

STRATEGIC USE OF AIDA MODEL IN NEW MEDIA TO RAISE FUNDS FOR FILM MAKING – A STUDY OF CROWD FUNDED FILMS

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ABSTRACT

Crowd funding is an emerging and innovative online platform that provides small businesses and startups with opportunities to increase their social media presence, investment base, and funding prospects. Crowd funding, a popular concept started in the **US** and the **UK**, is an emerging way of raising capital. Aspirants use internet or social networking sites such as Face book or LinkedIn or Twitter or even some dedicated websites.

This study proposes a strategy for using AIDA Model in social media to raise funds for film making. AIDA stands for Awareness, Interest, Desire and Action (AIDA) model. The AIDA model has been applied widely for online marketing strategy but its applicability for raising funds remains unknown. But in Indian context there are few films made out of fund raised by the public. In this study two crowd funded films, Kannada film Lucia (2013) and Punyakoti (Ongoing project) has been selected. A case study method was adopted to explore the data. Existing literature, secondary sources from websites and social networking sites were extensively studied. This study will serve as a guideline for amateur film makers on how to strategically use social media for film making.

Key words: Crowd funding, Crowd funded Cinema, AIDA Model, New Media

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Introduction

Due to its popularity and widespread use, social media has been seen as a new platform which can be used as a tool to raise funds. It is a competitive marketing weapon by business firms. But in what extent new media can be used as marketing tool is unclear. And it is well established fact that AIDA model is a guiding principle in marketing. This theory is well exploited by marketers especially advertisers to persuade people to take an action. AIDA model has been used widely in business activities either based on traditional methods or online. However, its applicability in the context of social media remains unknown and it needs extensive research. This paper presents a study which investigates how AIDA models can be used strategically to raise funds to make films.

Crowd funding is an emerging and innovative online platform that provides small businesses and startups with opportunities to increase their social media presence, investment base, and funding prospects. Crowd funding, a popular concept started in the US and the UK, is an emerging way of raising capital. Aspirants use internet or social networking sites such as Face book or Linked In or Twitter or even some dedicated websites.

Schwienbacher and Larralde (2010) define crowd funding as an open request 1, essentially through the websites, for the provision of financial resources either in form of donation or in exchange for some form of reward.

Crowd funding is a new method for funding a variety of new start up projects, allowing aspirant for business, cultural, or social projects to request funding from mass, often in return for future products or equity. The goal of crowd funding may vary from artistic ventures to business projects. Enterpreneurs try to seek monetary investment to seed capital (Schwienbacher and Larralde, 2010).

AIDA Model

AIDA model is a marketing theory; it posits that customers can be persuaded in a process. AIDA refers to Attention, Interest, Desire and Action. E. St. Elmo Lewis introduces this concept in 1898. AIDA is abbreviation that is used in marketing and advertisement; it describes general

phase of incidents, which is possible to happen when a customer exposed to certain advertisement.

According to Li dan Yu, 2013(as cited in Ernani Hadiyati. 2013), AIDA consists of four phases of prospective customers persuasion. It involves Awareness (Knowledge about product); Interest (improving customers' interest by focusing on benefits that they are going to get). Desire (convincing the customers the product or service they are exposed can fulfill their needs); Action (finally customer come to a decision and act according to the intention of advertisers).

According to Rowley, (2002) the AIDA model has been widely adopted in formulating marketing strategies in business. This marketing communication model focuses on the transaction and purchases performed by individuals. The emphasis is given to the recognition of the existence of a product or service. In the digital world, marketing communications stress three important steps which are creating the existence of a product or service, building relationships, and creating mutual value with customers.

AIDA Model and crowd funding

Many business houses use crowd funding as a strategy to get financial resources to their business. Today as we are in digital age there are many online platforms to raise funds from the publics. The process of crowd funding through online goes like this

Attention

Crowd funding portals in the first instance try to define their target audience then try to grab their attention. They will find their target audience by categorized search in social media. Then the campaign is shared from a friend on their network. They will upload an attention-grabbing headline or blurb to raise an eyebrow. The message is in accordance with what the audience want to read and speak their language. The message not only captures the attention and assures the target t is worth their time to read the rest of campaign.

Interest

Once they elicit attention the next step is to create interest on the product, cause, company or campaign. For example, if any company want to raise money for a project then it is necessary to clearly explain the value of the project. One of the best ways to build interest with the audience is a cleverly crafted video, write ups photographs etc. so that the organization make itself familiar with the target audience. Short, informative and persuasive videos are the perfect way to entertain and influence your crowd.

Desire

This is the stage where like it transforms to want it. Out of four stages of AIDA it is one of the crucial stage. In this stage the message highlight the profit that the investor going to get. So skillfully written pieces can arouse interest in the minds of people

Action

This is the final stage in AIDA Model. It is the time for taking action. Here company makes call to actions this will lead the audience into taking action right here. Clear and concrete information on taking action is given here.

Crowd funding in Cinema

Although, crowd funding is common phenomenon in business operations, the cultural industries, such as film, documentary, have been taking a large share of the crowd funding market (Boeuf, Darveau, Legoux, 2014). In major crowd funding platforms like kickstar there were over 294 thousand projects in all artistic categories, nearly 55 thousand projects in the category of video/film, and within this category over 600 ‘live’ projects (Urszula Kaczor, Paweł Kossecki, 2015)

The concept of online crowd funding is new to the country like India, especially for the film industry. But still the concept is catching up fast. The dearth of investors has led many Indian filmmakers to seek help of digital platform. Eschewing patronage and subsidy, the filmmakers

who make independent cinema are relying on new and creative ways to fund their works, by directly reaching out to their audiences.

Through solid content and creativity young directors created a new wave in cinema industry. Crowdfunding arrived as a silverline for this young directors to break monotonous content and showcase their talent (Adiga Shrinidhi, 2017)

Even though there are attempts to raise funds to make movie the academic research of crowd funding is still in the infant stage, especially if we consider the research conducted in a part of a particular domain, e.g. the crowd funding for art and cultural events. Urszula Kaczor, Paweł Kossecki (2015). So this research paper aims to explore information on crowd funded cinemas in India, the strategies used by online platforms to raise the funds on the theoretical background of AIDA Model.

Crowd funded cinemas in India

The idea of crowd funding is not new in India. Places of worship, for example, are built overnight using a large number of donations. However, the concept of online crowd funding is new to the country. It can be said that India has a history of crowd funding a long before the term was coined. The story of the Reliance Industries founder Dhirubhai Ambani is classic example for crowd funding. His small yet growing textile business was crowd funded by communities across the Gujarat.

Indian film industry has a crowd funding history for long. The movie Manthan was funded in 1975 with 2 Rupees from 5 lakh farmers. Manthan (1976) made by Shyam Benegal, was the movie which showed the power of “collective might”. The film went on to win the National Film Awards in multiple categories in 1977 and was also nominated for the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film for 1976.

The concept of crowd funding has provided new opportunity for the Indians who want to make different movies that can allow them to establish their identity in the Indian cinema, e.g.

Director, Onir produced film “I AM” with the help of crowd sourcing. This film was financed by donations from more than 400 different people around the world.

Another greatest example for crowd funded cinema is Lucia (2013). *Lucia* is an Indian Kannada romantic psychological thriller film written and directed by Pawan Kumar. It was funded by more than 100 investors who contributed to the project through social media pages like Facebook page and a blog managed by director cum actor Pawan Kumar. It was the first Kannada movie to break the traditional film financing model.

The next venture is *Placebo* (2014) It is not only a successful project as mainstream cinema but also made a mark as a crowd funded film. Film maker Abhay Kumar created a new record with his documentary *Placebo*, raising over Rs.5 lakh in a year’s time. Punyakoti (Yet to release) is India’s first animated film in Sanskrit. The movie is crowd sourced.

Most of the films produced with the help of crowd sourcing have used online platforms like, facebook, blogs and crowd funding platforms like kickstarter.com, ketto, wishberry etc. So this paper aims to study two successful crowdfunded film projects of India, i.e, Lucia and upcoming project Punyakoti. Their crowd funding strategies with a theoretical background of AIDA Model.

Objectives

- To find out how crowd funding can play as a funding source.
- To analyze success stories of crowd funding and strategy employed.
- To find out strategic use of AIDA Model in crowd fund raising
- To find out limitations of crowd funding in India

Methodology

This study adopted qualitative approach with secondary data analysis. The information collected by various crowd funding platforms, blogs and newspaper reports are analyzed. Two successful projects; Kannada film ‘Lucia’ (2013) and ongoing project, Sanskrit film ‘Punyakoti’ is selected for the study.

Successful projects

Lucia

Lucia is an Indian Kannada romantic psychological thriller film written, co-edited and directed by Pawan Kumar. The film managed to raise 51 lakhs. It stars Sathish Ninanam and Sruthi Hariharan. The film's plot is about Nikki, an usher in theatre who suffers from insomnia but after consuming a special pill, he gets immersed with a different kind of dream. *Lucia* was the first Kannada film to be crowd funded by the people which is considered as trend setter in crowd funded cinema in kannada movie industry. *Lucia* premiered at the London Indian Film Festival on 20 July 2013. It won the Best Film Audience Choice award at the festival.

It was also among the films shortlisted by the FFI for Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film for the year 2013. The film was also remade in Tamil as *Enakkul Oruvan* starring Siddharth and Deepa Sannidhi.

Punyakoti:

Punyakoti is an upcoming Sanskrit language Indian animation film directed by Ravi Shankar V. *Punyakoti* is the first Sanskrit animated movie that is likely to be completed in 2017. The movie is crowd funded and crowd sourced. It is an adaptation of a picture book for children written by Ravishankar

Analysis

The selected two movies are analyzed on the basis of how independent filmmakers and creative directors can use digital platform as an alternative funding source and what are the tactics one can adopt to elicit larger amount.

Strategy employed

Movie Lucia has almost 600 investors as producers which managed to raise 51 lakhs within 31 days. Interestingly it all started with a lot of frustration on Pawan's part, about being unable to fund his film. (Rakesh, May 2)

Creating Awareness

After months of chasing producers and sponsors, the director of 2011 film 'Lifeu Ishtene' was at the end of his wits and uploaded an outraged blog post titled 'Making Enemies', that interestingly describes his 'gut feeling' about how Lucia could become 'a cult film for the Kannada industry'. It also expressed his grievances with the difficulty of funding the film, and the audience's obsession with watching films starring celebrities and 'big names. (as cited in page Lucia) This post immediately aroused attention of the audience. The response to this blogpost was overwhelming, and this was when the concept of crowdfunding first entered the picture.

Interest

The director of the film had earlier expressed his frustration about no producers for his film and he asked for suggestions. The space for public suggestion actually created interest among the people. His fans and friends on Facebook reacted to it and many suggestions started reacting to his post. In his own words " My page was bombarded with emails, smses, pings, chat posts etc etc. Everyone coming together to pour in ideas and solutions. Majority of them have suggested to open a public funding and produce the film with the help of the audience!"

Creating Desire

Three days after the post was published, the response was so overwhelming that he decided to pitch the idea of inviting people to produce the film and Pawan Kumar initiated Project Lucia. Lucia is notable for its use of crowd funding technique.

Action

"Around 10 days after I put up the post, a lady from the UK transferred 200,000 rupees (around \$3,200) to my account. Soon, I had around 800,000 to 900,000 rupees in my account. That is when I realized I was on to something," the filmmaker told in one of the interviews with Reuters. *"They never looked at me as a guy from the industry who might be trying to loot them in the name of entertainment. They looked at me as a guy next door, who was aspiring to do something new,"* Pawan explains in his blogpost. *"And that is why they supported me unconditionally. So, when I told these people, that I will make an honest attempt to make a feature film in Kannada*

and to put this film on a global platform, they just supported the vision of the project: to take Kannada cinema to a global audience’.

Pawan’s goal was to raise 50 Lakh in 100 days, but within 27 days they were able to reach the target and in 31 days 51 lakhs were collected. As the film gained popularity, he realised that there were viewers who wanted to watch it on the big screen, which again was an expensive step. At this point, he had used the strategy of online distribution. He requested the audience to pre-order the film and then they can share the film with someone so that they can get the commission. The digital distribution experiment was a big hit.

Apart from funding, Pawan got an overwhelming support from many bangaloreans. Many social media users after reading his facebook request on the requirement of specific locations, offered Pawan to shoot the scenes at their home, office. Along with that Poornachandra .T a musician by passion sent a tune for the title song (Rao,2012,June 25).

So the project Lucia persuaded people to take action in every step of film making, right from the budgeting to distribution.

The film went on to premiere at the London Indian Film Festival 2013, where it won ‘Audience Choice Award’ and it has also been remade in Tamil. The legalities.

Crowdfunding India's first Sanskrit animated film

Punyakoti is India’s first animated film in Sanskrit. It is based on a popular folksong from South India. Punyakoti was started as an experiment. Nearly 35 animators all over the world are working on the project. It also tries to review the Sanskrit language, especially among the younger generation. The film is a debut venture by Ravi Shankar who is a multimedia expert and the head of human resources at Infosys. The legendary filmmaker Sri Ilayaraaja is composing the music for the film.

Strategy employed

Creating Awareness about the project

Usually online crowdfunding project needs a strong and supportive fan base. In the project Punyakoti in its initial stage wanted to build a fan base. For that it was necessary for them to create an awareness about the upcoming project. First of all the team Punyakoti started identifying the audience to spread the message. The message stressed the information like

- Only Sanskrit animation film in the world
- It is important to revive the Sanskrit Language.
- The film is going to be India's first crowd sourced animated film with technical assistance of 35 animators from all over the world.

To target the right audience the Facebook groups of Sanskrit lovers, Animation groups Ilaiyaraaja's fan communities were targeted. At the same time Twitter, Media portals are effectively used to carry Punyakoti story. Gradually social media pages started getting followers.

Creating Interest

Once Punyakoti's social media pages started getting followers, it was time to engage with them. The following content were shared as a part creating interest in the project.

- Updating real time events and progress of the project
- Honest appeals from the campaigner
- Creating Interest through other Media

Whenever there is media coverage on the project the same was uploaded in the social media page so that their interest in the project kept intact. Additionally on the Face book page the updates about Punyakoti was shared to identified groups. Project updates and tweets were sent to the Prime Minister Narendra Modi other administrators like Sushma Swaraj, Subramanian Swamy and Smriti Irani. This helped get more public attention. Even the campaign gained media attention.

Creating Desire

According to the team Punyakoti, the webpage was made so that people who are visiting the official website of Punyakoti could also see the crowd funding pitch video immediately.

This made more and more fans engaged in the project. Immediately after creating interest among the audience it was time to strengthen crowd funding campaign and motivate people to lend their money. So to request funding from public following strategies were employed.

- Close networks in the sites were reached personally.
- Contacts on Facebook and LinkedIn were a request letter in various rounds. A bunch of emails were sent to the people in first round. In next round again a batch of e mails were sent to the people who were not opened their earlier mail. This process was continued until all the contacts were opened the mail.
- Stress was laid on the news that people from all over the world were funding the movie.

Action by audience

Punyakoti raised Rs. 41 lakhs from 282 funders all across the globe.

Findings

Crowd funding will be blessing in disguise for the mature creative filmmakers who don't have financial backup. It encourages the creativity of film makers without any interference from production houses. This study examined the strategies that need to be addressed by the film makers. The study provides guidance to the aspirant film makers to use the new media efficiently and effectively. Crowd funding in social media follows certain steps. The initiators shall;

- Identify the crowd funding platform and identify the target audience.
- Introduction of the project should highlight the importance of the project and why people should invest in the project. In this stage awareness about the project must be created.
- In next stage interest can be created by emotionally persuading the people and revealing the information on the project.
- Third stage must concentrate on updates about the project. If there is any contributions that should be consistently posted in the pages so that a desire of contribution can be created.
- Finally action can be motivated. Receive the contributions made by the people. But keep on updating the progress of the project. Finally after completion of the project it is time to return the reward to the participants.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that crowd funding is rapidly being looked upon as a serious way of raising funds for filmmaking in India. This study highlights the fact that the new media can play an important role in providing monetary assistance to new film makers. The new film makers need to be competitive and strategically competent enough to raise funds. The AIDA Model can be a useful strategy to raise funds.

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