

67°
Festival del film Locarno
6-16 | 8 | 2014



Industry Days
9-11 | 8 | 2014
Festival del film
Locarno

Step In

Group 1: Audience Development in Public and Communal Settings

Moderator: Jon Barrenechea, Project Development Manager, Picturehouse Cinemas, UK

Cinema on Demand is rapidly becoming a new trend and handing the power back to the audience is paramount in bringing them back into venues. Event Cinema as well as travelling and outdoor Cinemas are becoming very important in order to attract especially young people and to make them come back to the big screen, which represents the biggest challenge today.

On the exhibitors' side, the general thought is that they need to have more of a say in the areas of production and distribution, as they are at the front lines and understand audiences better than anyone in the value chain.

Exhibitors everywhere are pushing the boundaries of what cinemas traditionally have done in a variety of ways to keep the cinema experience different from the competition on customers' leisure time, whether at home or in other arts' offer.

A joined up strategy from all parts of the value chain needs to be considered, with production/funding taking into account audiences and the exhibitors.

Group 2: Audience Development at Home

Moderator: Marit Van den Elshout, CineMart Manager, International Rotterdam Film Festival, Netherlands

The results for SVOD, Pay TV, DVD, Free TV are different in each territory. For example, in the U.S., there is no TV at all for foreign language films and in many cases DVD and Blu-Ray for those titles has not dropped (even increased) vs. what happens in Europe. US distributors are used to deal with Netflix but encourage Europeans not to work exclusively with them, there are other options which often treat independent films better. In most European countries, the trend is reduced slots for author films on TV, especially Free TV, vs. series, DVD has dropped significantly (piracy, illegal downloading being an issue in several countries). The biggest difficulty of SVOD becoming an effective partner for art-house content is that these platforms increasingly produce their own content in order to keep licensing costs down (also language issues) and prefer having products which are easy to promote such as crime series.

In general exhibitors are not involved and distributors deal with the problem of the window holdback before they can do anything with the film on Free/Pay TV, SVOD. All these players acknowledge the fact that they can't go on their business being isolated and exclusively focused on their activity (exhibition, distribution...), this is time for stronger cooperations, bridges between them to make sure a diverse offer of independent films will not be limited to festivals circuit in the next decade.

Prestigious film awards and good reviews are no longer a driving force to bring the audience, especially the youngest one, to the traditional distribution platforms. However, festivals with already large audiences and a strong label like Venice and Rotterdam can play a role in the audience development at home for niche/art-house films. Several new distribution initiatives are being launched (Sala Web etc.) by festivals, also involving sales agents, exhibitors and VOD platforms. The main problem is that all of them are experimenting on their own island, there should be more debate, cooperation lessons learned from each other.

Group 3: The Increasing Importance of Curators and Community Builders for release on all platforms

Moderator: Eugene Hernandez, Deputy Director, Film Society of Lincoln Center, USA

There are too many movies available today. In an overcrowded landscape, curation is the only guaranteed way to insure films find viewers, this means that professionals must rely on existing structures and institutions but also come up with new approaches that put the audiences interests, not the industry's needs first.

Film festivals have become a key filtering mechanism for the both industry and moviegoers. Nevertheless a large number of films from festivals and markets remain unsold to specific territories. An idea could be to put select titles on a platform like Vimeo as a way of not only combating piracy but growing an audience in a new market for individual art-house filmmakers. Moreover, a specialized database that serves an international audience and provides a starting point for audiences giving them a place to skim or search titles from top festivals could be a solution.

Group 4: The Practicalities of Multi-Platform/Multi-Territories, Day & Date and VOD releases

Moderator: Susan Wendt, Head of Sales, TrustNordisk, Denmark

Europe is still far behind the U.S. and Day & Date is a slow process that will come territory by territory. The main problem is that legislations and window holdback regulations are making the process slower as well as the fact that exhibitors are very much against a Day & Date release and don't want to screen films if released digitally at the same time. This combined with the challenges of different language both as dubbed, subtitled or with voiceover means that the Pan-European territories is not something that will happen right now. The technology for this exists and is being used already, but the territory definition is still a very essential point in our industry to be there. Pan-European licensing can be a possibility as straight to VOD for small films that don't find their way to distributors in the traditional way. The obstacles here however are how to get the films visible and recognized on the platforms, and therefore the PR & Marketing in this sector that needs to be developed.

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