

## What is a marketing manager?



Marketing teams aim to attract audiences to their films

The marketing of a film is a crucial part of its distribution. Advertising, publicity and promotions come under the umbrella of marketing and this team is usually the largest department in a distribution company.

They generally work reasonably closely with the sales department to maximise the profile for their films in cinemas, but it is in the areas of communicating with consumers and media in a bid to find the maximum potential audience for a film that the marketing department comes into its own.

The marketing manager is a key person in the team and works under the direction of the marketing director.

When a film is finished, the managing director usually sets a screening for all key marketing and sales staff and senior executives in their in-house theatre so everyone can see the film together. They often have a feedback session straight after the screening to hear the opinions of the staff about the film's strengths and challenges. This is the point at which ideas start to crystallise about who they should target the film to, what release date might suit the film best, what cinema locations they think it would work in, what sort of reviews it might attract, whether a talent tour would be beneficial and generally how to market the film.

It is really useful to have all key staff at that first screening because they generally represent a mix of demographics taking into account things such as gender, age, income, suburb and education, so their feedback provides valuable insights into marketing opportunities and pitfalls.

The marketing director has the job of harnessing that initial anecdotal feedback and using it to inform the development of the marketing campaign. The marketing director:

- works with MD and CFO to set marketing budget for film campaigns
- works with MD and Sales Director to determine overall distribution strategy
- works with marketing department to develop marketing strategy within parameters of overall distribution strategy and budget, keeping in mind exhibition strategy
- works with marketing counterparts at studio or Head Office to comply with requirements of worldwide marketing strategy
- works with filmmakers to develop trailer and poster if the film is not a studio title, but rather an acquisition (especially applies to Australian films)
- conducts a marketing brainstorming session, in which ideas are thrown into the mix and discussed for each different sub-category of marketing
- oversees the works of the advertising, publicity and promotions departments or employees

- oversees regular WIP (work-in-progress) meetings so the members of the marketing department can update each other on how the elements for the campaign are coming together; to troubleshoot; to problem solve

The marketing manager participates in most of the above activities to varying degrees. The set-up of marketing departments varies from distributor to distributor but effectively the difference is that the marketing director operates at a more strategic level and takes more responsibility for the establishment of the master marketing plan. The marketing manager is more hands-on and manages the execution of the plan, working in close partnership with the publicity and promotions staff and calling often on the advice and expertise of the advertising department, or agency, to supply information such as the ratings and audiences for TV shows so they can ensure the TV interviews and promotions they do are a suitable 'fit' for the film.

The marketing director will agree on a budget with the chief financial officer, which the managing director has to sign off on. The marketing manager generally recommends how their part of the overall marketing budget is best spent.

The marketing budgets for films vary depending on what the senior executives estimate the film can make at the box office.

## Paid advertising

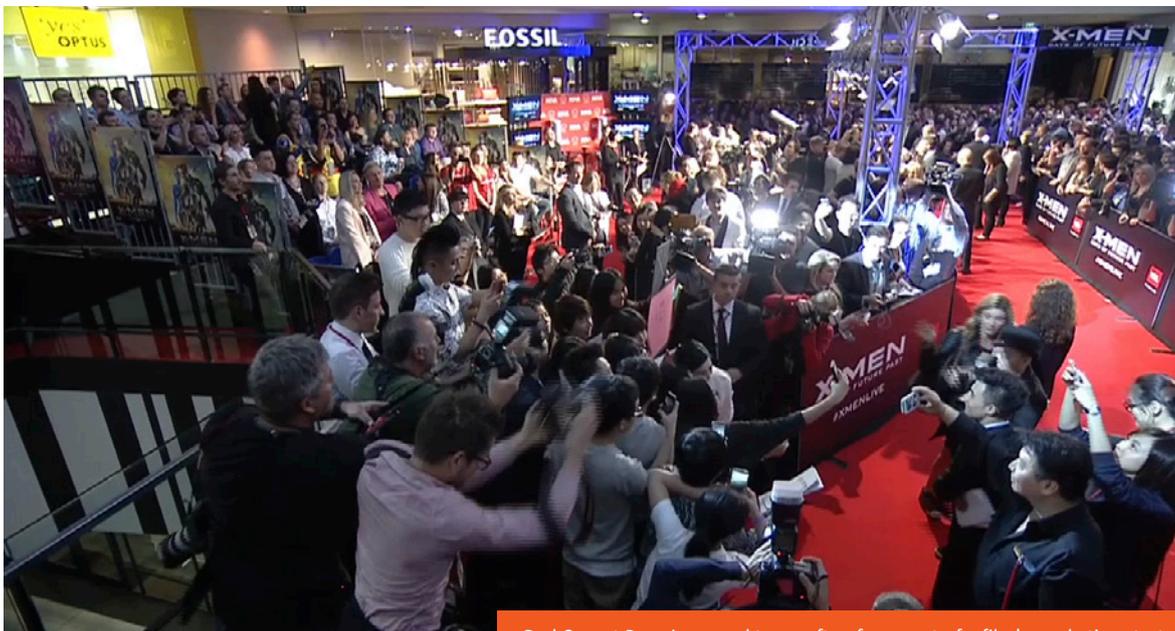
The various departments within marketing work very closely together so following is a brief overview of what is involved in paid advertising, publicity and promotions.

Paid advertising falls under the umbrella of marketing and includes things like TV commercials, billboards, online banner ads, radio commercials and social media buys. The major distributors spend millions of dollars each year on advertising and often have large ad agencies taking care of their business. Some distributors spend so much money on advertising that their agency gives them account managers who work in the distributor's own offices exclusively on their releases.

The advertising staff negotiate the most competitive rates and best placements for the distributor's ads; provide intelligence and data on print, TV, radio, digital and outdoor advertising and its reach and help distributors make informed decisions about the best way to spend their advertising budgets.

Studio-aligned distributors are generally provided with approved 'creative' – which means the ads themselves – and they get to localise the end boards with relevant release information but not the content of the ad itself, which usually requires a number of approvals from cast member's agents, filmmakers and the studio.

With an Australian film, a distributor has the opportunity to create the TV ad themselves, with input from their ad agency and the filmmakers.



Red Carpet Premieres and tours often form part of a film's marketing strategy



## Publicity

The publicity department is responsible for dealing with media outlets to generate maximum positive editorial around a film's release, taking into account the target markets that have been agreed upon for the film. This includes:

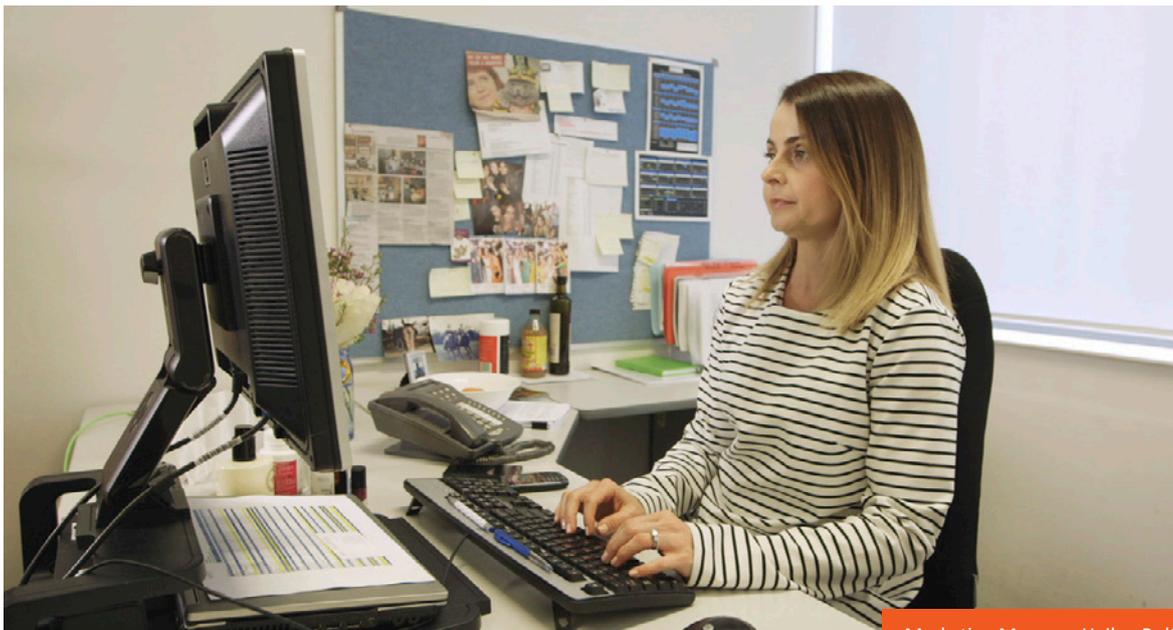
- issuing press releases
- handling requests for interviews with talent
- liaising with studio publicists in LA to negotiate access to talent at US junkets
- managing publicity tours
- arranging red carpet premiere access during publicity tours
- negotiating with media to generate editorial and reviews
- arranging screenings of the film for media
- supplying video clips and still images from the film for broadcast, online or print media

## Promotions

The promotions manager pitches and negotiates third-party promotions, i.e. with an external company or brand associated with a film. In the case of studio films, worldwide promotions are often negotiated with car companies or electronics companies or fashion brands. In this instance the promotions manager in the Australian distribution office may make contact with the local office of the worldwide brand to see how they can work together to leverage that association to gain attention for the film.

The promotions staff also manage media-backed promotions, i.e. promo giveaways on radio to win tickets to a film or money-can't-buy prizes. When they pitch and negotiate promotions, they try to ensure the media outlet is the best fit for the potential audience of the film. It is up to them to communicate the key messages of the film in the promotion, work with the media to determine the 'mechanic' (specific procedure entrants need to follow to enter the competition, e.g. take the best 'selfie' on a red carpet) and manage the logistics of the promotion (book flights and accommodation and Premiere tickets for the winners).

[Click here to view interview with marketing manager Heilan Bolton](#)



Marketing Manager Heilan Bolton

Creative Content Australia is a not-for-profit organisation committed to raising awareness of the significance of copyright, the value of screen content and the impact that downloading and streaming pirated films and TV programs has on the creative industries: [www.creativecontentaustralia.org.au](http://www.creativecontentaustralia.org.au)

Creative Content Australia develops and distributes free online education resources to schools throughout Australia to stimulate classroom discussion about copyright and promote the value of creative content and good digital citizenship online [www.nothingbeatstherealthing.info](http://www.nothingbeatstherealthing.info)

