

There are several reasons why this book could be useful to independent filmmakers. The first is that it gives a very broad, step-by-step approach to marketing and distributing your movie in what is now considered a new wild west of indie distribution. The second, and what I feel is a more important reason of why independent filmmakers should shell out for this book is that it reinforces the idea that they are not alone in their struggle to bring their films to the market, and to their audience. The information contained in the book are certainly textbook marketing tips, tricks, and truths, but also it is the story of how the movie BOMB IT! got from point A to point B, and provides a rough blueprint as to how a filmmaker might take advantage of the new hybrid theories of marketing and distribution to get to where they want to be as well.

Several aspects of this book work very well for documentaries while narrative filmmakers will have to do some creative adapting in order to get the most out of the info in “Think Outside the Box Office”. Why it might seem that some of the sections in this book that deal with educational licensing might not apply to you, just keep in mind that a film like “Birth of A Nation” is now considered to be required watching in film history classes as well as American History classes. Same goes with made-for-TV movies like “Roots”. So if there is a market in the education field for their movies, you might be able to use some of the info in this book to do the same for yours.

This book focuses a lot on finding and maintaining your audience through repeat contact, clever marketing, and social innovation. You may have made a movie with one particular theme or subject, but this book shows that there are many different audiences for it, and gives some guidelines as to how to find those audiences. While it does seem that a lot of Jon’s methods involve spending quite a bit of money on your marketing plan and distribution (he follows Ted Hope’s theory of a 50/50 marketing budget (50 percent of your total production budget goes to the film, while the other 50 percent goes to the P&A)), I believe that most of what is covered can be done cheaper. That doesn’t necessarily make either opinion right or wrong, but filmmakers reading this book should keep in mind their overall budget and plan accordingly. That being said, Jon makes a great point of starting you marketing very early into your production, and possibly even into pre-production.

“Think Outside the Box Office” is an ambitious book by Jon Reiss. It attempts to fit the whole of cinematic marketing and distribution into roughly 350 pages. What Jon has attempted is no small feat, but I certainly believe that this book is a good starting reference for indie filmmakers who feel lost in the woods. More information on this book, as well as a continued

dialog with Jon and other filmmakers can be found over at www.thinkoutsidetheboxoffice.com

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