

Álvaro Vega

Marketing & Publicity for Cinema – The Mentality to Promote

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ÁLVARO VEGA I worked at Vertigo Films for five years in Spain, specializing in international independent films. I've been responsible for the promotion of more than one hundred films, festivals, events, short films. The funny thing is that I started in this industry with no contacts, no specific background, no nothing. I just saw an offer on an employment website and sent my CV. There were 2,000 candidates and I was the only one doing something different. I gave them a call to express my interest. Nobody else did that. I'll talk a lot about how to make things different and how marketing is mainly a matter of attitude, mentality, a way of thinking.

After leaving this distribution company three years ago, I founded my own communication agency for the film industry, DobleSentido. Part of my job now is to travel around the world giving lectures on how to promote films, which is quite amazing, even to me. We not only work with films, but with festivals, events, short films. We had the great honour of handling the Spanish Oscar-nominated short film *That Wasn't Me*, managing the campaign in Spain and in Los Angeles.

When we think of marketing nowadays, we think of Facebook and Twitter, YouTube, social media, crossmedia, trans-media, all these trendy new concepts. We assume any film these days just needs a Facebook profile – which is not true. That would be like building a house starting from the roof. How many of you use Facebook? Most of you. Do you have this friend on Facebook where with everything he posts, he only gets one like, his own?

AUDIENCE I de-friended him.

VEGA Okay, well for me, we need to understand that marketing is not about the tools. Things change so fast nowadays. When we are writing or trying to produce a film, we try to convey deep human feelings and emotions. And when we're planning a marketing campaign, we try to find a formula. We need to have a trans-media strategy, for example, because that's what everybody is doing. It's not about that at all. You have to understand that we are people making films for other people, and when planning marketing or promotional campaigns, we are also planning them for them. Tools will change a lot. They have changed over the past thirty years, and will continue to change for the next one hundred years. But the basis of our job is, and will remain, the same one because, again, it's all about people, about human beings. Since prehistoric times, human beings have needed clothes, food, sex, entertainment. It's the same today and will be in a thousand years, too. Only the ways of satisfying these needs change. The needs do not.

This is something we can see very clearly in the first porn movie in history. Well, we're all adults, so let's have a look to this first porn movie in history. [video plays]

We need to be aware that the future of cinema is not about 3D technology or special effects. Cinema will always be about the stories, about the emotions, about people's interests and needs. So the key word for marketing is 'why'. It's important to always understand why things happen at all times. Why was the Western the most popular genre in the 50s and isn't anymore? Why do the vampires of thirty years ago look dark and frightening, and now they're high school students? Why

do certain films do great at the box office and others don't? Knowing the answers to these kinds of questions helps us come up with good strategies.

I always say that creativity is not a gift given by God to some chosen ones. Ninety-five percent of people who work in film marketing, in any sector, in any area, are mainly very well-informed people. They read a lot. They travel a lot. They research a lot. The more informed we are, the better we are at this job. Sometimes it's easy to see why things happen, for example: [plays a clip]. This is a very successful YouTube channel. She's a great singer and guitar player, which is why she's very successful, right? That's easy to understand.

Sometimes it's not that easy. This is the ninja cat [plays another clip], one of the most successful YouTube videos ever, with billions of views. There are thousands of versions from every country, parodies. Why? Who knows? Marketing is not an exact science. The film industry is a very tricky industry. Sometimes we don't really know why a film becomes successful. Marketing is not necessarily what achieves it, nor is the script, nor is the supposedly right distribution strategy. Sometimes it's just a matter of good luck. Because we don't really know where the clue to success is, we have to work hard in all areas to improve our chances.

In terms of marketing and publicity for cinema, let's say marketing is what we talk about as a whole, as a science, the science that makes a product saleable. Publicity is only a tool of marketing. In many sectors publicity is just a complementary or directly non-existent tool, but in cinema, it's the real starting point, something that must be managed. I will focus in this talk on how to take advantage of publicity. And let's try to make it practical.

Here's a sentence that says: "Publicity is the simple act of making a suggestion to a journalist that leads to the inclusion of a company or product in a story. Newspapers, magazines, TV programs and radio shows have large amounts of space to fill and depend upon publicists to help provide story ideas, interview subjects, background information or other material." Publicity is, in the very end, free promotion in media for our films, so the important thing is to take advantage of every opportunity for that. There is also, of course, paid promotion in media called advertising, as we all know. It's interesting to go through the differences between these two ways of communication to understand the importance of publicity in our promotion plan.

Here we have an example in *Fotogramas*, a film magazine in Spain about the film *I'm Not There* by Todd Haynes, with the review on the left and the advert we placed on the right. We will talk about the aspects of control, credibility and cost. We can't control the review since it comes from an independent source and is a personal take on what he or she saw. Here we have a five-star review, but it's very small on the page. However, when we are buying the space for an advert we can decide and control every detail. The level of credibility, though, is much higher when the message comes from an independent source than when there is someone talking about himself, highlighting his strongest points. In terms of cost, I said that publicity is free promotion in the media, but we must realize there is still a cost. This review did not appear in this magazine by chance. We need to inform journalists that the film exists, to organize a press screening, to rent a theatre, to send pictures and information. And there's someone managing all this, otherwise it's not going to happen.

It's funny, sometimes when you talk to producers in a very common conversation, you might ask them what they think about marketing for their project and how important they think it is. They admit that it's very, very important. When you ask, then, how much money they plan on investing in marketing, they tell you nothing. You might see a budget of two million euros and not even a line item for a still photographer, for example. Many producers don't understand that there's a cost behind good promotion and someone to manage it.

If we wonder which tool is more important, advertising or publicity, there is no answer. If we have the chance to use both, we need to find the right balance, a good mixture. The key question for me is which one is essential in cinema marketing plans, and we're going to see why publicity is the more essential.

Let's watch a video. [video plays] This is a presentation of *Inglourious Basterds* at Cannes with the Tarantino show. We see all the photographers, the red carpet. [another video plays] This is the arrival of The Rolling Stones in Berlin for the documentary *Shine A Light* by Martin Scorsese. Again photographers, red carpet, fans shouting ... [another video plays] And this is the arrival of Johnny Depp for the Los Angeles premiere of *Pirates of the Caribbean*. Shouts of "Johnny!"

The impact these kinds of events have in the following days all over the world for radio and TV shows, the Internet, newspapers, magazines ... how much would it cost if we had to pay for such a space? There's not enough money in the world to pay for this impact through an advertising campaign. And if we had it, remember we would not be sending such a trustful message as we do through these events.

The important thing is again to understand why things happen. Why do these events come together with all the press and the people there? The answer is that everyone loves cinema and that's a fact. We're working with the most popular pastime in the world. Cinema, along with music, is the most popular entertainment in the world, not sports, not fashion, not cars. Cinema is a part of us and, therefore, has the highest presence in media. The idea then is that we have access through publicity to any kind of media in the world. Every channel in all media has their own space for culture and for cinema. We have this option that so many other sectors don't have, so let's take advantage of it.

So now you're thinking, well, he showed The Rolling Stones and Johnny Depp and Quentin Tarantino. But, for example, what if I have a film in Venice that is about women's rights in Iran? This is the presentation of *Women Without Men* [plays video]. We see the crew dressed in green, the colour of hope, and doing the victory symbol. Okay, so this is not to say that to call attention to your film, you have to walk nude down the red carpet.

AUDIENCE I recall a Belgian movie where they all went naked on bicycles in Cannes, the producer, the actors and the director, all of them. It was great marketing.

VEGA Well, yes, other comedians like Sacha Baron Cohen use these kinds of publicity stunts all the time and it's right. But here this is a film, as I said, about women's rights in Iran, so they planned a very clever idea in sending the right messages about what the film is about. There's someone behind this, orchestrating and executing it all, and it does make a memorable impact. And it's no longer just one more film in the entire Venice selection. The competition is so big, and we really need to be more and more committed to these things. Sometimes it's going to be okay to go nude. Sometimes it's not. Just because there's no celebrity in your film, there's no excuse for not having a good marketing strategy and trying to do something that gets attention.

In conclusion, we can have a huge advertising budget and have a big blockbuster film, or we can have nothing like that, but we always have to maintain a standard on publicity, and that means working on it from the very beginning of the film. We will talk about when to start with these promotional ideas.

Once we know about its importance, what is marketing and publicity for cinema about? It's all about the content creation. But today we're living in the Twitter world, where new information, new headlines are produced in very short, very focused messages. New content is created in every

moment. So it's not just about content creation, but how valuable that is in this sphere. We need to offer something else no other competitor has. When people contact me to ask me what they can do to promote their finished film, my first question to them is why they didn't think about it before the film was completed. I'm sorry for what I'm about to say, but we aren't working with films, but with products. It may sound sad because we're all artists and have moving and important stories to tell, but you have a product.

As I told you, I don't come from cinema. When I started working with Vertigo, the distribution company, the films I was working with were so amazing, these great independent films. Gus Van Sant, Michael Winterbottom, David Lynch, great directors doing great work. I assumed because they were so great, they would be successful. I discovered quickly that audiences don't care at all. It's a very small and faithful audience for these kinds of films. But in terms of box office success, there are the romantic comedies and Hollywood blockbusters. It has nothing to do with the quality of the film. Americans build very good products to put out in the marketplace and European and independent cinema have difficulty competing with them.

For our product, we need to have a strong, solid and creative marketing plan from the very beginning. Without a plan, maybe you can end up having some luck, but otherwise it's pretty impossible. We need objectives and resources – budget, talent, creativity. But we need very specific objectives that are reasonable and ambitious, the maximum you can achieve with your film. Number one is to find an audience or as we call it nowadays, to create a community according to market rules. In order to find an audience, we need to know who they are. It's not about making a Facebook profile, and leaving it at that.

There are four parts to the decisions we have to make: product, place, price and promotion. In terms of product, we need to know what we're dealing with. The better we know our product the better we will be able to create the right strategy to promote it. This is always the first stage in the marketing process – analysis and positioning – which is as boring as it sounds but we have to do it. For the analyzing and positioning stage, we also have to pay attention to the environment, the market itself. It's what we call benchmarking, the job of finding and comparing, through research, what other films there are in the marketplace that are similar in subject matter and type. What kind of box office did they do? How many prints were delivered to cinemas? What kinds of windows were there for distribution, festivals, what kind of distribution numbers did they have? What kind of social media was used? We need all this information in order to do a competitive analysis. This all will help determine positioning in the marketplace, as well as what to avoid. This helps me decide what projects I will get involved in, or not. This process saves a lot of time and money.

Much of this information is easy to find nowadays. There are different websites where you can find figures on almost everything I mentioned. It's about knowing what's happening in our own business and trying to find the gap. At the end of all the research, we need to identify what's different in our project, to find its uniqueness – which is a big word. We're not pretending we're inventing the wheel. It's very difficult to invent the wheel again and again. It's been said that basically there are only six subjects in film that are treated over and over again. So it's about offering an added value, a different approach, something to highlight.

We now have a documentary about bees being released theatrically in Spain. I don't really know what makes it interesting for moviegoers, to be honest. Anyway, let's say that in handling such a product we manage to get Greenpeace involved, for example, with their finance and communication capabilities. Something needs to be found outside of just this documentary about bees.

Once we know what our film is and how to position it and what makes it engaging, we need to design our distribution strategy. We all basically know how the classic distribution model works. At an international level, we have a festival plan, and try to get a sales agent who will hopefully find distribution in different territories through local distributors, who will release the film nationally in theatres, DVD, VOD, paid and free TV and all the other exhibition windows.

At which festivals should I show my film? The answer is: at the right ones. The biggest aren't necessarily the best. It depends, again, on the type of film, the genre, the quality, the moment, together with the chances the marketplace offers. In documentary, for example, if I want to know which festivals are the best places to send my film, it takes a five-second search on Google to see what's listed as the top ten documentary film festivals, and their dates, profiles, information. Again, it's about informing yourself about what's happening and what environment is out there for your film. After this research, we can end up deciding not to send our documentary to documentary film festivals but to big A-class American or European festivals.

Have you heard about the San Sebastián International Film Festival in Spain? It's like our small Cannes, where everybody wants to be. It's in September by the seaside. The food is amazing, the weather... It's a high standard festival to show a film. Have you heard about Sitges? It specializes in horror films and is also international with a hugely dedicated audience committed to the genre. There are makers with horror films that would rather be in a parallel section at San Sebastián rather than a spotlight at Sitges. I keep seeing this same mistake made by some producers. It's common to want to be in the bigger festival, even if it's not the right one.

We also perceive that it's difficult to make a contract with a sales agent. Who are they? Where are they? Again, this could involve another five-second search on the Internet to look at various catalogues because sales agents need to sell themselves, as well. Without films, they have no business. They tout their selection and the worldwide successes of those films. Again, sometimes there is the assumption that the bigger the sales agent, the better. We want to sell our films through Celluloid Dreams, for example, instead of going with a smaller one that is going to take better care of your small film. And the way of consuming cinema is changing so much. It doesn't always center on going to the movie theatre, so it's important to find new alternatives like the day-and-date model. Is this option familiar to you?

By law in most countries, including Spain, after your theatrical release, you had to wait six months until the DVD could be released, then one-year for paid TV, and two years for broadcast television. Nowadays, this makes no sense. If it's a successful film, nobody wants to wait for two years to watch it on TV. The Internet allows multiple windows to open at the same time. Hollywood blockbusters can, and do, still follow this model, but for the release of a small film, it's sometimes more beneficial to have multiple releases on different platforms so you can create different audiences in a short time. That's what we know as day-and-date. We can have a small theatrical release in five theatres and also release the DVD, with VOD available a week later.

Searching for Sugarman got over €500,000 in the Spanish box office the same weekend it opened its VOD window. We need to offer these alternatives for different audiences now. We're consuming more and more films than ever, TV series, music... Exhibitors still worry they might be missing some part of their business because of this, but they wouldn't have those customers anyway who want to watch it on DVD or VOD. These people don't go to the cinema, perhaps, for smaller films. Also in the rural parts of the country or smaller cities and towns, they don't have as many theatrical options as we do in Madrid. One is not competing with the other. With this approach, we can also use the same publicity tactics and take advantage in this way of simultaneous releases on different platforms.

Today we're also playing with other new alternatives like event-driven releases or releases-on-demand. There can be something like twelve different releases every week, which makes it like a fast food consumption of cinema. So sometimes the idea of distribution is to make it exclusive, such as a two-night theatrical special event. Release-on-demand means that people participate and actually request the film, such as what happened with *Paranormal Activity*. As a user, you could vote for your city to be able to have the film released there and it was very competitive. This also minimized a lot of risk for the film's producers because there's a guaranteed audience. Even though not everyone who voted is going to watch the film in the theatres, it's still a great way to connect directly with audiences and bring them on board.

Do you know the film *Life in a Day*? Do you know how it was produced? It was meant to be released free online on a certain day on YouTube. The producers asked people to make short films and to send them in, creating a built-in audience for the film – its participants. The participants are also producers of the film. They sent three or four common questions to everyone in a massive publicity campaign to gather material. Four thousand five hundred hours of video was received from 192 countries. There was a three-day release on YouTube in 2011. It received tens of millions of views on its channel. They created a totally anti-intuitive distribution model. Because of the success of the publicity campaign through media, it was put into festivals like Sundance, into distribution in cinemas, DVD, television releases. It also received branding support from LG, who found it perfectly linked to their global marketing strategy based on the slogan "Life is Good". This is one example of how it's possible to expand and experiment now. How it's possible to break the rules and go through the production and distribution models so differently nowadays.

When you have a Plan A and a Plan B and nothing works, please remember we can still plan different alternatives to find audiences. We need to feed the mentality and the spirit of trying to go further. Let me show you another example. This headline says "The Spanish film that is promoted on Películas Yonkis". Películas Yonkis is one of the first websites we had in Spain that supplied illegal downloads of films before the attempt to create laws on how to legally consume content on the Internet. These guys had no success in the classical way of distributing films so they offered this website its first legal content. The industry complained so much about this website, so they made their film the first legal product on the site. They got lots of publicity and fifty thousand downloads when this article was written. And they got it with no money, 'only' with a good idea and the right attitude. We need to find alternatives if our plans don't work out. The other option is to keep our films in a drawer.

When we're clear in our minds about what the product is and how to position it, and we have a distribution plan, and know the cost of the film's exhibition life, we arrive at the shiny part of the marketing process – the promotion. But this won't be done well unless we've done the previous work. We need to define our target audience, and I encourage you to have this in your original plan: who are they socially and demographically, what are their motivations, behaviour, relationship to the film? If we know all this, we have many more options available to us rather than just chancing it. See this example about defining and finding audiences. This picture is taken in a theatre in Spain very close to my house. These old ladies are there every single day. It's a very 'dangerous' place if you're under the age of sixty. It's like a ghetto [laughter] No, seriously, this theatre programs the films these ladies really want to watch. They are a huge theatre audience and cinemas are catering to them. They don't play video games, they don't go to music festivals... cinema is their main entertainment. And there's someone behind this theatre who knows it and is feeding this demand. Someone who clearly defined a potential audience and is making the right decisions to bring them in.

So once we know who our potential audience might be, we need to define the message we will send them – a clear and direct message. We need to find quick, fast, focused and consistent

messages. A selling point. Here are two films starring Brad Pitt and the completely different messages they send us. Here we have Brad Pitt's name the same size as the title to say, "Come see the latest Brad Pitt film." It doesn't matter what it is. The other is a Terence Malick film that has Brad Pitt in it. Here we are watching the new film, not *with* Brad Pitt, but *by* Terence Malick.

With our target audience and messages defined, it's time to think in terms of the tools we'll use. We all know the traditional media (TV, radio, newspapers, magazines and outdoor) and the ones below-the-line (public relations, sponsorship, direct marketing, merchandising...). Along with all the traditional and alternative methods we've been talking about, the Internet has created this scenario where our worlds are socialized. We have the option of getting in touch with anybody in the world and promoting our content anywhere in the world. But it's more and more difficult and more and more necessary to highlight the content, otherwise it's just one more bit in a flood of content. Media can be anywhere and can go viral and be visible in so many places when we manage to create valuable content.

So how can we create this valuable content? Through valuable information. And how can we create valuable information? Our materials and actions determine this. So I mentioned that, more times than not, producers recognize the importance of this and the necessity, but still have no line item in their budgets when you can start creating valuable content during the shooting of the film, where you can capture the crew, the actors in action, a chance to collect interviews with everyone, an opportunity to do a making-of documentary of the film, stills from the set, etc. The shooting is so stressful, never enough time, never enough money. It's easy to suppose there's no time to think about marketing and that it will have to wait until the film is finished. But the opportunity to get this material is also gone, and then you don't have it to create marketing content.

We are all supposed to create the same classical materials for a film promotion: poster, photos, trailer, dossier, EPK, audio clips. So the idea when thinking in promotion is to go a bit further than that. A poster is a poster, I know, an image and that's it. We can't go further in that, can we? [plays a video] I don't know if you know about the motion poster or animated poster. On the streets, we see more digital screens and other opportunities in the public to see something a bit more eye-catching. They started to appear about four or five years ago, and they also provide worthy publicity on online and social media. But can we go further? The answer is always yes. [plays a video] Here is another motion poster where they are using an outtake from the shooting to send the right and strong message: it's a really funny comedy. But we have to understand there's someone behind all this who thought of shooting it to use it for publicity and promotion afterwards. In writing our stories and scripts, we are so creative and want to evoke the strongest feelings and emotions from our material. But in our promotional materials, we tend to be very traditional and derivative when it all should be approached in the same way.

Another way of creativity comes along with the different/new materials created out of the classical ones. [plays a video] Here for this film, *Rec*, they just put a camera on an audience and got reaction shots during its screening at the Sitges Film Festival. They took some of the best images of how scary it was, added some music and the awards they got in the festival to finish with the tagline "October 23rd experience the fear". It went viral and sent such a powerful and focused message. And they did it without showing a single second of the film. They didn't need a huge budget or lots of time. This probably cost only a couple of hundred euros to do and a few hours work. There's no excuse then. In marketing, we need to think about breaking the rules, and there should be no excuse about having no money or no time to do it. We 'only' need clever ideas. So videos, games, images, merchandising ... whatever it helps to spread the message in a creative, strong way – it's all useful.

Same mentality when we plan actions and events to create this valuable content. Actions like press conferences, interviews, junkets, festivals attendance, premieres, etc. are important. But we need to try to go further in this part, too. For instance, we're all familiar with how those premieres work – the red carpet, the lights, the crowds. Everyone from the film is there and they wave. They show the film. The crowd loves it. They applaud. And then everyone goes to a party. Because we are so used to these events, it's important to create new actions surrounding the promotion, too.

See what they did for the last *Iron Man* film in Madrid. Here's the Iron Man contest, a contest of men ironing. [laughter] This was staged in the very centre of Madrid. The prize for the winner was a one-week trip to New York. So many men came with their laundry and ironed in front of a jury of old ladies like the ones from the cinema I talked about before. It created a big buzz in media. See the image from Telecinco, one of the main Spanish broadcasters who also send us to their website for more information. See the journalist interviewing people who stopped there to take photos that they shared on their own social media profiles. It's the kind of funny, clever and successful stunts we're working on more often nowadays.

Here's another example for the film *The Last Exorcism*. The idea was based on this news item: "There are more and more cases of people who have demonic possessions. The main church representative in Madrid will choose eight priests to train them in the exorcism discipline". They then launched this website where they offer "free entrance for priests". [laughter] They gave priests the opportunity to improve their training in exorcism by watching the film for free. It was a friend of mine who created this campaign, so I asked her how many priests wanted to go see the film for free. She told me no one went. Maybe priests went incognito to the premiere. We don't know, but as far as she knew, no one officially took advantage of this generous offer. But it got good publicity and a lot of attention for the film, which is what they were actually looking for.

Apart from the more or less creative regular materials and actions, we have to think in terms of other types of content. We have to know that cinema is not only about going to a theatre to watch a film. We also have to think about social issues that are very common with which we can create synergies with different collectives or sectors apart from regular cinema-goers. For example, when we worked with the very popular *Millenium Trilogy*, we planned many events. The bigger the phenomenon is, the better chances you have of creating as many synergies as possible. That's our responsibility.

Here we have the mayor of Madrid introducing the third book [of Stieg Larsson], which was released at the same time as the first film [*The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*]. Here we have a premiere with Canal+, an important TV broadcaster. We have content in travel outlets like *The Traveler*, showing scenes of Stockholm where there are tours for fans of the books. Here we have something with a very famous Spanish writer reading from the books where images of the film were also used. Any way that we can get all sorts of interested groups involved in the promotion of the film is always worth a try.

The same with this example, the documentary by Martin Scorsese about *The Rolling Stones*, which is like candy for promotion. We made something again so many things: Canal+ again, the official radio station of The Rolling Stones in Spain, Vodafone, their record label, their guitar brand, exclusive clips with leader outlets... But the more options you have, the more committed you need to be. Just to have The Rolling Stones is not enough.

But synergies are not about how big is your film. We are obliged to find them for any film we work with. I don't know if you've heard of an Arabian film called *La graine et le mulet* produced in France. For the Spanish release, we made this small premiere in The Arabian House in Madrid, a place that is an Arab cultural centre where they screen films and have other activities. Ninety people came to their small screening room, but they were the ninety people we really wanted to watch the

film because their word-of-mouth is the one we need. The commitment to your audience is so important even if it's not that large.

Apart from synergies, we can also at some point have unexpected content. This can be positive or negative, opportunities or threats, so we have to take advantage of the first ones and try to avoid the rest. This film, *La source des femmes*, is about a sex strike by the women in a small Arabian village. The women wanted their men to build a system to bring water to the village because the women had to climb a huge mountain just to get water. From the Ministry of Culture, we received a qualification that said "specially recommended to promote genre equality". We didn't know what this was at first, but when we called, they told us they were launching the initiative to recognise films that had a strong and positive social message such as this one did for women's rights. We then decided to send out a press release to communicate what we found to be a very good and unexpected opportunity. The impact was amazing and an unforeseen benefit to promote the film. We reached a large audience, not only in mass media but also through the attention that was created in real target audiences such as the Association of Women Filmmakers, blogs like this one called Educating Equality, etc.

Here is footage of the Academy Awards when *Man on Wire* won the Oscar. [plays a video of a speech from Philippe Petit] This moment became one of the highlights of that night, even though the category is not an important one. So it was another kind of unexpected content we took advantage of.

However, as I said, negative issues can also arise that affect the promotion. In this case, sometimes there's nothing we can do besides try to minimize the impact.

Finally, we can include provoked content. I don't have any examples, but we all know there's also fake content we can create or provoke to get publicity. This is something I personally don't like. I believe in finding the options and alternatives the film itself can provide. But this is a choice that people in publicity and promotion have to make –whether to use content like this or not when they promote a film.

Once we have the content, marketing and publicity for cinema is about communication. Nowadays it's not just a matter of sending a press release to journalists, like it was twenty years ago. The consumer has become the centre of it all by sharing the messages we create. And, like I've said, there are a multitude of media channels we can use, 360-degree communication. The Internet has changed the rules of everything. We can get in touch with journalists and opinion-leaders so easily, as well as the audience, which is always the ultimate focus. We need to use all the communicational opportunities we have in our hands wisely.

In this sense, what I see more and more nowadays is people very concerned about trans-media strategies. Ok, yes, it's like the brand new formula to get success, even though we don't know what it is. We need to have a trans-media strategy because everybody talks about it. Wrong. Forget about trying to define this new and wonderful tool, which we can calmly say is based on the same work we've been doing for ages. The only change is that today we have so many media, platforms and possibilities to use that the way to promote one or various stories for the same goal can become more complex and elaborate. But that's it. What we need, again, is a good idea and we'll find the tools.

I will show you a video that, for me, explains this much better than delivering a thesis on what trans-media is. [plays video – *The 'Turn Me On' sex line*, a free service to teens to promote a film] This is a very smart campaign with a great idea that took advantage of different media and outlets

and all the options we have at our disposal. They used a mix of publicity, advertising, public relations and creative events to promote the same thing: a film. That's all we need to understand.

As we finish, this is a very small, but very important part of the lecture for me, and that is to talk about the power of persuasion. Let's say that anyone can communicate, but not anyone can persuade. Eighty to eighty-five percent of my job is based on the quality of the product I'm working with. If I'm working with an Oscar campaign, it's going to get publicity for sure, even though I'm a weak professional. If I have a very small independent film, it's going to be a bit harder and this is where your powers of persuasion come in. It makes all the difference, this fifteen percent, to persuade opinion-makers of the quality of the film. It's crucial here to build relationships of trust, something we do in everyday life, but in this business, it's essential.

Finally, marketing and publicity for cinema is about follow up. Following up is so important – to notice what kinds of first reactions are happening after a festival attendance, for example, to collect valuable information and react to that. This is the time to decide whether or not I need to make changes in my initial plan.

To finish up, here's a whole publicity campaign with an example of creative advertising. It's an animation film made in the 21st century – where all the Pixar or animation studios films or blockbuster films are having their greatest successes. But here is an animation film in black and white – it's 2D, not 3D – about the revolution in Iran from a girl's perspective. It's called *Persepolis*. As a product, this would appear to be a bit difficult to sell, but it had many strong points. It's based on the successful and very re-known comic books by Marjane Satrapi, so they counted on a large potential audience from the starting point. The production money came into the project quite 'easily'. They signed a deal with a big sales agent, Celluloid Dreams, and were chosen for the official selection at Cannes, having already sold the film to many territories. As the Spanish distributors, we started our communication with the festival premiere, and offered interviews with Marjane Satrapi and her co-director. It won a jury prize at Cannes, so we also transmitted this information.

We sent out all the press materials. And the week before the film's release in Spain, we decided to send the film to a festival that is still important although not that well known outside of Spain. Instead of having the Spanish premiere in a parallel section at San Sebastián, we were the opening film at Seminci [Valladolid International Film Festival]. It became something that people were really anxious to watch. We brought Satrapi to Valladolid, where she appeared in the largest publicity spaces at the festival. When the film was released, we got newspaper and magazine covers, appeared in the top women's publications, websites, TV, radio stations – it was a huge campaign. This level of promotion we only see, for the most part, for big romantic comedies and other blockbuster films. We had a built-in audience of the readers of the comic book on which the film was based, and there was, of course, the success in Cannes. There was also the unexpected content when the film was banned from playing at some festivals, which is always controversial and a good communication weapon.

For the advertising campaign, we made this leaflet. I'm not a comic book reader and I didn't know about *Persepolis* before. I didn't know anything about the Iranian revolution. But after reading it, I found a really amazing story that anybody would love. Then, for the outdoor campaign, instead of placing the poster classically in bus stops and other typical locations, we designed this leaflet. It has the poster image on its cover and the synopsis, the cast and crew and a couple of reviews on the back, together with the comic book cover. We made this in partnership with the editor to make it recognizable. And for the inside, we placed the first chapter of the comic book with the sentence "To be continued..." and the date the film would play in the theatres. These were handed out in

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underground stations as we all know people read while traveling. It was a different and creative outdoor advertising campaign with a hook.

The film didn't really work in theatres. It didn't do good box office. But the strategy and campaign were strong and made sense. It was the right one for this film, and that's what we have to chase in promotion. Even though we know success doesn't depend on the marketing campaign alone. The date, the number and distribution of the prints, the competition and the weather are also variables. But that's our responsibility.

So I hope you can take away this idea of the importance of the different aspects of marketing and promotion. Remember it's mainly a mentality, an attitude, a way of thinking. And above all, remember the few messages we have been repeating again and again. Be committed, be creative, let's go further. And, never forget it... [plays video from *Star Wars* kids' reactions and the sentence "We love cinema".]

Applause.