

Reflection, Analysis and Marketing Strategies

In this essay I will be analysing marketing strategies within the horror genre, and how they can be used to market Paranormal Wales. I will be researching previously successful campaigns in order to see what works and what doesn't within this industry. Also discussing how I plan to market and distribute my own paranormal short films to gain a successful audience following. The film I have chosen to market is 'Run'. After discovering a camera, a mentally disturbed individual, who perceives themselves as a victim to the landscapes predators. But really is a victim to his delusions. On this project I have undertaken the role of production designer and sound operator.

To first understand how to successfully market a film of the horror genre you need to know who your audience is. Researching into audience demographics of the paranormal horror genre I found an article which stated¹;

- 1) That the age of horror audiences are younger than the average cinema going people, 27% younger, being between the ages of 15 - 30.
- 2) That 44% of paranormal horror fans go to the cinema more than 12 times a year, they are a dedicated crowd.
- 3) In regards to gender it is almost an even split with 51% of males and 49% of women enjoying the genre.

Horror films have revolutionised film marketing campaigns throughout the years, especially with the evolution of technology. I researched into previously successful marketing campaigns of the horror genre, and found one of the most successful to be the 'Blair Witch Project' (1999), with only a budget of \$60,000 no one could have foreseen the success of the film. Grossing \$248m worldwide making it the fifth highest-earning independent film of all time. I believe all of this success came from the genius marketing campaign, the directors

relied on people believing the myth of the Blair Witch to be true. They dedicated an entire website to creating a fake timeline of the evil witch's activities, in order to convince the audience that the witch is a real phenomenon to be scared of. The website got more than 20 million views. The team even created fake missing posters of the stars of the film and put them up all over college campuses, to make it seem more real and draw attention and interest.

Another campaign was 'Cloverfield' (2008), the marketing for this film has been described as groundbreaking. With no warning in the summer of 2007 a trailer was released into the cinemas, with no title attached, the film was simply known as it's release date, '1/18/08'. As the months continued film fans simply speculated and shared rumours about what the film would entail. At the time, releasing a trailer for a secretly-produced film was unheard of. Cloverfield was a very clever found footage film, but the marketing and publicity for the film has been the most influential.

Next I researched into films, such as 'Paranormal activity' (2007), the film itself was unsuccessful in terms of criticism, but it definitely sparked interest in audiences with their very unique trailer. The trailer did not focus on the film itself but instead how the viewers were terrified by what they were seeing on the screen, a fan reaction. This campaign intrigued audiences enough to demand that there was a screening of the film in their area. Eventually Paranormal Activity grew and ended up on almost 2,000 screens, and made \$100m at the box office.²

Other films with more interactive social media marketing campaigns such as 'A Quiet Place'. Which focused on the silent aspect of the film and played to their strengths, for example a short trailer was posted on the film's Twitter account which encourage the viewer to turn the volume down on their devices because "If they hear you, they hunt you".³ Another film using an interactive virtual reality tactic is 'The Nun'. they uploaded a 360° video to youtube called 'The Nun: Escape the Abbey 360°' in which the viewer can interact and move around, encouraging the audience to explore locations relevant to the film, such as a convent.²

After researching into different successful marketing campaigns I then focused on researching into different avenues of distributing my own paranormal shorts. I watched many

short horrors on YouTube on a channel called 'Omeleto', where they post short films from filmmakers hoping to achieve success outside of film festivals. If your short film is accepted by Omeleto, they invest time in A/B testing your film in order to optimise the online success. After this they segment your film into genre categories, viewer demographics and geographical location in order to gain insights in order to maximise watch time. Omeleto believe in giving filmmakers a platform that is fair and transparent. "Think of us as 'Moneyball' for short films in the era of social media." - Omeleto official website. Omeleto has a following of 2.02 million subscribers on YouTube and just over 1.5 million followers on Facebook.⁴

Another company was 'Crypt TV', they specialise in developing, producing and distributing short horror films, focusing on monsters and linking universes. Crypt TV have a following of 2.96million subscribers on YouTube and over 3million followers on Facebook. They release around 100 videos every few months and use real time reactions on social media platforms in order to test new concepts and characters. "Our mission is to create culture changing monster stories that bring the world closer together, join us" - Crypt TV official website.⁵

Channel 4 have also released a series of short horror films called 'fright bites' during the build up to Halloween "Fright Bites has been a brilliant way for us to support six new and diverse filmmakers to work hard and fast on some really smart, original, sometimes funny and always creepy films. Audience was at the heart of the process so we're thrilled they're available to watch in so many ways." - Film4 Creative Executive Eva Yates.⁶

In conclusion, after thoroughly researching and analysing demographics and successful marketing campaigns I believe I have found a successful strategy in which I would market paranormal Wales and my own short films. First I will begin by creating social media accounts on all platforms such as - Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube. I believe a strong social media presence is necessary for the success of the film, especially as social media is such a huge part of young peoples lives. It is a good, if not the best way, to reach the audience demographic for the horror genre.

All of the posts on the Instagram platform will be from the point of view of the main character, sparking intrigue by showing his mental decline throughout the posts, getting weirder closer to the release of the film. I would like to use the rest of the platforms to create conspiracy theories of a mysterious supernatural phenomenon relating to the location the film is set in - Rosehill quarry.

The film will disprove these theories and raise awareness for mental health conditions, as the character is schizophrenic, this is the twist in the film. The trailer will be a self-shot video of the main character, a 'vlog' of sorts, of him talking about his research into the paranormal phenomenon in the woods, as he becomes obsessive with the thought of documenting his visions onto film. Like the 'Cloverfield' trailer there will be no title in the trailer, only the release date. I would like to surprise the followers of the social media platforms with the release of the film, and use this to my advantage. Also creating a 'ghost tour' of Rosehill quarry, and use a local actor to tell the scary stories to the participants. They will be chosen by their strong following of the social media platforms, and will have no idea the tour isn't real. I would also film the 'ghost tour', as a fake tourism video and cut in footage to future trailers.

In terms of distribution I would prefer for my film to be uploaded via Omeleto or Crypt TV on YouTube in order to be viewed as I believe it would have the most success through being uploaded to an already well known media platform. I will be focusing on the film being set in Wales by using welsh actors and a Welsh tour guide. I would also incorporate some of the welsh language into the film therefor bringing attraction to Wales and an interest from people local to the area.

Bibliography -

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