

FINANCIAL EXPRESS

Small films big magnets for ads

Successful performances of small budget movies have led to advertisers renewing their interest in promotions within cinemas

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THE CONSISTENT SUCCESS of small budget, content-driven films in 2018 seems to have changed the way most advertisers used to look at in-cinema advertising — typically a tactical approach and an exclusive focus on blockbusters. In 2018, small budget movies like *Raazi*, *Stree*, *Badhaai Ho* and *Baaghi 2* crossed the coveted ₹100-crore mark at the domestic box office. “We were dependent on small budget movies for consistent footfalls and box office collections in 2018,” says Devang Sampat, director, strategic initiatives, Cinépolis India.

In fact, according to Box Office India, the total collection of the top 10 small budget films (*Baaghi 2*, *Raazi*, *Badhaai Ho*, *Stree*, *Sonu Ke Titu Ki Sweety*, *Veere Di Wedding*, *Andhadhun*, *Kedarnath*, *Parmanu*

How the underdogs performed

Top 10 small budget films that did exceptionally well in 2018

■ **BAAGHI 2**
(₹158.2 cr)



■ **Raazi**
(₹120.68 cr)

■ **Badhaai Ho** (₹130 cr)

■ **Stree** (₹120 cr)

■ **Sonu Ke Titu Ki Sweety**
(₹105.4 cr)

■ **Veere Di Wedding** (₹85.8 cr)

■ **Andhadhun** (₹69.32 cr)

■ **Kedarnath** (₹64 cr)

■ **Parmanu** (₹62.55 cr)

■ **Hichki** (₹45.2 cr)

Source: Box Office India

and *Hichki*) is ₹961.15 crore in 2018. This is around 28% of the provisional box office collection for Hindi films, which is around ₹3,420 crore, net of taxes (this includes the collections of the still running

Simmba at the end of its first week — January 3).

The increase in advertiser interest can be gauged from the in-cinema ad buys for January. According to Siddharth Bhardwaj, chief marketing

officer and head of enterprise sales, UFOMoviez, instead of buying just one week of inventory for January 26, when *Manikarnika* will be released, most advertisers are running four-week campaigns, covering films like *Uri: The Surgical Strike*, *The Accidental Prime Minister* and *Why Cheat India*.

So far, cinema has been more of a tactical investment for brands. But the success of content-based movies in 2018 has made advertisers consider cinema as a strategic play. “While blockbuster films will continue to fetch a premium, advertisers who were earlier active only four-five weeks in a year are now looking to advertise for at least 15-20 weeks,” says Bhardwaj.

For example, at Cinépolis, brands such as Star Group, Apple, Rupa, Vicco, Siyaram and One Plus advertised throughout 2018.

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"STATISTICS SHOW WE get the same customer five to six times in a year. For an advertiser, it is a great recall opportunity. Also, those who advertise through the year get

From the Front Page

volume discounts and don't have to pay a premium for blockbusters," says Sampat. However, experts say it is difficult for advertisers to take these sleeper hits into account in their annual budget at the start of the year. "The lifetime collections of sleeper hits are what a big budget film (even if it ultimately fails) collects on its opening day itself," points out Nitin Tej Ahuja, publisher, Box Office India. "For an advertiser, it is difficult to figure out which dark horse to bet on versus the reasonably guaranteed decent opening of a big budget

film." Clearly, that is the reason large advertisers don't plan upfront for sleeper hits. "However, local and hyper-local players take advantage of small budget movies that are commercially successful. National clients ought to keep some budget aside for sleeper hits," says Seenu Kurien, vice-president, sales and marketing, Carnival Cinemas. In fact, sleeper hits have started commanding higher ad rates. "Local clients such as auto dealers, retail, lifestyle and F&B brands are actively advertising on small budget

movies that become sleeper hits. Not only do they command a 10-12% premium over regular weeks, they also stay in the theatres for a longer period of time – usu-

ally three-four weeks," says Kurien. According to Sethumadhavan Napan, COO and producer, Dar Motion Pic-

tures, which backed films like *The Lunch Box*, says 2018 proved that Indian cinema is no longer skewed towards

the blockbusters. "We expect 15-20% growth in the number of small budget films made this year."