



Data Guides Perfect Aim

VIACOM VANTAGE LINKS WITH MOVIO TO GET THE BIGGEST BANG FROM STUDIOS' ADVERTISING BUCKS By James Linhardt

When filmmakers, studios and exhibitors consider how to connect a new film with its potential audience, they all share the same goal: They want to convince viewers to get off the couch, buy a ticket and a popcorn, and invest in the communal experience of cinema.

A darkened theater with a large glowing screen remains the place where a movie can make the biggest impact, flourishing as a proper spectacle and not just another form of "content."

As *Variety* critic Owen Gleiberman put it in a 2017 piece reflecting on the glory days of the pre-VOD era: "The audience, united in holy silence, looked up at the screen to gaze at stars who were like oversized gods... They took the rows of worshipers and swept them up into a dream of what life was, and what it could be."

Audiences know that's the ideal way to watch a movie and studios agree. But with rising ticket

costs and overwhelming competition from other forms of screen-based media, there's never been a more challenging moment to connect audiences with the wonders of the big screen. For every recent success story like "Black Panther" and "A Quiet Place," there are hundreds of worthwhile features that struggle to find the right theatrical audience.

In addition, the cost of marketing films has ballooned over the past decade — and so has the pressure on studio marketers to ensure they're reaching the audiences most likely to see a particular film in theaters. Many are turning to data to do it, but that's not as simple as it sounds.

"Here's the challenge in marketing movies with data," says Gabriel Bevilacqua, senior vice president of product management for Vantage, Viacom's advanced audience platform. "There aren't a lot of widely available data sources that help you understand viewership around specific titles."

In partnership with leading movie data analytics company Movio, Vantage provides film studios with precise, impactful marketing solutions that get the right message to the right audience at the right time.

Over the past eight years, Movio, in partnership with cinema exhibitors, has built the world's most comprehensive database of moviegoers.

It includes over 100 million individuals across 39 countries,

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CRAIG JONES

chief commercial officer, Movio

"Movio is the partner we were looking for for a while," Bevilacqua says.

"Movio brings those insights around not just large-scale movie-going behavior, but insights into the specific titles and genres.

"And they're able to assemble all that data and help us put the right audiences together for a studio marketing partner."

and close to 750 million ticket transaction records for over 5,000 film titles.

Viacom, with its suite of premier TV brands, is able to connect Movio's market data and audience insights to set-top box viewing data. That lets Vantage create a newly sophisticated targeting approach focused on reaching infrequent or occasional moviego-

ers — the people Bevilacqua calls the “swing voters” of theatrical marketing.

According to Craig Jones, Movio’s chief commercial officer, “both Movio and Viacom recognized there was an opportunity to combine our respective strengths to offer something truly game-changing to studio marketers.

“Every moviegoer is unique,” says Jones. “However, in the past studios have had limited access to data to be able to understand the behavior of moviegoers.

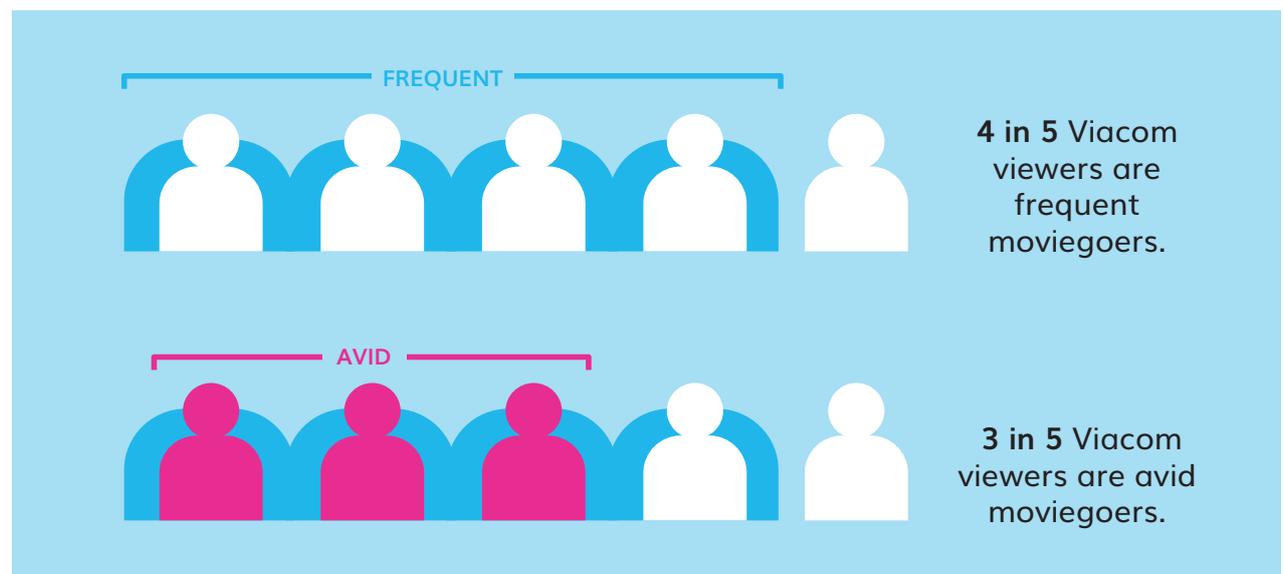
“Generally speaking, they had to rely on assumptions based on demographics or a movie’s tone, content and genre as the proxy for identifying who the likely audience for a particular film is.”

Such broad assumptions can lead to wasted marketing dollars, Jones argues. “One example that we’ve been able to uncover in our data is that the audience will evolve throughout a theatrical run.”

Opening weekends, he explains, see a disproportionate number of males under 30 buying tickets, while females are underrepresented.

But the proportion of female ticket buyers grows over time, and the over-50 audience doesn’t show up until the end of week one.

“So if all the marketing dollars are spent upfront, you’re potentially missing those moviegoers who are likely to see your movie and therefore, leaving money on



the table.”

By leveraging Movio’s moviegoer database and machine learning technologies, Viacom can build customized audience segments for upcoming film titles based on the actual behavior of previous moviegoers.

According to Bevilacqua: “We build an audience specifically designed around comparable films or the titles that we’re planning to market.

“We are then able to look across all of the programming on Viacom, and say, ‘What are the right spots in our grid that will deliver a higher concentration of this audience that we’ve defined?’”

These audience segments can be entered into Vantage’s platform to optimize ad scheduling to reach a potential moviegoer across all of

Viacom’s media.

Then, by combining ticket purchase data with TV viewership data, Viacom and Movio can provide studios with a view of how effectively their marketing drove attendance for a particular film.

The goal of Viacom and Movio’s precision guided marketing is to sway those persuadable “swing voters” by breaking the wasteful habits advertisers developed over time.

“If you get it right,” says Bevilacqua, “you’re creating value for everyone through the chain.”

For both partners, the ultimate goal is to reacquaint audiences with the glory of the theatrical experience.

“Movio’s mission as a company is to connect everybody with their ideal movie so they can experience

the magic of cinema,” Jones says. “We exist to help exhibitors and studios around the world maximize the number of people that attend the cinema.”

The strategy aims to deliver audiences in large numbers by taking stock of what makes moviegoing so appealing to each individual consumer, creating tailored marketing plans that are as dependable as a recommendation from a friend.

Viacom and Movio’s proposition is that what every moviegoer wants most is to have their specific tastes and preferences understood, which makes every ticket purchase a safe bet on a valuable — and sometimes unforgettable — bigscreen experience.

For more information on Movio, go to www.movio.co.

