based patronage?

If so, how large is your membership?

How much are membership dues, and what do members receive in exchange for their dues?

Programming

How often do you show films?

How often does the film you are showing change?

Do you use a booking agency?

What is your programming process?

What form(s) of projection do you use? (35 mm, 16 mm, Digital, or other?)

If you use digital, what format is it? DVD? Other?

How do you promote your films?

Concessions

Do you have a concession stand?

How do you manage the concessions?

Is it run by your organization or through an outside partnership?

If it is run by someone else, do you get proceeds?

Is it licensed?

What are its hours?

(x)

Funding

Can you estimate the percentage of your revenues that comes from:

Ticket sales?

Concessions?

Grants?

Memberships?

Other (please specify)?

How do you feel about the future of repertory cinema?

What is your main piece of advice for us?

Is there anything else you would like to share with us?

Cinema Narratives

Acadia Cinema Cooperative and Fundy Film Society

Wolfville, Nova Scotia
www.acadiacinemacoop.ca
info@acadiacinemacoop.ca
902.542.5157

Getting Started

The Acadia Cinema (ACC) was a fixture in Wolfville for many years, but when the manager of 48 years retired in 2000, the cinema closed. The Fundy Film Society (FFS) formed in 2001, and began showing films in rented space at Empire Theatres in New Minas. When the Acadia Cinema came on the market, the Acadia Cinema Cooperative Ltd. was created and incorporated to purchase and renovate the building. FFS became the "anchor tenant" for the theatre (Acadia Cinema Cooperative, 2009). The ACC is set up as a non-profit community owned co-op, and joint owner/management of property. The FFS is a non-profit registered society. Both groups would incorporate the same way today if they were just starting out.

Logistics

FFS screens films at Acadia Cinema's Al Whittle Theatre. The ACC owns the building along with Just Us! Coffee Roaster Coop, which has a café in the theatre's original lobby. The café was planned as a result of early screenings at Empire Theatres and the frustration of having nowhere to gather to discuss the films. The theatre has 160 seats. During a recent Wednesday night screening of "In the Storm", 136 seats were filled, but other screenings have had as few as 12 attendees. The ACC averages approximate 100 seats per event. The FFS pays rent to the ACC at commercial market rates. The Al Whittle theatre is used for multiple types of live performance and community event alongside a yearlong schedule of FFS showings.

All positions connected with running the FFS and programs are volunteer. Rent pays for the ACC projectionist/house manager. The ACC had a paid manager for two years; however, in 2006 the manager became a volunteer. ACC are in the process of recruiting for a new paid manager. ACC also contracts staff such as house managers, technicians, and projectionists. Volunteers clean the ACC areas, and once a week young adults from the Flower Cart's "Transition to Work program" and their supervisor clean the theatre.

Audience

FFS films and Al Whittle Theatre events bring in audience members from all demographics and backgrounds. Arts lovers come from Kings, Hants, Annapolis, Lunenburg, and HRM. No market research was done before opening, and while students from Acadia have used the ACC as project for a marketing course, the results were not substantially utilized by the organizations.

FFS sells memberships for \$10 per year. For this price members can serve on the Board and Executive and can help choose films. People who volunteer at the door receive free entry to films, but this does not require membership. The FFS has 18 members and 5 volunteers.

The ACC sells shares at \$100 each. Each shareholder is an equal member in the cooperative and provides the "satisfaction of having invested in the cultural life of the community." According to S.Haur, "being an "owner" who has helped make [the] facility what it is" (S. Hauer, personal communication, January 11, 2009). The ACC membership is made up of a board of nine, and 650 shareholders.

General admission tickets are \$8, or pre-paid six packs of tickets are available for \$36.

Programming

FFS shows films three days per week. In one week there will be three screening of the same film ("Main series"); the second week there will be three screening of two different films: (two from the "On the Edge" series, one for the "Documentary" series). Additional information about these series are available via the website. A current calendar can be found here. FFS uses a booking agency: The Toronto International Film Festival Group also maintains partnerships with NFB films and regional filmmakers, among others.

Films are currently projected using 35mm. They will soon have a 12,000 lumen digital cinema projector (DCI compliant). ACC has used a lower power digital projector (reluctantly) for some screenings. Very soon, the Al Whittle Theatre will soon be capable of using all forms of digital including Blu-Ray, HD Cam, DigiBeta, etc. According to S.Haur, "[Their] tests suggest that the digital community find Blu-Ray perfectly acceptable as a distribution format (and far more affordable than HD cam etc but [they] need to get the distributors committed to this model. [FFS] have had one screening using a Digiscreen server and that will be an affordable distribution model. Once studios start doing digital releases [they] will make every effort to accommodate this distribution format" (S. Hauer, personal communication, January 11, 2009).

Films are promoted in the following ways:

- Announcements at every film and community/café society/word-of-mouth
- FFS and Al Whittle Theatre web sites
- Community-based web calendars
- FFS seasonal posters, brochures and bookmarks
- On-Acadia campus display and brochure out-let
- Film posters in the theatre window and café/theatre lobby
- The marquee reader board
- A Theatre window calendar
- Free Public Service Announcements (radio, cable, print event listings)
- Free internet announcements

- One ad every two weeks in a very popular community cultural newspaper (more to support the publication than to advertise FFS)

The only money spent for promotion (other than this ad and printing costs) has been an ad to support the Atlantic Film Festival in their catalogue annual (two years) - The organization reports that funded promotions activities bring little gain to the theatre.

Concessions

There is no concession stand, however drinks and snacks are available at the Just Us Café. The theatre is occasionally licensed. The café is open 7 - 11, Monday - Saturday and 9:00 - 10:30 Sunday.

Funding

FSS revenues:

- Ticket sales: 100%
- Memberships: Between \$120-\$180 per year in membership dues.

ACC

- Grants: 15% operating, plus one-off grants for capital
- Memberships: New shares are purchased during Share Sales at specific times each year (about \$280,000 since 2003).
- Other: ACC has received projector fund donations from several community groups also, including the Wolfville Business Development Agency (WBDC), local businesses, service groups, and the retired Acadia professors' group, among others. Between share purchase designated for the projector, community donations and Town and Provincial grants, they have raised \$58,800 for their projector. The ACC applied for and received an ACOA SCIFF grant in 2004 for theatre renovations (\$316,500). While the Cinema originally had no support from the municipality or province, the town of Wolfville eventually gave the ACC a residential (instead of commercial) tax rate, two \$5000 facilities grants, and a contribution of \$20,000 to the digital cinema projector fund. The Province of Nova Scotia has contributed \$10,000 to the digital cinema projector fund, as well as an \$8000 operations grant.

Insights

When asked their opinion of the future of repertory cinema, FFS replied, "FFS face challenges but is always moving to meet them. A quality digital cinema projector will bust open opportunities" (S. Hauer, January 11, 2009). Haur's advice for Paradise Cinema is to use the name Wormwood II to attract more support, rather than creating a whole new entity/name. They make this recommendation based on their experiences with the advantages of being associated with the Acadia Cinema/ Al Whittle history.

Brattle Theatre

Cambridge, MA
www.brattlefilm.org
617.876.6837

Getting Started

The non-profit Brattle Film Foundation has operated the Brattle Theatre since 2001. The theatre itself has a long, involved history in Cambridge, Massachusetts and can be traced back to its inception in 1871. The website has various resources on the history, including a timeline: <http://www.brattlefilm.org/brattlefilm/timeline.html> well as an article written in 1990 detailing the first 100 years of Brattle: <http://www.brattlefilm.org/brattlefilm/first100.html>.

Due to the historical status of the Brattle Theatre as a local landmark, it is difficult to define a "getting started" schema. Over the years it has gone through many changes, including moving from a stage format to a screen, as well as developing the new Brattle Film Foundation. As the Engstrom article states about the vision of the Brattle: "a century ago its Victorian founders envisioned a multifarious cultural center, combining theatre, lectures and meetings. In a curious way, even through its incarnations over the years as a legitimate theatre and a haven for art-repertory cinema, the Brattle Theatre's connection to these early goals has stayed remarkably close" (Engstrom, 1990). The Brattle supports the education of students interested in films and other arts related fields through their internship program. It rents the theatre out to the community and outreaches to the community through advertisements and online connections such as MySpace, Facebook, and Google/Apple online calendars (Brattle theatre, n.d.).

Logistics

The Brattle Theatre has 235 seats and has been showing movies since 1953 and much of the work done at the Brattle is volunteer or internship based (Brattle Theatre, n.d.)

Volunteers pass out flyers on the street, usher and deal with concessions in return for free passes.

The website defines intern responsibilities as the following:

- Design- Design for flyers, t-shirts, website, and other collateral
- Development/Fundraising - Research grants, write sections of grants, track submissions and replies, contact potential funders for information on their grant-making processes.
- PR/Marketing - Supervise and coordinate marketing efforts related to programming, including grassroots marketing, press communications, flyer design, information distribution, creation of press materials.
- Special Events/Guests - Assist Associate Director with special events at the theatre. Responsibilities include online research for partnerships, funders, and marketing, solicitation of guest attendance at events.

- Sponsorship - Online research and phone inquiries to potential sponsors of film series or the organization as a whole, manage mailings and follow up with potential sponsors (Brattle Theatre, n.d.)

Audience

The Brattle Film Foundation is working toward a time when innovative and essential works of cinema are respected, viewed, and preserved alongside other great works of art. The Foundation is committed to providing audiences access to quality and diverse film presentation, education, and information, in theatres and on-line (Brattle, n.d.).

Programming

As the Brattle Theatre website states: "We show classic, cutting-edge, foreign, and art-house films. We also show first-run films and new releases of classic films, but our specialty is a repertory programming format consisting of films from a particular director, genre, or subject shown over the course of a week, or on the same weekday throughout the month" (Brattle Theatre, n.d.).

Funding

The Brattle Theatre obtains funding through grants, donations, membership, and other contributions from individuals, sponsors and foundations. It also rents the theatre space and holds special screening. It also sells advertising space both in print and on the screen as well as gifts and merchandise. The Brattle has a \$4,600 grant from Massachusetts Cultural Council. At least half of their budget comes from donations, membership, and other contributions from individuals, sponsors and foundations (Brattle theatre, n.d.)

Ticket prices range from \$6.50 to \$9.50. Membership fees range from \$75 to \$500, the latter being tax deductible (Brattle Theatre, n.d.).

All memberships are valid for one year and include:

- Coupon For One Large Popcorn & Two Regular Drinks
- Discounts At Local Stores & Restaurants (updated 5/2008)
- 25% Discount On Brattle Merchandise
- Calendar Subscription by First-Class Mail:

Regular Membership \$75

- 12 Free Passes (Save \$39 off Regular Admission Price to 12 Films)
- \$1.50 Admission discount once you've used all your passes
- Dual/Couple Membership \$140
- 24 Free Passes (Save \$88 off Regular Admission Price for Two to 12 Films)
- \$1.50 Admission discount once you've used all your passes

Special Membership \$125

- 20 Free Passes (Save \$65 off Regular Admission Price to 20 Films)
- \$1.50 Admission discount once you've used all your passes
- One Free Brattle T-Shirt
- One Entry in Annual Guaranteed Request Raffle
- Invitations to Select Special Events

Usher Membership \$300

- Unlimited Free Admission for One to All Regular Brattle Screenings
- One Free Brattle T-Shirt
- One Entry in Annual Guaranteed Request Raffle
- Invitations to Select Special Events
- Listing on Donor Roster
- Tax-Deductible up to \$255

Producer Membership \$500

- Unlimited Free Admission for Two to All Regular Brattle Screenings
- One Free Brattle T-Shirt
- One Entry in Annual Guaranteed Request Raffle
- Invitations to Select Special Events
- Listing on Donor Roster
- Tax-Deductible up to \$410

Broadway Cinema

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
www.broadway-cinema.com
film@broadwaytheatre.ca
306.652.6556

Getting Started

Built in 1946, the Broadway theatre underwent a number of manifestations as a cinema before being forced to close in 1993, inspiring national media coverage. The community responded with a campaign to purchase the theater. Several public meetings led to the formation of the "Friends of the Broadway Theatre, Inc." By the end of October 1993, 4500 people had purchased membership cards although there was no guarantee that the theatre would reopen (K.Wirchenko, Personal Communication, January 19, 2009).

Logistics

Films are run at 7 and 9 p.m. 250 nights a year, but ticket sales from these shows do not make up the bulk of Broadway's operating budget. Though representing nearly 70% of the nights that the Broadway is open, film will bring in less than 50% of the revenue. Comparitively, 70 nights of music and 40 of live theatre will bring in more than a third of the revenue. Broadway prides itself on being the only local venue to combine music, theatre and film, and sees this unique combination as a central part of the theatre's identity. There are 17 staff in total, including concession staff and two projectionists. Core staff are Kirby Wirchenko, the Office Administrator, and one Box Office staff member. Kirby is the only full time employee, who is paid for 40 hours a week but estimates that he works more than 60 (K. Wirchenko, Personal Communication, January 19, 2009). The rest of the core staff work 25-30 hours weekly. While there is still a small morgage on the theatre, Broadway is less than six figures in debt. While volunteers are used for fundraising events, calendar distribution, selling of merchandise, ticket taking and postering, they are largely underutilized. The problem, notes Kirby, is that where you get a large volunteer base, you need a really good volunteer coordinator (K. Wirchenko, Personal Communication, January 19, 2009). Kirby notes that there is a lot of interest from young people in volunteering, and sees potential for Broadway to make more and better use of volunteers in the future.

The affairs of the Broadway Theatre are maintained by the "Friends of the Broadway Theatre, Inc." (1993). On the Broadway theatre website, this organization is described as a non-profit charity, based in the local community. The Friends of Broadway Theatre, Inc. have a vision to preserve and renovate a historical theatre, and a mission to, "serve the arts and entertainment interests of the public by offering film and live performance in a community-owned and operated heritage building" There is also an emphasis on the respect of diversity and cultural awareness. Not only does the Broadway emphasize its status as a historical building, it also strives to be a "multi-faceted community centre," "support the Canadian film industry by

screening quality independent Canadian film," and provide locals with a venue for live performances by local, regional, and international artists, "who would not otherwise come to the community, who are emerging, or who prefer an intimate atmosphere." (Behind the Scenes, 2008). Kirby feels that the theatres unique blend of programming and the support of the community are essential in the Broadway's continued success (K. Wirchenko, Personal Communication, January 19, 2009).

Audience

Membership has dropped from the initial year (4500) to 1300-1800 annually. Membership costs \$20/yr and reduces the price of tickets by nearly half (\$6.50 instead of \$10). Members also get one free movie admission and two tickets that give admission at two-for-one. Kirby notes that because of this price drop, the most significant thing that the membership contributes to revenue is a commitment to see films regularly. The audience for the venue is diverse, but live events are better attended than cinema screenings (K. Wirchenko, Personal Communication, January 19, 2009).

Last year, film attendance was significantly down, averaging 15 people a screening. Currently, average attendance is 20 people a show. While this makes for an empty theater, it is not as apocalyptic as it might seem. Bulk ticket sales, according to Kirby Wirchenko, are less significant than continued patronage (K. Wirchenko, Personal Communication, January 19, 2009). With its current operating budget, a regular attendance level of 30 would sustain the Broadway Theater.

The most popular film night every year is probably the "Rocky Horror Picture Show." For Kirby this attests to the significance of events and atmosphere for improving theatre attendance. The prohibitive costs of market research prevents Broadway Theatre from conducting regular studies. A group from the University of Saskatoon did complete a membership assessment for Broadway last year. A copy of that report is available on the wiki.

Programming

Broadway shows a mixture of Independent, repertory film, foreign and domestic film and does not use a booking agent - Kirby Wirchenko goes to film festivals and contacts distributors personally (K. Wirchenko, Personal Communication, January 19, 2009). Wirchenko confirms that once a programmer starts contacting distributors, he or she is "in the loop" and will receive catalogues from distributors. Much of the programming process can be completed online, and prices vary depending upon the size of the city and the venue, and the amount of times a film will be shown (K. Wirchenko, Personal Communication, January 19, 2009). Kirby Wirchenko believes that Halifax is a similar city to Saskatoon, and will face similar costs and restraints. Films cost a minimum of \$150-200 or a % of the house take (whatever is greater). Getting a film for a private event changes the cost of acquiring a film because these are often flat rate films. Older films are also often offered at a flat rate. Shipping is always paid for by the cinema, and it can be expensive (K. Wirchenko, Personal Communication, January 19, 2009).

Concessions

Concessions are essential for the Broadway's operating budget. Concessions are open on regular film nights from 6:30-9:30p.m. Live events are particularly lucrative for concessions. Broadway charges \$8,250 for renting the theater, and makes a small fee on ticket sales. On a good night, the concessions will take in more than all other income from the event. Private events are licensed, but Kirby Wirchenko is pessimistic about the logistics of regularly licensed concessions. He calls it a "nightmare" to try to license for regular film showings, comparing it to the difficulties of trying to arrange an all ages show (K. Wirchenko, Personal Communication, January 19, 2009).

Funding

According to Kirby, Broadway's charitable status has played an essential role in its continued success. In combination with community support, charitable status helped Broadway earn a tax abatement from the city that accounts for \$20,000/year. While some funding comes for grants, Kirby notes that project funding is easier to get than operational funds. While 10% of the current budget comes from operating grants, Kirby thinks it is dangerous to count on more than 5% of your annual operating budget coming from these types of sources . A recent Federal Cultural Spaces grant has helped the theater recently complete a significant renovation. While the Broadway gets grants from the Federal and Provincial government, Kirby has not felt that the terms of these grants have impinged upon his programming process (K. Wirchenko, Personal Communication, January 19, 2009). The organization also runs fundraising events (at least one) annually. Data about the logistics of these events and their contribution to the overall operating budget was unavailable.

Insights (K. Wirchenko, Personal Communication, January 19, 2009).

- While it is possible to generate a lot of excitement about a cause, it is harder to sustain that interest once the project has started.
- There are times when you will lose money on film. Film cannot be the cornerstone of a new operation.
- The non-profit sector is a great place to find contacts and develop. However, non-profits have a tendency to forget about business plans.
- There is still a lot of potential for repertory cinemas, but cinemas must give patrons something different to bring them out of their homes.
- Moving around projection equipment produces a lot of wear and tear.
- Broadway's location in a "boutique store" area of Saskatoon is essential to its success. Cinemas must be integrated into various lifestyles and must offer an experience that cannot be replicated by home theatres.
- It is very difficult to find consolidated information about cinemas. It will probably always feel as though you are jumping in to the milieu.
- Digital is coming fast.
- Mixed programming is key.
- Being non-profit means lower rental rates.

ByTowne Cinema

Ottawa, Ontario
www.bytowne.ca
cinemail@bytowne.ca
613.789.4600

Getting Started

Sole owner Bruce White has been running a cinema for over thirty years. His original "Towne Cinema" opened in Beechwood Avenue in 1973. Bruce White moved to his current location in 1988. The building itself has been a theater since it opened as "The Nelson" in 1947. Famous Players operated the location for a number of years before selling it to Bruce to follow the multiplex model. During the move, White renamed the Theater the "ByTowne" after Ottawa's founder, Colonel John By (History of the Theatre). Bruce White purchased the building using private mortgage financing, with a down payment raised by selling 'shares' to cinema enthusiasts (B. White, Personal Communication, January 21, 2009). The ByTowne is a limited corporation, a model that White says he would choose again if starting over because this model protects his assets, "in the unlikely event of an emergency over money" (B. White, Personal Communication, January 21, 2009).

Logistics

The 670-seat theatre with one screen and balcony seating (S.K. Ma, 2009) averages 3000 moviegoers a week. That said, Bruce White indicates that attendance is often unpredictable, citing 1% - 102% capacity as the potential range. Furthermore, he notes that "'typical' is not a word that is used often in the movie business" (B. White, Personal Communication, January 21, 2009). The cinema has 3 full time staff and, at any given time, about 15 people working part time.

Audience

The ByTowne conducts no market research, but has a popular membership program. For 10\$, patrons receive a year long membership, which entitles to members to significantly discounted movie tickets (\$6 instead of \$9 regular admission). Members also receive a mailing list subscription to the bi-monthly ByTowne Guide (hard copy). Memberships can be purchased via mail through the website for \$11.

Programming

Bruce reads, researches, and visits screeners and film festivals to determine which films are of interest. Distributors participate in the process by sending him literature about possible films. Programming takes place about two months in advance, without a booking agency, and involves negotiations with distributors. In his own words, this two month program of desired films is, "imagined, modified, requested, modified, negotiated, modified, compromised,

modified, finalized and modified" (B. White, Personal Communication, January 21, 2009). There are two to four movie showings, seven days a week. A current calendar of movies is available here.

Almost all of the films shown at ByTowne are on 35mm, with one event per year in 16mm. Occasionally Bytowne rents a digital projector, and uses DVDs. The ByTowne promotes heavily using a program schedule (The ByTowne Guide). ByTowne circulates 60,000 copies to 200 locations. The website is considered by Bruce to be an important tool. It should be noted that although functional, the website does not have a particularly contemporary design or appearance. On the website, visitors can sign up for a weekly e-mail reminder newsletter. Bruce reports that there are 3,000 subscribers to this service.

Concessions

The ByTowne runs concessions in house. The concessions are unlicensed, and run from a half hour before the first show of the day until 45 minutes after the final show of the day.

Funding

Bruce estimates that revenues come from the following sources:

- Ticket Sales - 70%
- Concessions - 15%
- Memberships - 10%
- Advertising Sales in the program guide - 5%

Insights

Kirby Wirchenko, head of the Broadway theater in Saskatchewan, calls the ByTowne the model for private independent theater success in Canada. With a reputation and patronage that has developed over time, the Broadway can attract first run shows over major movie theater chains. While interviewing Bruce White for this report, he had the following insights to share:

On the Future of Independent Cinema:

"Independent cinemas can with good management and a bit of luck, maintain attendance levels of the past, but it is highly unlikely that attendance for specialty films in any given market will increase. A slow but certain erosion of the market due to dvd, cable tv, piracy and the short attention span of an increasingly lazy public cannot, in my opinion, be easily reversed" (B. White, Personal Communication, January 21, 2009).

On the term "Repertory Cinema":

"I recommend that you drop the word 'repertory' from your vocabulary. To audiences, it conjures up notions of 'used' goods, low prices and compromised viewing conditions. "Independent Cinema" is an umbrella term which covers more programming -- new films as

well as old -- and appeals to the anti-fast-food, anti-corporate-culture, anti-chain-everything person who is very likely to be one of your most frequent and loyal customers. It also liberates you to charge as much as the chain cinemas, because "independent" is not as quickly associated with "bargain" as the term "repertory". Because the ByTowne started out as a rep cinema and slowly evolved to showing a high percentage of new indie product, people somehow still expect us to be less expensive than the other cinemas. But that's a paradox: which other industry offers imported, exotic and exclusive products for less than the common garden-variety domestic stuff? A new operation like yours has an opportunity to start itself off with a 'boutique' image" (B. White, Personal Communication, January 21, 2009).

On Sharing Space:

"In a smaller market like Halifax, consider using the auditorium for as many other events as possible, especially on week nights. Movie attendance is heavily skewed to the convenience of Friday & Saturday nights, so a concert by a touring singer/songwriter or a three-night stand of a one-person play during the week does little harm to the film programming, while creating happy, enthusiastic traffic through your building. Ottawa is a large enough city that the ByTowne does not need to dabble outside its specialty, but many smaller-market cinemas have had good success at becoming an "alternative arts centre" as a sideline to the core cinema business" (B. White, Personal Communication, January 21, 2009).

In Conclusion:

"Do this for love, not money. A group that does it for the love of cinema can tap into resources like volunteer labour that a private for-profit enterprise cannot. If you can motivate a core group of cinephiles to help the operation in ways that reduce your operating costs, the pressure on attendance revenue will be eased" (B. White, Personal Communication, January 21, 2009).

Bytowne's complete responses can be found in the "Completed Questionnaires" folder on the Paradise Sisters Cinema Society Wiki.

Cameo Cinema

Kingston, Ontario

www.cameocinema.allcapslock.com

Wendy.Huot@gmail.com

613.547.2894

Getting Started

Wendy's "Cameo Cinema" began out of a desire to see good films with friends and has organically developed into a monthly screening held at ModernFuel Art Space, a building owned by a non-profit organization with a mandate to promote art and artists (W. Huot, Personal Communication, January 20, 2008).

Logistics

Cameo cinema is less a traditional cinema, and more a cinema club. The concept is to have a different person presenting a different film once monthly. Screenings are free and open to the public. Wendy Huot, the coordinator of these events, refers to these people as "curators" (W.Huot, Personal Communication, January 20, 2008). The person curating the event will introduce the film and speak briefly about its meaning. The content of these introductions vary widely, but Wendy Huot considers it less an exercise in academies, and more a subjective expression of meaning. The person presenting brings a DVD, there is a pull down screen and folding chairs available at the space, and she borrows digital projectors from about three different sources, always free. Normally ArtFuel costs about 50\$ a night to rent, but Wendy can borrow the space for free due to personal connections.

After a person shows interest in presenting a film, Wendy will meet with him or her a few times to determine areas of interest in the film. When the person is artistically inclined, he or she will make the poster, otherwise Wendy makes the poster. The poster is then photocopied and some are placed in public areas. While Wendy Huot feels this may bring in the occasional person, she maintains that the contacts brought in by curators are most significant for promotion (W. Huot, Personal Communication, January 20, 2008).

Very little revenue runs through the project, outside of \$100 dollars Wendy once collected by passing a hat at several showing to purchase a popcorn machine and supplies so that Huot can offer free popcorn at the showings (W. Huot, Personal Communication, January 20, 2008).

Audience

Cameo Cinema showings draw in about 20-30 people consistently (W. Huot. Personal Communication, January 20, 2008). There is a core audience of community members, but a strong showing from Queen's University students, indicating a younger crowd. Many Queen's Film Students attend the showings, and there have been guest directors who have hosted showings through the Cinema group. However, Wendy Huot notes that each different curator

brings different personal contacts and that films shown in partnership with local organizations with draw different crowds. People who enjoy the format will often return for another show. Wendy Huot feels that this develops the cinema's audience by diversifying the crowd (W. Huot, Personal Communication, January 20, 2008).

Programming

Wendy does not purchase public viewing licenses for DVDs, or follow any established programming process. She is approached by people with an interest in viewing a certain film of significance to them. She has never had to solicit people for this purpose, and interested parties follow no established application process to show a film (W.Huot, Personal Communication, January 20, 2008).

Concessions

Outside of the free popcorn given out at events, Wendy Huot runs no concessions.

Funding

Very little revenue runs through the Cameo Cinema, although the club benefits from its partnerships with other community organizations, who may receive public funding.

Insights

"Curators" have all been people that Wendy Huot has some kind of minor social connection with. The group seems to have developed organically, indicating a vibrant community interest in quality film screenings. Wendy's major advice is to involve as many people as possible in selecting and presenting films. They bring their friends, and people who like the atmosphere come back again.

Wendy Huot suggests that there are a number of less formal organizations like hers in Toronto. She suggests that many have found ways of creatively circumventing prohibitive programming fees. She also notes that some libraries buy public viewing privileges for their DVDs (W. Huot, Personal Communication, January 20, 2008).

Wendy Huot's partnerships with community partners is symbiotic. For example, Huot will occasionally show a film that coordinates with an art showing at ModernFuel. In her partnered showings with other groups, the films are often of interest to the partnering group. For example, the next showing is being held in partnership with the Museum of Health Care, at the Museum of Health Care, and the topic is nurses in film (Cameo Cinema, 2009)

Wendy Huot advises looking into Film Circuit, an independent, non-profit Canadian film distributor that is a division of the Toronto Film Festival, and ships films to various groups trying to promote independent film exhibition. AFSCOOP is the local partner of this organization in Halifax (W. Huot, Personal Communication, January 20, 2008).

Facebook plays a major role in maintaining this young and diverse cinema group. It is the central avenue, outside of word-of-mouth, in promoting the theatre. The Facebook group is open; anybody can join or invite others to join. It can be accessed here and viewed by anyone with a Facebook account.

Cinema du Parc

Montreal, Quebec
www.cinemaduparc.com
info@cinemaduparc.com
514.281.1900

Getting Started

Cinema du Parc was founded by Roland Smith, who has had a long career in the film exhibition industry. Smith is credited with starting the repertory cinema model in Montreal and bringing it to other areas of Quebec. He eventually became the director General of "Famous Players Cinemas" for Quebec before becoming active in the video sales and rental market. He also has experiences with cinema festivals. In the end, Smith returned to become the program director of Cinema du Parc (Cinema du Parc, n.d.).

Logistics

The cinema schedule of films indicates three operating screens. Cinema Du Parc is located in downtown Montreal and advertised on its website as the only cinema in downtown Montreal with free parking (Cinema du Parc, n.d.).

Audience

The cinema offers two membership cards for its clients. They are both valid for a year. One offers 8 regular programming films and two sneak previews for \$48, while the other offers 5 regular programming films for \$25 (Cinema du Parc, n.d.).

Programming

Most of their promotion for their films is done from the website, with showtimes listed on the home page. There is also a link for upcoming films (Cinema du Parc, n.d.).

The website offers a weekly e-mail newsletter, and allows for online ticket purchases (Cinema du Parc, n.d.).

There is a PDF calendar which lists the events for the week, includes ticket prices and synopses of films currently showing, and emphasizes free parking (Cinema du Parc, n.d.).

Most films currently showing are English language films - The weekend of January 31 - February 1st, they are showing Milk, The Wrestler, Slumdog Millionaire, and The Curious Case of Benjamin Button (Cinema du Parc, n.d.). This indicates strong attention to both mainstream films, and successful "indie" programming.

Film Brockville

Brockville, Ontario
www.filmbrockville.ca
filmbrockville@yahoo.ca

Getting Started

Film Brockville began as a small group of people who knew each other: "two of us were formerly in another film group [. . .] we began to organize our ideas and thoughts and put a plan into action" (D. Chisamore, personal communication, January 12, 2009). Film Brockville is currently a non-profit group operating under the umbrella of the Toronto International Film Festival Group (TIFFG).

Logistics

Film Brockville shows its films at the local Cineplex theatre (which houses 6 screens). Film Brockville rents the largest screening room (300+ seats) from Cineplex in order to show its films, and typically about 110 seats on average are sold. However, depending on what films are being screened, this number is exceeded (for example, "The Duchess" typically fills more seats than the average 110). Tickets are sold for \$8.00 each (although in the past they have been sold for \$9.25) (refer to the website: <http://www.filmbrockville.ca/films.html>). This rate is consistent no matter what film is being screened.

Film Brockville does not own its own building, but rather pays rental fees to Cineplex Odeon. It is not known whether the rental rate represents the market rate in the area (likely because no other organizations have a similar relationship in Brockville). The space, for the times allotted to Film Brockville, is not shared with any other organizations.

All Film Brockville members are volunteers.

Audience

The main audience demographic is above 40, with the bulk of membership in their 50s and 60s. Few young people attend. No market research was done to determine the viability of a repertory cinema in Brockville, rather, there was a leap of faith and an instinctual feeling that people wanted to see the types of films that Film Brockville screens (D. Chisamore, personal communication, January 12, 2009). There is no ongoing market research.

As for membership, Film Brockville tried a membership-based ticket system but it was determined that not enough season passes were sold. No information regarding the size of Film Brockville's membership.

Film Brockville volunteers pay no fees, other than paying for the viewing of the films.

Programming

Film Brockville screens every second and fourth Wednesday from September to November, and then from January to May (as detailed on the website). This is because Cineplex imposes a black-out in December, and during the summer months. Thus, screenings are bi-weekly for 8 months during the year. This is equal to approximately 16 screenings per year. Each screening is only run once.

All films are sourced through the Toronto International Film Festival Group, and Film Brockville receives regular catalogues to use for selecting/ordering films from the TIFFG. These TIFFG films come on large reels in the default format currently used by cinemas in Ontario. There is no sign of digital films in theatres. Thus, the projection characteristics are constrained by the fact that Film Brockville operates out of a Cineplex theatre.

As for promotion, Film Brockville has an extensive e-mail contact list that updates the contacts about the films that are going to be screened. The web page also acts as a current portal of information. Moreover, Film Brockville uses print media to advertise: large posters are on display in the cinema and in the downtown area (D. Chisamore, personal communication, January 12, 2009). Smaller format posters are posted around the city in public places. Free distribution channels are also utilized.

Moreover, there are prize draws for a DVD prior to each screening, as an additional mechanism to draw an audience.

Concessions

Cineplex handles all concessions.

Funding

Revenues for Film Brockville come from:

- Ticket sales: 100 percent
- Concessions: N/A
- Grants: N/A
- Memberships: N/A
- Other (please specify): N/A

Insights

"When it comes to the market for repertory cinema, I think there are many people who want to see independent film and small market film, more than enough to provide an audience. So much film is unscreened that people become very enthusiastic about a change from the normal fare at a Cineplex-style theatre" (D. Chisamore, personal communication, January 12, 2009).

Film Brockville's main piece of advice: work with a small group of people that is cohesive and enthusiastic about film. A large group is unwieldy and hard to coordinate (D. Chisamore, personal communication, January 12, 2009).

Garrick Theatre

Bonavista, Newfoundland and Labrador
www.garricktheatre.ca
info@garricktheatre.ca
709.468.2880

The Garrick theater is a pending project. No members from the Historical Society were available for comment.

Getting Started

The original Garrick Theatre was designed to show both theater and film and opened in 1945. For many decades it was a central cultural location in the city, supported by multiple volunteers. In 2000 the building closed, and in 2003 it was donated to the Bonavista Historical Society in 2003. In order to restore the building and bring it to code, the Historical Society is aiming to raise approximately \$1,610,000 (Project Information).

Logistics

The theater is designed to be a "premier, multi-use, 200 seat theatre" (Project Information). The theatre will be managed by the residents of the Bonavista peninsula. The Theatre will be shared with multiple local and visiting performers. The perception is that film will make the Garrick a more viable year-round facility. There is clear intention to rent the space out as a "cultural venue" and have not only live performances, but also lectures, meetings and conferences (Project Information).

Volunteers are central to the creation and sustainability of the Garrick Theatre model. The Bonavista Historic Townscape Foundation aims to oversee the renovation of the theatre and provide a volunteer Management committee to operate the theater. There are two foundation staff members that will fill management staff positions half-time. The group anticipates hiring three additional part-time staff working at least 20 hours a week. Volunteers will also be used to supplement the work of paid staff "when deemed desirable or necessary" (Project Information).

In one year, the theatre plans to schedule 200 cinema nights and 20 nights of live theater, moving to 40 nights of live theater in the first two years. The operating budget is anticipated to be \$130,000/yr. Public funding has been received but fundraising is required for 13% of the budget (Project Information).

Audience

The Garrick theater is a community driven project that seeks significant feedback from residents of the Bonavista Peninsula and aims to provide them with a "cultural venue" for not only live

performance and cinema, but also lectures, meetings, and conferences. The perception is that film will enable the theater to become more sustainable and better service the community.

Programming

Programming will be a mixture of Independent and mainstream film and live performances (Project Information). Several of the visiting productions each year will be sponsored by the provincial Arts and Culture Centre's "Community Circuit" program. A board of community volunteers with relevant experience will help guide the Society in developing programming and schedules for the theater (Project Information).

Funding

The Garrick anticipates (and has received) significant community support. Not only is local fundraising deemed viable, but the Society anticipates \$1.4 million from public agencies (Project Information). A recent \$700,000 dollar grant from the Federal Government (part of their Inovative Communities Fund) moves the project significantly forward. To raise money for building, the theatre is selling seats. \$500 dollars for an auditorium seat, and \$1000 for a balcony seat. Buying a seat comes with a bronze plaque with the name desired by the purchaser, and futher signage in the lobby (Garrick Theatre Capital Campaign).

Insights

The Garrick Theatre is unique in that it developed initially as a live performance/cinema venue and this curent manifestation would be a return to the building's original use. As a highly structured project supported by significant funding, the Garrick theater attests to the value of a non-profit, community-oriented perspective. It should be noted that Bonavista is a rural area (population less than 4,000).

Metro Cinema

Edmonton, Alberta
www.metrocinema.org
metro@metrocinema.org
780.425.9212

Getting Started

The Metro Cinema was preceded by the National Film Theatre: Edmonton, part of a national association of arthouse cinemas. According to Marsh Murphy, executive director of the Metro Cinema Society, "With the rise of video and cable, and the parallel decline of repertory cinema, the NFT group dissolved. Individuals associated with the Edmonton instance of the NFT came together to keep the organization going, and eventually the name changed to Metro Cinema" (personal communication, January 20, 2009). The Metro Cinema is a non-profit society with charitable status. Were they to incorporate today, they would keep the same model because they receive arts funding from the Canada Council for the Arts, Alberta Foundation for the Arts, and Edmonton Arts Council, as well as from Alberta lottery funds. Those funds are only available to registered non-profit societies, and the lottery funding is only available to charities.

Logistics

Films are shown in Zeidler Hall, a 224 seat cinema located in a larger complex of theatres called the Citadel Theatre. 43 seats are typically filled. Metro Cinema shares the space with the Citadel Theatre (from whom they rent the space for non-commercial rates), who use the room for some educational programming of their own on Tuesday and Wednesday nights, and Saturday afternoons. The Metro Cinema staff is made up of both volunteer and paid workers. Volunteers run the box office, while theatre managers (who work the concession and manage the box office volunteers), union projectionists, and three office staff (Executive Director/Programmer; Publicity/Print Traffic; Administration) are paid positions.

Audience

The Metro Cinema sees their audience as being made up of "students; hipsters; committed older cinephiles; grassroots community partners" (M. Murphy, personal communication, January 20, 2009). As the organization is 35 years old, market research undertaken before opening (if any was done) is no longer in their files. The organization collects no ongoing market research. The cinema has approximately 200 members, who gain membership by buying one of two kinds of special passes. One is an annual all-access pass - for \$125, the holder gets to attend every film screened without paying admission. The second is a '6 for the price of 5' pass. Single tickets are \$10 for adults and \$8 for students and seniors.

Programming

Films are screened five nights a week, with two films being showed every week. Films change weekly. Metro Cinema also partners with film festivals and local organizations, and rents the cinema space to other groups. The cinema has a full-time programmer (the Executive Director). According to Murphy, the cinema has "also been 'incubating' local curators (to steal a phrase from Toronto's VTape), with whom [they] work on special programs. Over the last year [they've] worked with about six or seven emerging curators on about 10 weekends of themed programming" (M. Murphy, personal communication, January 20, 2009).

For screening purposes, the Metro Cinema has a 35mm changeover system, a 16mm projector, and a video projector. They screen from DigiBeta, Beta SP, DVCam, MiniDV, DVD, computer, and, says Murphy, "(in some rare, horrible cases), VHS. "I shudder to type that," notes M. Murphy (M. Murphy, personal communication, January 20, 2009).

The Metro Cinema uses a number of platforms for promotion:

- An 8-16 page program/calendar is mailed to members, available at the theatre, and distributed throughout the city.
- An informative website, metrocinema.org.
- Local newspapers: "Excellent editorial coverage from local arts weeklies, and community radio station" as well as, "Good coverage from [the] daily paper, but recent budget cuts have lessened [their] coverage there " (M. Murphy, personal communication, January 20, 2009).
- An e-mailing list, using a service called MyMailout.com.
- Partners' publications (M. Murphy, personal communication, January 20, 2009).
- Posters, handbills, and Facebook.

Concessions

The Metro Cinema has a concession stand. Office staff order items for the concession, and the theatre manager pops the popcorn and sells the goods. The concession is not licensed, but the cinema does get liquor licenses for some special events. The concession is open while films are screening.

Funding

- Estimated revenue from:
- Ticket sales – 21%
- Concessions – 10%
- Grants – 46%
- Memberships – 3%
- Other/Casino revenue – 8%
- Other/Special Events (rentals, partnerships, etc) – 7%
- Other/Advertising, fundraising, charitable donations, misc – 5%

Insights

When asked how they feel about the future about repertory cinema, the Metro Cinema responded thusly: "Straight-up repertory cinema is not our strong suit; throughout our existence, we have faced local competition from a higher-profile commercial theatre that trumps us on screening high-performing arthouse work. Our strengths lie in partnering effectively with community groups to present films of interest to their constituencies. Perhaps that can be read as just a different vocabulary for targeted marketing, but we find that communities are more engaged when they participate in the programming" (M. Murphy, personal communication, January 20, 2009). Their main piece of advice is to "define your goals, begin modestly until you feel you're ready to branch out on solid ground" (Murphy, personal communication, January 20, 2009). And the last thing they wanted to share was, "Best of luck! Bring back the days of the cross country circuit of art house independent cinemas in Canada!" (M. Murphy, personal communication, January 20, 2009).

Moxie Cinema

Springfield, Missouri

www.moxiecinema.com

nicole@moxiecinema.com

417.429.0800

Source of information: <http://blog.moxiecinema.com/>.

Getting Started

The Moxie Cinema operates out of its own building, which is owned by private individuals and leased by the Moxie owners. This is because the owners, who originated the idea of starting up an independent cinema in Springfield, did not have the required cash to buy a building up-front. A business plan was developed over several months, and pitched to several banks for debt financing. This financing was for equipment and other start-up costs (other than purchasing real estate).

Moxie relies on the support and sponsorship of several local businesses.

Logistics

Moxie is operated out of its own building, which is being leased from the building's owners. Seat capacity is 137 (54 + 83), in two auditoriums with two separate screens.

Programming

Moxie does not use a booking agency, however, when first starting, a booking agent (who did booking for Ragtag Cinema) was used to deal with distributors. After this initial start-up period Moxie decided to take on distribution negotiations on its own.

Films are screened approximately 3 times a day. Films that are more popular than others (for example, "Slumdog Millionaire") are screened on consecutive days over an extended period of time. Almost all films are screened on a 35mm projector, but Moxie is capable of screening digital films if required (for local or "indie" independent films). Films are promoted through a variety of mediums, including the website and local advertising mediums (most commonly print media). A large proportion of promotion for Moxie is undertaken via electronic mediums (i.e. over the Internet); for example, "MoxieTV", rss feeds, and discussion forums.

Pricing can be summarized as follows:

- Standard admission \$8.00
- Students/Seniors \$7.00
- Matinee admission \$6.00
- Special series \$5.00 and up

One interesting feature is that Moxie provides convenience and ease of access to purchasing tickets, primarily by ordering them electronically or by phone.

"Special series" is another unique promotional tool.

Concessions

The Moxie puts a strong emphasis on concessions. Early in the development of the theatre, there was recognition that no profits are made from screenings. Rather, if profit is a main goal, concessions are necessary. Accordingly, Moxie provides a large selection of unique concessions: Their "Cinebar" includes "hard-to-find" candies, wine and beer, and novelty-sized popcorn (e.g. the "Damn That's Big" size).

The "Cinebar" is run by the staff that work for Moxie, and is an integral part of the business.

Funding

Revenues for Moxie Cinema come from:

- Ticket sales: moderate
- Concessions: substantial
- Grants: N/A
- Memberships: N/A
- Other (please specify): "pre-show" advertising (slides on the projector before the movie begins)

Insights

The Moxie blog is a very detailed resource that chronicles everything one may need to know about starting up an independent cinema. However, it is important to note that the focus is on running a theatre out of an owned/leased building, rather than on other forms of business organization. The blog can be found here: blog.moxiecinema.com/

Pacific Cinematheque

Vancouver, BC
www.cinematheque.bc.ca
info@cinematheque.bc.ca
604.688.8202

Getting Started

Pacific Cinematheque was started as a film society almost 40 years ago, and in the years since has become, "one of the most active film organizations in North America, with more than 500 curated film exhibitions annually" (Pacific Cinematheque, n.d.). Pacific Cinematheque is a not-for-profit society.

Logistics

The Cinematheque's 194 seat theatre is located in downtown Vancouver. Volunteers are used for front-of-house activities as well as marketing tasks and administrative duties.

Audience

Anyone buying a ticket to a film must purchase or already hold a \$3 annual membership. Ticket prices are \$9.50 for a single bill or \$11.50 for a double bill. A 10 double bill pass costs \$88. Students and seniors pay \$8 and \$10 for tickets and \$78 for a 10 double bill pass.

Programming

Films are typically shown seven days a week, and each night features a double bill. Pacific Cinematheque hosts a number of film festivals throughout the year.

Concessions

Pacific Cinematheque has a concession.

Funding

Pacific Cinematheque receives funding from the Canada Council for the Arts, the British Columbia Arts Council, the Province of British Columbia, and the City of Vancouver.

Ragtag Cinema

Columbia, Missouri
www.ragtagfilm.com
whit@ragtagfilm.com
573.441.8504

Getting Started

Ragtag Cinema is a non-profit independent movie theatre located in Columbia, Missouri and it introduces a unique solution to the space issue. Ragtag began in 1998, taking an unusual approach to theatre by combining the cinema with beer-drinking, and following this by not offering mainstream movies, but those "independent films" which are both fun and thought provoking. With both volunteer help from the youth of Columbia and partnerships within the community, the Ragtag Cinema began a partnership to create a CinemaCafe space 2000. They obtained a 35mm projector, and moved into an 18x45 foot space. This space was furnished with couches and comfortable chairs in intimate environment. This result is a space where movies are not only watched, but can be enjoyed and discussed. According to the website, "Projectionists introduce each film, offering trivia and announcements of upcoming events. For some films, [the cinema] offer[s] theme-related food and drink. For others, [they] host lectures and discussions" (Ragtag Cinema, n.d.).

Logistics

The Ragtag has no set amount of available seating, due to the transitory seating arrangement, but can fit 75. Folding chairs can be taken out for films with a larger audience and none of the seating is stationary. The Ragtag is currently in the process of moving locations, having outgrown their current space. They have two theatres, one in a more traditional theatre arrangement with set seating and the other in Ragtag's successful Cinemacafe style. The new location still has the old space, but now also has a theatre which can fit 130.

Ragtag puts emphasis on building partnerships with local nonprofits, schools, businesses and interest groups. They also support the creative endeavours of local musicians, painters, photographers, and cultural activists. To quote their mission statement: "We believe independent and alternative media informs dialogue between people of different cultures, backgrounds, and identities, and we aim to grow a vibrant and energized geographic core for the city" (Ragtag Cinema, n.d.).

Ragtag provides a creative home and venue, serves as fiscal sponsor for individual filmmakers, and advocates for local media artists.

Audience

The Ragtag audience ranges from people who love film and believe it is an art form to those who simply enjoy the Ragtag atmosphere and the ability to drink beer in the movie theatre. As

Ragtag states: "First and foremost, Ragtag exists to provide a venue for the best in U.S. independent and international filmmaking. We believe that film is the dominant art form of our age and that it has the power to change minds and hearts. It is therefore critical that audiences have a breadth of film options" (Ragtag Cinema, n.d.).

Programming

The Ragtag is currently showing "independent films" and has a number of programs or series which are currently on-going or coming up. The Ragtag not only offers films as for viewing, but also encourages discussions surrounding them. For the 2006 year, Ragtag showed "132 different films, presented 44 special events, and hosted 12 visiting filmmakers, 19 music & multimedia events, 11 literary events and 8 gallery openings" (Ragtag Cinema, n.d.). Once the new building opens, expectations are that these numbers will increase.

Concessions

Concessions are available through the cafe section of the Cinemacafe. One of the mottos of the Ragtag is a quote from Bertolt Brecht, stating "a theater without beer is just a museum" (Ragtag Cinema, n.d.). The snack the usual popcorn and soda, and also wine, beer, juices, cheeses, sandwiches and soup.

Funding

The Ragtag website states that most of their funding comes from membership fees, ticket sales, and concessions. Tickets sales range from \$4-\$8.

Membership fees are as follows:

Ragtag Irregulars (\$45/individual; \$40 for seniors [65+] & students):

- A Ragtag Irregular membership card
- \$4 admission to all feature films
- Free popcorn on Sunday and Monday
- An invitation to our fabulous Irregular Party every December

Couch Club (\$90/individual; \$160/pair)

In addition to all of the perks of the Irregular Membership, Couch Club members enjoy private receptions and screenings of new releases, exclusive meetings with visiting filmmakers, and other events to keep Columbia's cinephiles satiated.

The Guffmans (\$425)

Our top-tier members gain free admission to Ragtag feature films for an entire year, in addition to all other amenities enjoyed by the Couch Club and Irregulars.

Insights

A Ragtag representative was unavailable for an interview, but the website contains many useful resources for independent cinemas. The Ragtag mission statement expresses the cinema's belief that film is an art form, the enjoyment of which is severely hindered by commercial theatres. Owners believe that it is necessary for film viewers to have a wide selection of available films because films have "the power to change minds and hearts" (Ragtag Cinema, n.d.). Ragtag also promotes media literacy, education, and new ideas through providing "films that spark dialogue and on occasion force an intellectual reorientation. [They] also offer more traditional educational opportunities like workshops with schoolchildren and post-film discussion" (Ragtag Cinema, n.d.). Ragtag also supports local media artists. The website contains a valuable link containing information about other independent cinemas, DIY film distributors, guilds and organizations. Resources are focused on the American mid-west.

Revue Cinema

Toronto, Ontario
www.revuefilmsociety.ca
info@revuefilmsociety.ca
416.531.9950

Source of information: <http://revuecinema.ca/revuecinema>.

Getting Started

The Revue is a cinema operating out of its own facilities. Built in 1912, the Revue is one of the oldest cinemas in Canada, and as such has been granted a historic designation. The building is currently owned by two local residents: Danny and Letty Mullin, who paid \$954,000 to acquire it, and is leased to the Revue Film Society (a community-based organization), which is responsible for the operational side of the cinema.

It is important to note that the Revue Film Society relies heavily on support from local residents, businesses and politicians - in other words, the Roncesvalles community and neighbourhood plays a key part in the process.

Logistics

The capacity of the Revue Cinema is 244.

The Revue Film Society rents the space from the Mullins for a price of \$7,000 per month.

Programming

The Revue is committed to playing films daily. There are typically two to four show times a day. The films are shown using a 35mm projector, and there are facilities in place that allow digital media to be screened.

Pricing can be summarized as follows:

- Membership \$6.00 per 6 months (\$12.00 per year)
- Members \$6.50
- Children \$5.00
- Seniors \$5.00
- Sunday Matinee \$5.00 (non-members included)
- Tuesdays \$5.00

There are also promotional programs available, such as the "Reelcard", which provides 5 screenings (over a 6 month period) for \$25.00. Thus, Revue uses pricing as a strategic tool, but it is important to note that the Revue places a strong onus on viewers to become Members

(since a non-Member typically will pay an additional \$6.00 and get the membership automatically, outside of Sunday Matinee screenings).

Funding

Revenues for Revue Cinema come from:

- Ticket sales: substantial
- Concessions: N/A
- Grants: N/A
- Memberships: N/A
- Other (please specify): advertising and facility rental

The Uptown

Calgary, Alberta
www.theuptown.com
selina@theuptown.com
403.265.0123

The Uptown owns its own building, which holds two theatres: Uptown Screen (movie theatre), the Uptown Stage (movie theatre & live performance venue). It was built in 1951 by Mr. Jacob Barron, a Calgary lawyer and owner of the National Theatres. The Uptown Screen has a capacity of 460 and the Stage can seat 340. Both these rooms can be rented, included equipment projection and lighting equipment as well as a trained projectionist. The Uptown is for profit and provides its own concessions. The theatre boasts "the finest example of Art Deco architecture in the city" and considers its programming to be the best available in Calgary (Uptown Cinema, 2008, "About Us"). An indication of current programming at The Uptown can be found on the front page of their website: Milk, Frost/Nixon, and Doubt for the week of February 6-12.

ADMISSION

- Adults: \$9.00
- Students (with valid ID): \$7.00
- Seniors (60 & over): \$5.00
- Children (13 & under): \$5.00
- Tuesdays: \$7.00
- Matinees: \$7.00
- Gift Certificates: \$5 or \$10 denominations

A representative from the theatre did not respond to contact. This information is from the website only.

Vogue Cinema

Sackville, New Brunswick
www.voguecinema.ca
voguecinema@eastlink.ca
Jeff Coates -

Getting Started

The Vogue was originally built in 1946, by Mr. M.E. Walker, the original owner. Since then, the building has been passed through successive owners.

Logistics

The building is an "Art Deco" Theatre, with a single screen, and with a seating capacity of 304. A new sound system was recently installed. Thus, the Vogue operates out of its own building.

Programming

There is a graduated ticket system in place; different prices are charged for different types of people and at different times. This is summarized below:

Group Price

- Adults (18 and over) \$8.50
- Youth (14 to 17) \$7.50
- Children (4 to 13) \$5.50
- Seniors \$5.50
- Tuesday Cheap Night \$5.00
- Friday Midnight Movie \$2.00
- Matinees \$5.00

Thus, the Vogue uses pricing strategy as a promotional tool. It also offers promotional packages related to concessions, events, and other community businesses (for example, the "Dinner & a Movie" deal, which involves buying a meal at a local restaurant and then getting a cheaper ticket at the Vogue).

However, Vogue is not a repertory cinema per se. Rather, it runs its own, "mainstream", films on a daily basis but provides the space to the Sackville Film Society on Thursday evenings. Thus, screenings of "indy" films occur every week. Pricing of the Sackville Film Society is:

Group Price

- Membership \$8.00
- Film: With Membership \$6.00
- Film: Without Membership \$8.00

Concessions

The Vogue, since it is operating out of premises it owns, also administers its own concession business.

Funding

Revenues for Vogue Cinema come substantially from ticket sales and concessions, but they also earn revenue from promotional packages and events, such as birthday parties.

Winnipeg Film Group & Cinematheque

Winnipeg, Manitoba
www.winnipegfilmgroup.com
info@winnipegfilmgroup.com
204.925.3456

Getting Started

The Winnipeg Film Group was founded in 1974 and is a charitable, non-profit organization. The Winnipeg Film Group is “dedicated to promoting the art of cinema... [that has served] as a resource for Manitoba filmmakers and video artists for 35 years, providing access to affordable training, mentorship, production funding, experimentation opportunities, production and post production equipment and facilities, and local, national and international programming and distribution” (Winnipeg Film Group, 2009).

Logistics

Films are shown in the Cinematheque, a 118 seat theatre in Winnipeg’s downtown Exchange District. The Cinematheque is located in the Artspace Building, and space is shared with approximately 25 other organizations. All positions in the cinema are paid, as they discovered that volunteers did not work hard enough.

Audience

According to their website, the Cinematheque is “an intimate art film theatre devoted to screening the very best in Canadian and world cinema, including foreign language films. [They] premiere new films, as well as screen the works of visiting artists, touring film programs and exclusive series” (Winnipeg Film Group, 2009). The Cinematheque does have a membership program, through which the public can buy memberships in exchange for reduced ticket prices and a bi-monthly program guide. Individual memberships are \$25. Regular admission is \$7, and student and senior prices are \$6.

Programming

Films are shown Wednesday through Sunday, with two different films being shown each night. Films seem to be shown for two to three days at a time, so approximately five different films are shown each week. Films are promoted in newspapers, and on posters, their website, and on their Facebook page.

Concessions

The Cinematheque concession stand is run by the Cinematheque and is licensed. It opens an hour before a film showing and closes half an hour after the screening begins.

Funding

The Cinematheque receives funding through the Canada Council for the Arts, the Manitoba Arts Council, and the City of Winnipeg through the Winnipeg Arts Council. The Cinematheque is also supported by a number of corporate sponsors and individual donors.

Winnipeg Cinematheque's complete responses can be found in the "Completed Questionnaires" folder on the Paradise Sisters Cinema Society Wiki.

Paradise Sisters Cinema Society Wiki

In addition to creating a written report, the MWB Paradise team created a wiki. The wiki is located at <http://paradisesistersproject.pbwiki.com/>. The wiki will be accessible in Read Only mode to the Paradise Sisters Cinema Society board, faculty advisor Professor Sandra Toze, and Teaching Assistant, Cordelia Perry until the MWB team receives their final grade. At that time the Paradise board will be given administrator status. The wiki includes all information contained in the report, as well as completed questionnaires from surveyed cinemas, and links to extensive online resources. A table of contents is located in a sidebar that can be found by scrolling down the page.

Cinema Comparison Chart