

Europa Cinemas Innovation Day Lab Report

Leipzig, 20th September 2018

18th Filmkunstmesse

On the 20th September, as part of the **Leipzig Filmkunstmesse**, Europa Cinemas held its second Leipzig Innovation Day Lab.

The **Leipzig Filmkunstmesse** is an annual meeting gathering professionals of the cinema industry in Germany, organised by the AG-Kino Gilde, the national association of arthouse cinema in Germany. It took place from 17th to 21st September and allowed the participants to discover the films to be released in the country, but also to gather around discussions, participate in workshops and take part in debates concerning the sector.

This Europa Cinemas Innovation Day Lab was divided in two different sessions, "**Social Media Marketing**", and "**From Workflow to Cashflow: Strategies of team management in the 'post-student era'**".

There were 31 participants at the morning session and 23 at the afternoon session.



Marco Odasso, specialist of social media and Head of Sales and Marketing at Stereolize GmbH, presented the morning session.

His presentation aimed at giving indispensable tips and tricks to launch successfully a campaign on the social networks. He shared his own experiences as a social media consultant with the participants, in order to deconstruct the pre-existed thoughts that companies often have on social media. He explained that the most important thing is not the number of “Likes” and followers that you can even buy on the different platforms. Having a large reach with low engagement will never make your marketing campaign successful, on the contrary. Marco Odasso’s approach drew on the very nature of social media, which allows a **bidirectional communication among users**. Social media are platforms where new forms of social organisation and exchange of knowledge emerge. The users have figured out that they have become able to get better information from the other users than from companies, including on the products and services, and social media is more of a collaborative experience than mass media. Marco Odasso developed the idea of considering **online markets as conversations**: companies should think in terms of person-to-person conversations when they want to communicate with their potential customers.

Marco Odasso explained that, after the first important step of defining their goals, companies can engage social conversations. They should focus on the **relevance** of their message depending on the community’s interests, make sure to engage the community thanks to the message’s **appeal**, and prove their **consideration** of the community: not only the users but also the companies need to listen. He recommended the use of **Key Performance Indicators** or KPIs to answer these questions: “Are you reaching the targeted people?”, “Are you engaging with them?”, “How many of your followers or social media fans are inquiring about your activities and services?”, “How many of them become customers?”. These KPIs include Likes, clicks, comments, active followers, brand mentions, profile visits etc. Based upon the results, the companies can and should re-define their initial goals.

The companies should then be able to create a connection with the users and the potential audiences, rather than simply do brand promotion, to build **reliable and realistic relationships** with its audience, based on interactive communication: not only the customers but also the companies are active. It is important to keep in mind that markets on social media consist of human beings: companies should not try to sell but should pay attention at individuals. This kind of engagement offers a real return on investment if it is developed over the long term and with the necessary input.

The session was concluded by questions asked by the participants.



The afternoon session was led by **Claudia Overath** (Project Coordinator Film & Cinema Marketing and Training at RMC Medien + Kreativ Consult) and **Thomas Pintzke** (Consultant, RMC Medien + Kreativ Consult). Their presentation was entitled “**From Workflow to Cashflow: Strategies of team management in the ‘post-student era’**”.





They looked into the current issues faced by cinema exhibitors in terms of team managing, as many of them hire students who started with part time jobs. They insisted on the drastic evolution of cinemas as places over the past decade: cinemas are not the only platforms to watch films anymore, and face many competitors for the consumers' free time use, which are also much more flexible. Cinema has become

only a small part of the entertainment industry, which implies a necessary evolution of its attractiveness for the audience. Therefore, **more demands weigh on the employees**: full service, interactions with the audience, Web 2.0, social media, extended immersive technical equipment, marketing etc.. There is a **diversification of the required knowledge** and expertise, which often requires temporary staff. In those conditions, the exhibitors have to deal with a more complex staff planning and management.

In a first time, Claudia Overath presented essential questions which need to be asked regularly for a good organisation: what are my goals for my cinema? Which groups does my cinema target? Which work areas are needed in my cinema? For which of these areas do I need staff? Etc. The speakers insisted on the fact that staff management cannot be based on "gut feeling" ("last week-end we were overwhelmed", "We need 3 ticket offices on Saturdays", "We need to save money"...), but should be carefully thought.

In a second time, Claudia Overath explained different ways to achieve a sustainable staff planning. The different solutions mentioned were: staff "forecast", the calculation of the number of users expected on a monthly and weekly basis, the weekly calculation of the work schedules based on these expectations, and the necessity to take the regional and national events into account (concerts, local celebrations, sport events). The combination of these four aspects should allow a successful staff management.

She concluded the presentation by raising more questions to be reflected upon: how to provide high quality services when many of the employees work part-time? How to help them build sustainable competences and knowledge areas? Should more qualified employees earn more money? Etc.

The second session concluded with discussions among the participants, who shared their own experiences and reflected on the best practices in the area of staff management.