



## **Small films show up on the advertising radar as brands bet big on cinema**

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There was a time when advertisers would chase big banner releases, confident that such offerings will attract audience in huge numbers. But the scenario is changing.

More footfalls mean better exposure and brands are realising the potential of small and mid-sized films and opting for in-cinema advertising, now more than ever.

Talking to Moneycontrol, Siddharth Bhardwaj, CMO, UFO Moviez, said, "In the first half of this year, what we saw was that advertisers are more open in using cinema as a medium where they are not limiting themselves just to 4-5 big anticipated blockbusters. They are also open to advertising around other movies which they feel will strike a chord with the audience."

"This year has been good because smaller movies did well, which is also helping the cause (to continue the growing trend of in-theatre advertising)," he added.

While the trend has been that advertising interest peaks during the release of 10-12 blockbuster films, theatre owners are changing this by educating advertisers.

"Advertisers first tried to take advantage of blockbuster films. Five-six years ago, when advertisers came to cinema, they only wanted a Salman or Shah Rukh Khan movie. Slowly, they started experiencing that cinema is not just limited to those 4-5 releases. There is audience for other movies too. They started using the medium more. Slowly, it has gone up from 3-4 movies to 12-15 movies in a year," said Bhardwaj.

The exhibition industry is making an active and conscious effort to reach out to advertisers and share information basis which they can take decisions.

"Many brand managers rely on us to feed the data and we do that very aggressively. We pass on the info to advertisers. For example, Thugs of Hindostan didn't do well, but at the same time, there were two Marathi films that performed. Immediately, we went to the market educating the advertisers," he added.

In comparison to television or digital, cinema advertising is small, accounting for one or two per cent of total ad spends by brands. This is because brands earlier did not see theatres as a captive medium to advertise products.

“Cinema was fragmented so it was difficult for brands to put out a campaign across so many screens. One had to reach out to every screen owner separately, but it got aggregated with with digitisation. Digitisation democratised cinema where every screen became a release centre. With digitisation, the platform also got aggregated among four or five players in the country where it became easier for advertisers,” explained Bhardwaj.

In-cinema advertising is expected to grow 20-25 percent in the next five years. The number of in-cinema advertisers grew from 50-100 in 2010 to over 2,500 in 2016. Sponsorship revenues for PVR Cinemas increased by almost 20 percent in 2016 over previous year, said a KPMG 2017 report.

According to the report, this growth can be attributed to expansion of multiplexes in metro/non-metro cities and nearly 100 percent digitisation of screens. Digitisation has resulted in an increase in the volume of ad inventory and the ability to geographically target advertisements with multi lingual support. At the same time, the exhibition industry has become more organized, technologically advanced and ensures a high level of transparency by providing real-time campaign tracking to advertisers.

A study by GroupM, a media investment group, suggests that many cinephiles are willing to consume advertisements before and during the interval of a film.

More than 50 percent of the respondents interviewed for the study said they paid more attention to advertisements played in theatres.