



2013 PROMOTIONAL CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW

Objective

The objective of this year's promotional campaign is to improve the Visions Film brand and image as a leading undergraduate film festival and conference. We will accomplish this by achieving the following goals.

1. *Increasing festival attendance and video race registration by 15%.*
2. *Increasing film and abstract submissions to 65 and 25 for this festival year, respectively.*
3. *Increasing grassroots buzz about the festival through social media and the official website, reaching 1K "likes" on Facebook, 100 followers on Twitter, and 3K unique visitors per month to the website by the day of the event.*
4. *Improving media coverage of the actual event.*
5. *Attracting more high-profile sponsors for cross-promotional endorsements and contributions.*

Target Audience

Primary audience: International, but mostly national, regional, and local undergraduate film students.

Secondary audience: Companies, organizations, and industry professionals with an interest in film, the arts, and supporting or acquiring undergraduate talent.

Brand

Logo

This year, a new logo will be implemented into festival campaign visual media supportives. Clean and minimal, yet bold, the logo will be versatile and easily recognizable, making it easy to apply to branded materials.

Positioning

Just as we position Visions as a leading and legitimate undergraduate film festival and conference, the festival itself aims to position the work of young filmmakers and film scholars as worthy of investment, attention, and celebration. Our campaign will express two central characteristics of the Visions experience: *professional* and *fun*.

"Professional," meaning that we take the undergraduate very seriously as professionals, artists, scholars, and industry members. Our advertising materials will be designed to portray our featured talent thusly, in the most professional way possible. The materials Visions creates will reflect the material Visions seeks to program: high-quality work which exhibits a certain level of skill and shows a sense of pride and respect for our craft and industry.

“Fun,” meaning that we are still geared toward the undergraduate and are enthusiastic, youthful, and energetic in our dedication to building a strong community among our festival talent and audiences through personal interactions and enriching events. Ensuring the mutual enrichment of everyone involved by being welcoming, supportive, engaging, and respectful is paramount.

Strategy

We will promote the event by using a variety of communication methods to direct traffic to the festival website. Though geared towards our primary audience with the main goal being to increase submissions and attendance, these methods are also designed with synergy in mind for our sponsors/marketing partners. Additional incentives will also need to be implemented to better improve our sponsorship relationships in particular, as common tendency exists to treat sponsors as “second class citizens” of film festivals; a stronger sense of “endorsement” is beneficial to our positioning, while limiting any commercialization of the festival is key.

Website

The website is the main tool for acquiring submissions, reserving festival passes, and registering for the video race. All marketing materials will direct traffic to the website. The website will be updated for the 2013 festival year by October 1, 2012, to accept submissions. Video race registration forms will be live on the website by _____ and festival pass registration forms will be live on _____.

Emails and Listservs

Emails will be used to send out the call for entries press release to our list of local, regional, national and international undergraduate film programs on October 12, 2012. Emails will also be used to send out the video race registration press release to local regional schools and media on _____, early selections press releases to all schools and media on _____, and official selections/festival pass reservation press releases to local and regional schools and media on _____. Listservs will be used to distribute the same information to the UNCW Film Studies department faculty and students. Emails and listservs will also be used to promote festival screening tours to the appropriate local schools and media outlets.

Screening Tour

Visions will go on tour to several regional schools throughout the fall and spring semesters, dates and locations to be decided. Schools will be within reasonable driving distance from UNCW (4-6 hours). The purpose of the tour is to garner interest about Visions in regional film schools, ultimately leading to increased submissions and increased attendance. These events will be promoted through the website, social media, and traditional media (press releases emailed to local schools and media two weeks in advance). Adequate (live) coverage of these events with photos, Facebook posts, Tweets, video will also be ensured. Screenings will be free, but QR codes should be present on literature for attendees to Tweet about the event, check-in on Facebook, or answer a poll question about their favorite film from the program (see “Social Media”). The resulting coverage will also depict Visions as a relevant and active entity within a greater undergraduate film community, as well as show potential filmmakers and film scholars that Visions promotes their work well beyond the day of the actual festival event.

Retrospective Articles

A series of articles looking back on past featured filmmakers and film scholars will be released over the course of the call for entries period on the official website, beginning the week of the launch of the call for entries press release. These will also be shared on social media with links back to the website. These articles will show our past success stories with the intent to inspire prospective film students to submit their work.

Special Initiatives: Regional Fee Waivers

One special initiative we will implement is a submissions fee waiver for students interested in submitting who attend the festival screening tours. At the tour events, students will either sign in with their name and email or receive a pre-marked “fee waived” submissions form. This will help us boost our submissions numbers, encourage tour event attendance, as well as strengthen public relations with regional film students. Also see “Social Media” and “Social Payment” sections below.

Increased Video Content: Promos, Vlog, Interviews

Branded video content posted on our YouTube channel, Facebook, and website will help pre- and post-event promotions. Three promotional videos will be made by the PR department to promote: 1) the call for entries (released on _____), 2) video race registration (released on _____), and 3) official selections/festival pass registration (released on _____). The “In-Visions” behind-the-scenes blog will promote the unique fact that the festival is run by undergraduates and will be released monthly up until the festival. At least 3 to 5 video interviews with featured (award-winning) festival talent will also be conducted during the event, and released intermittently in the weeks following the festival (_____, _____, and _____). These interviews will discuss about the talent’s inspiration, personal background, history of the work (festivals and other publications), future aspirations, other projects or work coming down the line, and their Visions experience. Shorter bumpers featuring the Visions Film logo will also be placed before all video content to create a brand across platforms.

Animated Posters

Three posters will be made throughout the year to promote the call for entries (_____), video race registration (_____), and festival event (_____). These posters will be distributed on our website, social media, and in email press releases to schools and media (listed above). Print versions of the posters will also be made and posted locally. These animated posters will contain a simple and attractive short animation with sound, pertinent copy, and necessary sponsor information, and they will link back to our official website.

Social Media & QR Codes

Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram will be used throughout the entire festival year to share all of the above information and redirect online viewers back to the website. Facebook will be the main social networking tool, and we will create Facebook events for tours, fundraisers, and the festival. A Facebook group will also be created at the beginning of the year to include all festival staff members for ease of communication. A Facebook Alumni group has already been created and will continue to be maintained to help further communications within Visions networks established in previous festival years. Live Tweets, Facebook polls, and Instagram photos and photo contests will be implemented throughout the day to cover talent arrivals, opening words, keynote speech quotes, the video race, sponsor brand visibility, the video race, the after party, and awards presentations. QR codes will be present on festival programs, posters, passes, and at entrances linking them to “share” or “tweet.”

Social Payment

While submissions, screening tour attendance, video race registration, and festival pass reservations are free, we will implement several “Tweet to Pay” or “Post to Pay” initiatives throughout the year. In order to register for an event or reserve a pass online, people will click on a link enabling them to tweet or post about Visions on their social networks before being taken to the online registration form. This will result in more people talking about us on social networks and create virtual word-of-mouth grassroots buzz, raising awareness and encouraging their friends to take the same action. Their posts can be programmed to include a link to our official website.

Improved Sponsorship Opportunities

The sponsorship proposal has been reworked to afford more opportunities for sponsorship engagement. The design of these sponsorship packages aims to attract in-person representatives with reserved seating at events, top sponsor event brandings (i.e. “The Toon Boom After Party,” or “Toon Boom presents the 1Hour/1Take Video Race”), and optional non-soliciting audience addresses, presentations,

and workshops. For the 2013 festival year, we will attempt to work out a deal with Toon Boom as a top sponsor, who has offered for representatives to attend the event, speak to the audience, and hold product demonstrations, all while cross-promoting Visions on their website and social networks. We want Toon Boom's endorsement through in-person representatives and online cross-promotion, but we also want to limit sales-pitchy address, while still implementing some kind of giveaway of their product to the audience and/or as an award. A demonstration event during the festival with a product giveaway can be open to UNCW Film Studies students, as well as Communications, Digital Arts, and Computer Sciences students, thereby strengthening public relationships with fellow departments. Sponsorship packages have also been updated to include more brand visibility on the website, in venues, on printed materials, and in press releases.

Press Wall

We will purchase a step-and-repeat with a tiled "Visions Film" brand logo to be set up outside of film screenings and the after party/awards presentations for photo ops of arriving talent. As the talent, the talent's alma maters, festival attendees, and media circulate these images, the visible Visions Film branding will improve Visions' notoriety in the undergraduate film community and festival circuit.

Press Invitations

Press will be invited to attend the festival and review the event and films in their publications. Last year, press focused on the fact that it happened along with audience reactions, without really providing any insight into the content of the festival or the experiences of the featured filmmakers and film scholars. Aside from the usual press releases, we will send out pitch letters and event invitations to specific media contacts with interests in community arts and culture, from Encore, Star News, Lumina Magazine, Wilma, and Men, Ink. Including local fashion bloggers will also be looked into, as pre-planning with these types of publications may add a fun element to the event and after party, especially at the press walls. Niche fashion blogs could provide extra coverage about the festival and may incorporate further interviews with talent, depending on how proactive the attending journo is.

Local News Publications (Print/Online)

Press releases will be sent to the local media outlets of cities where our schools are located, as well as Wilmington's local media, hopefully resulting in write-ups in community calendars and Culture & Arts sections of papers like Encore and StarNews. Our aim is to also generate reviews after the event, describing the entire experience of the festival. This can only be accomplished by inviting press to attend the whole festival, or portions of each event, rather than one portion of one event, as is what happened last year. These write-ups and reviews will be held onto for future promotions.

Key Media Targets

List of university and commercial media outlets *and* their name-specific contacts (local and regional; national and international mailing lists are already available through Programming department) will be researched and compiled by the PR Coordinator by _____. We will research outlets and contacts whose editorial profiles match that of the festival.