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CASE STUDY

Situation Analysis

In order to provide a viable alternative to illegal movie downloads, five major movie studios joined forces to launch Movielink, a movie download service providing access to top tier studio movies for the very first time. When Movielink launched, the movie download market was nascent, targeted primarily to early adapters and “road warriors.” Over the course of its lifespan, Movielink offered numerous innovations, including the ability to stream while the video was being downloaded and downloading to own among others, expanding its audience base considerably. The library grew way beyond the original partners to include a broad spectrum of independent, foreign, genre and television content. Movielink also provided an opportunity to test different ways to market online films and test price points. Ultimately, Movielink’s role in building the online marketplace resulted in its sale to Blockbuster.

Strategy

From the very beginning, the strategy for Movielink was to evangelize digital downloading of movies, focusing on ease of use, portability and the first time availability of top tier studio films. As the market began to mature, the priority was on expanding the audience, generating awareness for the broad range of film and television content available, as well as for Movielink’s superior performance.

In addition to leveraging the announcements of exclusive content, library acquisitions and new technology capabilities, the strategy focused on securing reviews and generating stories about the value of movie downloads for various audience segments, from business travelers to moms-on-the-go. We put out news on the most down loaded movies of the week, eventually securing a regular chart, encouraged studios to announce that their movies were available day-and-date with their street release where applicable, placed items on which celebrities were downloading movies and created stories around such big movie events as the Sundance Film Festival and Academy Awards. We also developed b-roll that could be used for broadcast and online coverage.

In addition to reaching out to consumer tech writers at a broad range of consumer outlets (men’s, women’s, parents, lifestyle, entertainment), we also encouraged movie critics to try Movielink and write about their experiences.

Results

During the course of MPRM's relationship with Movielink, which began with its predecessor Moviefly and ended with its acquisition by Blockbuster, Movielink was covered multiple times by every major trade and consumer outlet. In addition to covering breaking Movielink news, they ran features and reviews, and included Movielink in trend and roundup stories. Movielink was featured in publications ranging from airline magazines to lads and gear publications to family and parenting outlets from the New York and Los Angeles Times to USA Today and Wall Street Journal, from Video Business to Hollywood Reporter, Daily Variety and Multichannel News to Time and Newsweek. The service was also featured on broadcast and cable entertainment news reports and included in radio station giveaways.