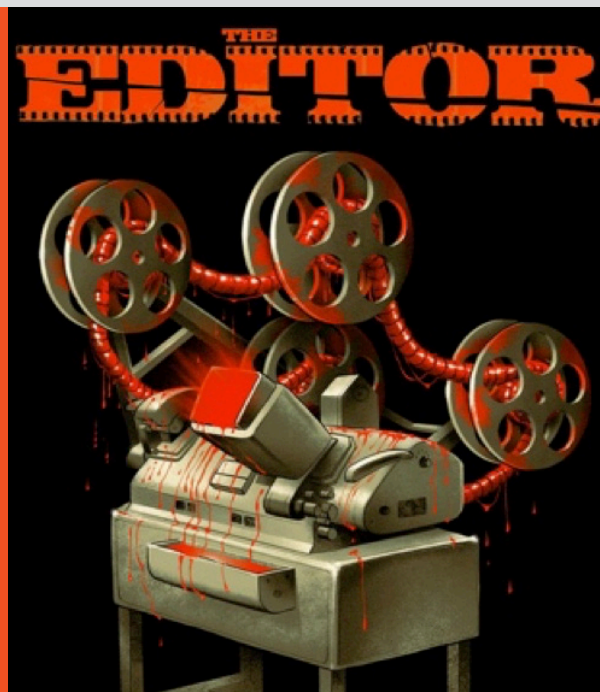


CASE STUDY ON MARKETING, DISTRIBUTION AND
AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT USING DIGITAL CHANNELS

THE EDITOR

A Micro-Budget
Production Program project
TELEFILM CANADA



August 2016

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Canada

INTRODUCTION

The movie *The Editor* is one of several projects to benefit from [Telefilm's Micro-Budget Production Program](#), which provides funds for movies that have a total maximum budget of \$250,000 and that aims to stimulate the use of new digital distribution platforms by emerging filmmakers.

The Editor was chosen to highlight a marketing strategy that successfully integrated online marketing within its overall marketing plan. The following case study presents what was learned through this initiative.

BACKGROUND

Producer and director Adam Brooks and co-director Matthew Kennedy joined forces to produce *The Editor*, a full-length movie.

Kennedy and Brooks leveraged the brand they had established with [Astron-6](#), the Winnipeg film collective, to position and promote *The Editor* to their fan base. Astron-6 was founded by five Winnipeg multimedia artists who shared a fascination with “the mechanics of fear and laughter” and created a uniquely positioned film production company catering to vintage-horror-irony film-lovers. The company has succeeded in producing films that “subvert the expectations of the seasoned viewer with the nightmarish and absurd” while targeting “irony-craving, internet savvy Generations X and Y”¹.

The Editor is considered a *giallo* genre film, a sub-genre that was perfected in the 1970s and 1980s by such Italian directors as Mario Bava, Dario Argento and Lucio Fulci. Although *giallo* has a semi-cult following, it remains a niche genre. In brief, *giallo* is a vintage horror-comedy genre that elicits some very particular differentiating elements within the film typical of the genre—such as the over-utilization of satire throughout the movie, ample nudity, showcasing of spiders as well as a vintage-feel to the sound and film amongst other.

1. <http://www.astron-6.com/about.html>

KEY TAKE-AWAYS

1. Know your target audience inside and out

The more in-depth understanding there is of one's target audience, the higher the chances of success in marketing a product to this group of people. Producers need to “immerse themselves” in the life of their target audience to understand the smallest, yet important, details in this audience's life.

Producers need to know specifically where the target audience “hangs out” online (which are the most commonly used channels to consume information), what kind of “voice” the target audience utilizes (in order to speak the same language as them) and which topics resonate with the target audience, among other pertinent information.

Such in-depth understanding will guide all marketing efforts to ensure a successful rollout of a marketing plan by using a targeted message via the right distribution channels.

2. Start a conversation with your fan base early on in the production phase and get fans involved

Starting a conversation early on in the production stage ensures that a production company, especially in the case of budget-strapped independent films, forms the necessary traction to get a following for a film. It might take a while to test various strategies and identify those tactics that work the best and refine them along the way.

In addition, when deciding which distribution channels to choose for digital social channels, along with the frequency of posts, two simple rules apply: be where your target audience is, and favour quality over quantity.

3. The producer's role as a digital marketer/ ambassador/creative is essential to the successful marketing of a film

Producer-directors Adam Brooks and Matthew Kennedy's intimate knowledge of their target audience, and their close involvement in all aspects of the marketing plan rollout, were key. They maintained a consistent voice, brand and narrative throughout. For example, Brooks insisted on using creative artist [Graham Humphrey](#) to design the film poster. The rationale behind this choice was that Humphrey's artwork would speak directly to aficionados of the Italian *giallo* genre Brooks and Kennedy were looking to attract.

The role of the producer is evolving and, like never before, the producer is a central component in the successful engagement of a loyal fan base.

KEY RESULTS

The Editor is a good example of a movie that made good use of digital channels to reach a larger audience, creating an online presence and following:

- A successful campaign on Indiegogo: US\$19,000 raised by 200 backers;
- 72,000 views of all trailers online;
- 1,000 followers on [Twitter](#) and 3200 followers on Facebook; and
- National and international coverage by media giants such as The Globe and Mail and [Variety](#) as well as by smaller media outlets such as [Rue Morgue](#) and [Electric Playground](#), among other independent players.

The Editor went on to develop a robust public relations and social media engagement strategy that garnered the movie national press, a loyal fan base and plenty of hype leading up to its world premiere at TIFF 2014.

THE CHALLENGE

Marketing such a film to a target audience—aficionados of hybrid horror and mystery movies with an affinity for and knowledge of the very niche giallo genre—was a challenge in itself.

The challenge was also to get a sufficient mass of people interested in the film to build a fan base, to identify and utilize the right digital channels to get to this niche audience, as well as to create hype around the film leading up to festivals.

THE MARKETING STRATEGY

Highlights

- The film's creation was propelled by a successful funding campaign via the global online crowd-funding website [Indiegogo](#).
- The film built a loyal international fan base that transcended borders and helped its selection as a best-in-class feature across various horror-loving communities.
- Well-known cult-film actor [Udo Kier](#) participated in the project.
- A number of on-brand vintage marketing collateral pieces were created by acclaimed designer [Graham Humphrey](#) (an illustrator who has dedicated his art life to the more obscure side of art).
- A two-way conversation was started on social media as soon as the film was confirmed, which helped the film acquire more than 3,000 Facebook and 1,000 Twitter followers.
- The film's teaser trailer has had over 16,000 views on YouTube so far in 2016, and each [official trailer](#) has had an increasing number of views—topping out at 36,000 for the first official trailer and 20,000 for the second official trailer. Moreover, the TIFF trailer received more than 50,000 views on the TIFF YouTube channel.
- The movie is available in Canada on iTunes and Amazon.

TAKEAWAYS FROM *THE EDITOR'S* MARKETING STRATEGY

1. Identifying the marketing persona to a tee

Producers cannot limit their description and understanding of a target audience to an age range or to a generic description of a group of people, i.e., “drama film buffs, aged 18 to 65.” In order to truly understand a target audience, producers should visualize a marketing persona that will provide insights such as their audience’s preferred media consumption channel, income, marital status, leisure sport preference and online hangouts, as well as what tone and voice resonates with them.

As a first rule of thumb, producers, directors and/or marketing coordinators have to invest time to inform themselves about the specific demographics that differentiate digital platforms:

- On which online distribution channel does my marketing persona consume video?
- Where do my target viewers seek out movie reviews?
- Which bloggers and influencers do the target audience follow most often?

Adam Brooks and Matthew Kennedy set out to identify the marketing persona that they were going after. Their objective was to find the distribution channels—blog sites, influencers, comic-book stores, social media platforms—and other places where their persona would possibly hang out. But more than a close connection to their target audience, they had accumulated a network of online and offline influencers—a roster of über-niche sites and news platforms—in addition to the close followers they had acquired from their previous films through *Astron-6*.

In short, Brooks and Kennedy amassed key market research information that gave them a large marketing advantage. Film producers would and should want to have such a close connection to their audience pre-film launch.

2. Getting fans involved in the making of the film

In October 2013, Brooks and Kennedy took to Facebook and Twitter to announce the start of production on *The Editor* and to initiate a conversation with their loyal fan base. In May 2013, they launched a crowd-sourcing campaign via Indiegogo for their film, which would premiere more than a year later—in September 2014—at the Toronto International Film Festival.

The Editor's [Indiegogo campaign](#) was a success: within two months of its launch, the campaign had raised a total of \$18,740—surpassing its initial goal of \$16,500—from 200 backers who provided support at a variety of levels.

The campaign featured a number of personalized perks for backers aligned with the overall branding of the film. A lot of thought went into the recognition backers would get—a level of detail consistent with all aspects of the marketing activities throughout the campaign. The most popular of the perks claimed by backers was an *Astron-6* T-shirt and public recognition on Twitter, with a portrait drawn by Adam Brooks a close second.

The crowd-funding campaign was not only an efficient kick-start to the marketing strategy and hype that was to be built over the following months; it also served as a way to test the waters with followers—in other words, to validate that the producers had a viable product to bring to market.

3. A continuous flow of content

The producers had to wear various hats during the production of the film: from directors, to actors, to content marketers or better-content curators. Brooks and Kennedy were key in spotting content that would be catchy and viral and that would resonate with their followers. In fact, a crucial factor in the success of *The Editor*'s visibility was the close involvement of the co-directors in maintaining a consistent voice and brand across platforms.

Drawing on third-party sources and content taken from the film, *The Editor*'s Facebook page shared fresh items of information on a weekly basis: behind-the-scenes photos, short clips from the film, articles that related to the *giallo* sub-genre, and actor interviews. Such consistent activity earned the film a high engagement and visibility among fans, and helped amplify the producers' marketing efforts. Die-hard fans would quickly comment and share some of the coveted pieces with others on their own social media platforms. (See Appendix 1 for examples of the content shared on *The Editor*'s Facebook and Twitter pages).

4. PR and news outlets

The Editor was well received by the media and online blogs, getting coverage in a large number of magazines, newspapers and online news platforms. It also earned recognition from niche online horror-loving communities.

The movie benefited from the hype resulting from its selection at TIFF and for its detailed representation of the *giallo* sub-genre. However, long before all the PR attention, Brooks and Kennedy generated significant interest in their film by connecting to blogs, bloggers and important horror-seeking online communities. Over 20 different blogs, magazines and online communities wrote articles about the movie. The positive side-effect of so much attention from authoritative news publications meant that an online search on the film, placed *The Editor* on Google's first page. An indication of high discoverability and very high ranking on search engines.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

[Nathalia Porras](#) is a marketing consultant specializing in digital marketing strategies, including social media management, online paid advertising and content marketing. She founded her own marketing consulting business in Montreal in 2014 after completing an MBA at HEC.

Nathalia brings with her over 11 years of business experience, helping companies develop marketing and business development plans by setting precise goals, have a well-devised CRM, build an online presence and expand reach to specific target audiences. Connect with Nathalia on LinkedIn at www.linkedin.com/in/nathaliaporras.

Her motto:

“There is no one-size-fits-all marketing plan or strategy — which is why the best tactics are refined over time by actually testing these out. Experience counts largely, especially in social media & digital marketing.”

ABOUT TELEFILM CANADA

Inspired by talent. Viewed everywhere.

Created in 1967, Telefilm is dedicated to the cultural, commercial and industrial success of Canada’s audiovisual industry. Through its various funding and promotion programs, Telefilm supports dynamic companies and creative talent here at home and around the world.

Telefilm also makes recommendations regarding the certification of audiovisual treaty coproductions to the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, and administers the programs of the Canada Media Fund and the Talent Fund, a private donation initiative. Visit telefilm.ca and follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/telefilm_canada and on Facebook at www.facebook.com/telefilmcanada.

For any questions regarding this study please contact Strategy and Research at sr@telefilm.ca

APPENDIX 1:

Indiegogo campaign

The screenshot shows the Indiegogo website interface. At the top, the Indiegogo logo is on the left, and navigation links for 'Explorer', 'Fonctionnement', and a search bar are in the center. On the right, there are buttons for 'LANCER UN PROJET', 'S'inscrire', and 'S'identifier'. The main content area features a video player with a play button and a YouTube logo. To the right of the video, the campaign title 'THE EDITOR a feature film giallo-comedy' is displayed, along with the creator's name 'Adam Brooks' and location 'Winnipeg, Canada'. A progress bar shows that \$18,740 USD has been raised from 199 donors, which is 114% of the \$16,500 flexible goal. Below the video, there are social media sharing icons for Facebook, Twitter, and Email. The 'Short Summary' section describes the film's premise: a once-great editor who becomes an amputee and is suspected of murdering his co-workers. The 'CONTRIBUTIONS' section lists two donation tiers: a \$5 tier with the message 'We're not mad... We're not mad, we're just disappointed. Sorry and thanks.' and a \$20 tier with the message 'Shout-out on Twitter! Ever heard of a Tweet? You're gonna be in'.

INDIEGOGO Explorer Fonctionnement

LANCER UN PROJET S'inscrire S'identifier

Fermé

THE EDITOR a feature film giallo-comedy

Help Astron-6 take on the giallo genre with style!

Adam Brooks
Winnipeg, Canada
À propos | Poser une question

\$18,740 USD recueillis par 199 donateurs

114% sur \$16,500 objectif flexible

PITCH MISES À JOUR COMMENTAIRES DONATEURS (199) GALERIE

Short Summary

Once revered as the greatest editor of all time, an editing accident reduced him to a ridiculed amputee. When his co-workers are murdered one after another, the editor is the prime suspect!

Has he lost control of his psycho-sexual subconscious like a modern day Dr. Jekyll or Wolfman? Not even he knows for sure!

Help us make the movies we've all been dying to see!
Hollywood ain't gonna do it.

Manborg was shot on standard-def video for almost nothing. Father's Day was shot on DSLR for ten thousand dollars. We want to take a swing at the big league on this absurdist giallo film and we need your help.

\$5 USD
We're not mad...
We're not mad, we're just disappointed.
Sorry and thanks.
3 réclames

\$20 USD
Shout-out on Twitter!
Ever heard of a Tweet? You're gonna be in

Examples of content marketing pieces that enjoyed high engagement across social channels:

The Editor updated their cover photo.
June 10, 2015 · 🌐

Like Comment Share Hootlet

222 people like this. [Top Comments](#)

2 shares

Write a comment...

Alex Kehagias Yes! Finallyyyyy
Like · Reply · June 10, 2015 at 1:11pm · Edited

Robert Gudino SWEET JESUS! This movie is awesome
Like · Reply · June 11, 2015 at 6:28am

[View 10 more comments](#)

The Editor added 6 new photos to the album: Behind the scenes — with Matthew Ward Kennedy and Alexander Neil McLellan.
December 5, 2014 · 🌐

Go behind the curtain. Feel the soul crushing and dream-killing for yourself.

Like Comment Share Hootlet

168 people like this. [Top Comments](#)

1 share

Write a comment...

David Macumber When is it on DVD? Haha I NEED to see this movie!
Like · Reply · November 24, 2014 at 7:45pm

The Editor updated their profile picture.
September 2, 2015 · 🌐

On shelves now!
Art by Juarez Ricci!

Like Comment Share Hootlet

72 people like this. [Top Comments](#)

1 share

Write a comment...

John Barnes I went to Barnes and Noble last week after seeing this but it wasn't out yet..Astron 6 says jump,I say how high?
Like · Reply · September 2, 2015 at 3:19pm

Quentin Ragnar Great read!
Like · Reply · September 2, 2015 at 2:54pm

John Barnes I went to Barnes and Noble last week after seeing this but it wasn't out yet..Astron 6 says jump,I say how high?
Like · Reply · September 2, 2015 at 3:19pm

APPENDIX 2: TIMELINE

The Editor – Timeline on Highlights on Marketing Activities and Distribution Plan

	Traditional marketing activities	Digital marketing activities
May 2013		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crowd-funding campaign gets started on Indiegogo: 2 months later, the campaign is complete • Announcement of Indiegogo campaign on the Astron 6 Facebook page
August 2013		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twitter account is opened
October 2013		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facebook page for <i>The Editor</i> movie is started. Content starts to be published continuously to build momentum
August 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Official teaser trailer commentary by Blood-bath & beyond (subscription base of 14k) is released on YouTube: watched by 7.3K people • TIFF releases the trailer for <i>The Editor</i> on its YouTube channel (44K subscription): trailer gets 50K views 	
September 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Editor</i> makes the cut at TIFF (Toronto International Film Festival) & Fantastic Fest in Austin, TX • The Globe and Mail publishes an article pre-release that very positively supports the film. Article gets 400 shares on social media • The movie makes it to the Calgary International Film Festival & the Vancouver International Film Festival 	
October 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Editor</i> is shown at the Chicago International Film Festival • <i>The Editor</i> is present at La Samain du Cinema Fantastique in Nice, France • <i>The Editor</i> is shown at Sitges Film Festival in Barcelona, Spain 	
November 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Editor</i> makes it to Monsterfest, Australia. Wins awards for best actor and best sound 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A second poster version is released on <i>The Editor's</i> Facebook page

December 2014		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A digital album with the soundtrack from <i>The Editor</i> is made available for purchase online by hook Lab
September 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Movie is released in the USA on September 8, 2015: distribution rights belong to Raven Banner Entertainment • DVD & Blu-ray are made available in Canada by Raven Banner. <i>The Editor</i> makes it to the cover of the Rue Morgue magazine • Parallel to the launch of the DVD the movie hits select theaters in Ontario, Toronto, Ottawa, Kitchener and Hamilton 	
October 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Editor</i> is available on iTunes Canada and Amazon Canada 	
February 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Editor</i> wins five awards at “The Windy Awards” in Winnipeg 	

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