

Film Festivals and Cinema Distribution- a Caribbean Filmmaker's Perspective

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Presentation to One Caribbean Media and CaribbeanTales Symposium

February 2010

Film Festivals -The Process

- Choice of Festival for international premiere
 - What kind of premiere is it – world, N.A, NY etc
 - Does timing fit your marketing plans?
 - What is track record in terms of distribution?
 - Talk to film makers who have been to that festival
 - Use any contacts you have with festival to make them aware of your interest in that festival
- Manage the process – “Withoutabox.com”
- Cost of application

Festivals - The Value

- Exposure
- Networking
- Distribution Opportunities – Int'l and Regional
- On-Site DVD Sales
- Learning

Before You Get There

- Prepare a thorough Electronic Press Kit and send off by deadline
- Ask about PR opportunities
- Ask about speaking opportunities
- Ask about funding for you to be there
- Try to get there
- Get promotional cards made
- Contact your Embassy/Tourist Board in that city

Before You Get There

- Ask to sell your DVD's at the venue
- Contact your local national association in that country and get them to invite members to attend.
- Ask sponsors, your High Commission or Embassy, your Tourist Board, Investment Agency in that country to host an event preferably after your screening and/or a press conference to promote your film

Before You Get There

- Ask your Tourist Board to get their PR firm to send out a release about your film or arrange interviews for you, before you get there preferably
- Find out who the distributors are that might be at the festival
- Invite potential distributors or contacts who might help you to your screening
- Put the screening on facebook and ask your family and friends to promote it for you

Before You Get There

- Make contact with the Festival Coordinator, build relationship, give them what they want when they want it.
- Check whether you are likely to get more than one screening.
- Register for learning opportunities

Cinema Distribution

- About 5 distributors in English Speaking Caribbean – 3 in Trinidad, one in Jamaica, one in Barbados
- Jamaica chooses itself (Palace Entertainment) and you can choose one for the rest of the Caribbean
- Some markets you do not see records or money

The Deal in the English-Speaking Caribbean

Exhibitor – 50%

Distributor – 20%

Producer – 30%

Sometimes you can go directly to exhibitor and retain the 20%

Marketing expenses come off the top

If you can get funding to offset those that helps

Promotion

- You have to promote your film
- Exhibitor will put a small ad in press to start and then the schedule thereafter
- A premiere creates buzz but get someone else to do it as a fund raiser. Make sure you agree with them up front tickets you get for your guests

When You Get There

- Go to the festival as far ahead of your screening as you can afford to go
- Ensure that your film is where it should be and ask to see it tested beforehand. Some will ...some won't!
- If you are concerned about the projection arrangements, politely express this and seek a solution
- Ensure that your promotional materials – posters are on display

When You Get There

- Enlist anyone who can to help you to hand out your cards
- Don't be shy...sell your screening to everyone you meet. A full house creates a buzz and then they spread the word for the next screening
- Find some angle that could be a hook for people in that city or festival and target those people
- Prepare for your introduction and talk back session