

ENTERTAINMENT MARKETING: A NEW INTEGRATIVE ENTERTAINMENT MARKETING COURSE

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ABSTRACT

Entertainment has seen major technological advances causing the lines between media, products, and services to increasingly blur. The paper proposes a new, broader, and integrative way to teach the field of entertainment marketing. First, a discussion addresses the academic and strategic issues in entertainment marketing. Next, the paper addresses the evolution and current practice of entertainment marketing. After, the paper proposes a new course in "Entertainment Marketing," which embraces an integrative approach and reflects on entertainment marketing practice today, with the goal to better equip marketing students for the background and tools to succeed in the entertainment industry.

INTRODUCTION

There is much evidence to suggest that in entertainment, academia is far behind practice. This is reflected in the scant research articles that embrace a broad and integrated perspective to entertainment, the relatively few courses in entertainment marketing to equip students for a career that will span a full spectrum of entertainment products, and the lack of an academic journal on entertainment marketing. Drawing from marketing practice, it is clear that a broad and integrated approach to teaching entertainment to prepare students for the crossover is necessary. Movies as a product are linked to other entertainment products, from music to theme parks to sports to clothing with the list extending onward. Further, entertainment is increasingly an integral part of marketing strategy used not only by Los Angeles, the center of the world's entertainment industry, but by all businesses as a means of differentiation in today's competitive environment.

Marketers worldwide recognize the importance of entertainment as an integral part of marketing strategy. Consider in movies, how for the release of "Shrek 2" on DVD in November 2004, DreamWorks Home Entertainment lined up promotional partnerships in its largest, most aggressive DVD marketing program ever. In sports, Super Bowl is linked to celebrities like Janet Jackson and Paul McCartney. In retailing, the trendy upscale fashion brand Juicy Couture is promoted by

celebrities wearing the brand. On Broadway, Chitty Chitty Bang Bang performs in the Hilton Theater, linked to Hilton hotels. In cruises, Cirque de Soleil partners with Celebrity Cruises using Las Vegas entertainment on a boat. In TV, Oprah promoted Pontiac with her highly publicized Pontiac giveaway on national television.

Given that entertainment products are no longer stand-alone enterprises, the author makes a case for developing a new course in entertainment marketing that focuses on the performance of marketing activities, which span across the entertainment industry. The proposed course would adopt an integrative approach to entertainment which bridges all facets of entertainment, including movies, TV, home video, publishing, Internet, interactive games, recorded music, publishing, toys, radio, travel, casinos, clothing, theater, museums, theme parks, concerts, sports, fashion, fast food, and more.

The article opens with an academic and strategic perspective to entertainment. Following this, a broader approach to teaching entertainment marketing is proposed, rooted in the digital revolution, the wide range of entertainment and media choices, and generation shifts. Finally, the author proposes a new course in entertainment marketing reflecting marketing practice today.

AN ACADEMIC PERSPECTIVE

Entertainment marketing is a broad field that bridges all areas of entertainment. While the marketing of stand-alone entertainment enterprises (e.g., recorded music, theater, sports, toys) is nothing new, marketing them together is. The definition of entertainment marketing that defines marketing in the broadest sense is rooted in the new definition of marketing recently released in August 2004 by the American Marketing Association (AMA), which represents marketing professionals in the United States and Canada. In light of changes in technology, and an increased awareness of customers and long-term relationships, the new AMA definition is:

Marketing is an **organizational function and a set of processes** for creating, communicating and delivering value to **customers** and for **managing**

customer relationships in ways that benefit the organization and its stakeholders (Marketing News, September 15, 2004).

Under this new definition, marketing reinforces the idea of integration. Entertainment is an evolving industry where the lines between entertainment products increasingly blur. Recorded music as a product, for example, is linked to other entertainment products, from movies to theme parks, consistent with the expansion of media companies. Marketers must be prepared for this crossover by adopting a broader view to entertainment and embracing the new definition of marketing, which relies on integrated approaches.

A review of the literature on entertainment marketing reveals with few exceptions (e.g. Dekom and Sealey; Wolf 1999), little has been done to address entertainment as a broad discipline where subfields are merged together. The academic literature reveals that topics most widely addressed include: sports management (Burton 1999; Mason 1999; Raymond 2001), movie screen management (Swami, Eliashberg, and Weinberg 1999), cofinancing and risk management (Goethler and Leslie 1995), critics' reviews (Basuroy, Chatterjee, and Ravid 2003; Cameron 1995; Caves 2000; Desai and Basuroy 2005; Eliashberg and Shugan 1997; Holbrook 1999), star power (Desai, Kaushik, and Basuroy 2005; Da Vany and Walls 1999; De Silva 1998; Holbrook 1999; Litman and Ahn 1998; Neelamegham and Chintagunta 1999; Ravid 1999), legal and ethical issues (Chiou, Huang, and Lee 2005; Grier 2001; Hemphill 2003; Kaplan 2005; Kranenburg, Van, and Hogenbirk 2005; Ravid and Basuroy 2003; Wang 2005), motion picture management (Sawhney and Eliashberg 1996; Jedidi et al. 1998; Radas and Shugan 1998; Swami et al. 1999; Swami and Khairnar 2003), entertainment and experience (Holbrook 1999; 2000; Schindler and Holbrook 2003a; 2003b); performing arts (Bennett 2005; Putler and Lele 2003; Reddy, Swaminathan, and Motley 1998; Richards 2002); internet, interactive TV, and media related studies (Elpers, Wedel, and Pieters 2003; Fattah 2001; Spain and Vega 2005; Thompson 2003; Zeisser 2002), entertainment and shopping (Lotz 2000; Sit, Merrilees, and Birch 2003), films (Ravid 1999), trade shows (Penaloza 2000), children and youth (Grier 2001; Fattah 2001; Weissman 1999); etc.

Clearly, the academic discipline in marketing treats entertainment as the sum of its parts (e.g., sports marketing, movie marketing, event marketing, hotel marketing) rather than one broad discipline which merges all facets of entertainment. Consistent with

this, there is no journal with entertainment marketing in the title, but instead focusing on entertainment-related topics, including *International Journal of Sports Management and Marketing*, *International Journal of Sports Marketing & Sponsorship*, *Journal of Hospitality and Leisure Marketing*, *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing*, *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, *International Journal of Arts Management*, and more.

From a teaching perspective, the approach adopted by most universities nationwide is to break entertainment down into subfields and offer courses in areas like sports marketing, movie entertainment, event marketing, hotel management, and others, rather than teach it as one broad discipline, which merges these areas together. As the boundaries in entertainment become seamless, it is necessary to teach entertainment subfields together under the umbrella of "entertainment marketing." Movies, sports, concerts, retailing, leisure, theme parks, home video, interactive games must be studied together with publishing, toys, radio, theater, food, events, and other entertainment products.

A STRATEGIC PERSPECTIVE

Entertainment marketing as an integrative strategy is rooted in product placement and merchandise tie-ins. In a world where technological advances occur in breakneck speed, it is important to understand the origins of entertainment marketing to fully appreciate how it evolved and shapes the industry today.

Product Placement

While many Americans believe entertainment marketing is rooted in the little boy who demonstrated the power of Reese's Pieces to attract a friendly extraterrestrial in 1982's "E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial," earlier examples of product placement could be traced to Lever Brothers' Sunlight soap in 1896, appearing in multiple films distributed throughout the world. Examples of product placement in movies in the early 1930s include "Scarface" where actor Paul Muni smoked a cigar in the film and the producers auctioned off the merchandising rights to tobacco companies, and, "Gold Diggers" and "A Night at the Ritz" which both featured Buick cars. In the 1940s, in movies like "You'll Never Get Rich," Fred Astaire, a spokesperson for Chesterfield Cigarettes, included an elaborate tap-dance while smoking a cigarette; and "That Uncertain Feeling" where the DeBeers company allowed Hollywood to use their diamonds as part of a very successful strategy to increase

diamond sales in post-depression America.

After World War II, TV broadcasting exploded resulting in huge opportunities for marketers. Early TV programs often blurred the line between the program and the advertising—Andy Griffith's affinity for Sanka coffee from General Foods on the *Andy Griffith Show* being one early example where actors promoted products as part of the programming. Similar to radio, the companies that sponsored early TV shows placed brand names in the title. "Philco TV Playhouse," "Texaco Star Theater" and "Kraft Television Theatre" were among the most prestigious shows of the '50s. Also common was integrating sponsors either in the beginning of a show, during a commercial break, or at the end of the show. In the TV show "I Love Lucy," Lucy and Desi cartoon characters promoted their sponsor, Phillip Morris, as an introduction to the show. In another show, Lucy and Desi drove a Pontiac on the George Washington Bridge singing "California Here I Come."

Merchandise Tie-Ins

The historical roots to tie-ins could be traced to "Howdy Doody" in TV and "Star Wars" in movies. When "Howdy Doody," a kids show that lasted from the late '40s into the '60s, was on television, there were no VCRs, no DVDs, no video games, no Internet. In the late 40s came the modern lunch box, where kids tuning in to their favorite TV shows would be able to partner with their TV heroes at school. Lunch box lineup included The Lone Ranger, Howdy Doody, Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck, and three Davy Crockett kits.

Beginning with Magilla Gorilla in 1964, it became increasingly difficult to tell a TV cartoon from a toy line, especially since toys and toons would debut close together, and cross-promote each other. Toys like *Care Bears*, *My Little Pony*, and *Rainbow Brite*, and then *He-Man & the Masters of the Universe*. In 1982, half of all toys introduced at the annual Toy Fair were associated with a licensed character. In 1984, the sales of licensed toys were greater than all 1978 toy sales combined. By 1987, licensed products accounted for 80 percent of the toy business.

The "Star Wars" series coincided with a technological explosion in distribution channels, allowing Lucasfilm to sell the brand over and over. The movie "Star Wars" spawned a number of characters -- Han Solo, Luke Skywalker, Princess Leia, Obi-Wan Kenobi, Yoda, and Darth Vader -- that would all become action figures. The Jedi

Knight light sabers were quickly turned into toys and widely marketed. The action sequences were tailor-made for video games. The land speeder chariot race in 1999's "Episode I: The Phantom Menace" appeared to be lifted directly from a video game. With the movie "Star Wars: Revenge of the Sith" in 2005, it was the first time "Star Wars" characters appeared outside the film environment, or its fictional equivalent, interacting with humans in commercials. In a Cingular Wireless ad, for example, characters were growling into a microphone in a recording studio the perfect ring tones for the company's cell phones.

The practice of tie-ins continues today, but extends into media and merchandise. Shows like "Yu-Gi-Oh" are linked not only to toys and lunchboxes, but costumes, apparel, costumes, toothbrush, cereal, collectible cards, movies, spin-off shows, comic books and an avalanche of video games. Movie series like "Harry Potter," "Spiderman," "Batman," "Star Wars," and others capture marketing dollars by creating an emotional connection to the point that consumers buy anything that connects them to the franchise. Successful shows like *Extreme Makeover* demonstrates what brands can do together in a partnership between Sears and ABC.

AN INTEGRATIVE APPROACH

The movement toward integrative entertainment marketing is rooted in the digital revolution, the wide range of entertainment and media choices, and generation shifts.

The Digital Revolution

Today, the digital revolution of the marketplace allows not only greater entertainment options but for integrating entertainment modes together. The Internet's capacity to carry live video and audio directly to modem-equipped PCs is responsible for this new mode of media transmission, which is used by broadcasters, the recording industry, and independent Web sites.

Wide Range of Choices

Nowadays, electronic offerings such as DVDs, personal video recorders, video-on-demand and MP3 players have vastly altered the way consumers enjoy entertainment. People could pick and choose according to their preferences which or what media to tune into. In light of the digital revolution, one issue affecting the entertainment and media is control. No longer could television and radio programmers expect audiences to sit through ads or

a new generation of marketers must be trained in strategies and relationships that span across entertainment products. Thus, it is becoming increasingly important to offer an all-encompassing entertainment marketing course, which is designed to help prepare students for marketing careers in entertainment.

REFERENCES

Available upon request.