

MINUTES TO MANAGEMENT MEETING HELD WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22,
1992.

PRESENT:

Joanna Peberdy
Kate Norrish
Elaine Burrows
Julia Knight
Azza Rahman
Anna Leibschner
Liane Harris
Sonja Armstrong
Satwant Gill
Carla Mitchell

Began the meeting with an overview of the business of the last couple of months since the last Management Committee Meeting, regarding which Management made the following comments:

BFI GRANT: While verbal commitment to fund has been secured, this has not been confirmed in writing. To precipitate this it was suggested that Cinenova should draft a letter in the rough form of an agreement which the BFI can countersign, which outlines the total funding level and how it will be cashflowed over the financial year. This is necessary and urgent as we need to set our cashflow.

DANGEROUS TO KNOW: Kate warned that due to possible video rights loopholes, videos sold on sell-thru as opposed to rental basis, have not been sold for personal use, but have been appearing in libraries etc. Need to take this into consideration in drawing up the eventual contract.

ICA: We welcomed any suggestions for a banner name for our bi-monthly slot and indeed, any ideas for the kind of seasons we could plan. Follow up next meeting although the following helpful suggestions were made:

-getting a European festival to curate a program with the "best of" its films. Possible language problems but worth pursuing.

-seeking sponsorship for one or more of the seasons. Good idea especially for a 'major' season - say one involving Women Make Movies- where costs are likely to balloon. Such a season could be launched with a reception to raise both Cinenova's and potential sponsor's profile. As an aside Joanna mentioned that airlines, such as Continental, could provide sponsorship for travel if we had to bring people in from overseas.

-using the ICA season as a launch-pad for a touring package, which again could be funded by sponsors, Arts Council etc.

Good idea as it gives an opportunity to fully exploit the earning potential of a 'packaged' idea.

CINENOVA: BUSINESS STRATEGY

There is a need to clarify the overall direction which Cinenova is to pursue in the short, medium and long term and to define that direction in terms of concrete goals. This means identifying the exact markets we want to target and formulating an acquisition policy which reflects that. This in turn will ascertain the basis on which to seek sponsorship. Kicked off this discussion by re-assessing our marketing to the educational sector, which to date has been the most significant revenue earner. In particular, this was done in relation to the mini-packages which have been compiled to be sent out on 'glossies' to various courses.

Researching mailing lists is an area which needs focussing on as it will provide feedback as to the kind of material suitable for packaging. The following suggestions were made:

- Education Year Book;
- Social Services Year Book - which lists training officers;
- Educational mailing lists;
- British University's(?) Film and Video Council;
- City Business Library (near Guildhall)
- The British Library for Marketing
- Health Centres;
- Local Authorities for lists regarding Social Services and Health Officer Training.

It was concluded that the eight mini-packages were too unfocussed as a whole to risk the significant marketing outlay involved. A more appropriate strategy would be to devise packages which are 'issue-based' and marketable to a range of courses, as opposed to focussing on a particular course and second-guessing their requirements by suggesting a number of loosely connected titles. The Trinh-Min-Ha and mental health packages are possible starters. They present a wide possible audience and can be readily put together. A professionally put together package which has longevity could also be a candidate for sponsorship money. What we need to follow up with is an average costing for this kind of marketing effort. For packages which are less marketable but of obvious interest to specific courses, time and money spent on them would be proportionally reduced. However, as it would be highly specific marketing, one would still expect a high pick-up rate. The key in sum, is accurately matching up courses and product.

Other market niches:

It was agreed that Cinenova needed to exploit the 'arty' or

'cult' aspects of its catalogue by targetting areas which are not specifically education-oriented. It is important not only in terms of overall image, but as a significant revenue earner. In terms of our acquisition strength, it will also be an important indication to our filmmakers that their films are given the widest possible distribution.

The kind of distribution and therefore acquisition policies we should pursue turned the discussion to how Cinenova is to define itself in terms of Company image. How key is 'feminism' in its traditional or 're-defined' aspects? Problematic, I think, is the word that was bandied about! Julia Knight made the important point that we should not be here to make filmmaking a vehicle for feminism but that we act as a channel for women filmmakers to make whatever statement they wish. 'Feminism' is obviously inherent, and how it probably should remain in marketing corporate image. This is all key to the Cinenova leaflet we will be producing.

Back on the issue of how to target the 'not-specifically-educational market' (for want of a better term) we went back to the idea of touring packages and using the ICA as a possible platform for regional tours. Beyond that, Liane summarised her discussions with various independent London cinemas, who all reflected the same view: bums on seats rule. Obvious, but highlights the fact that we are not really in the league of this kind of cinema release because of acquisition and P&A costs. However, its a niche we should investigate - in tandem with our fund-raising endeavours.

TV: another source of potentially significant income. The current catalogue could be packaged as a 'retrospective' saleable to TV, and new acquisitions could provide opportunities, especially as a leg in the door. Making one-off feature sales is not a possibility at this stage, so it is important to start meeting with programme editors to discuss possible program supply. Caroline Spry at Channel 4 has a friendly ear apparently - Liane to follow up with Anne. Dazzling Image editor Jane Tholburn(?), was also suggested by Kate as someone to contact.

Certainly, TV programmers would come high on the list of any launch receptions we may have.

General comments on sponsorship for marketing:

-The theory behind raising sponsorship for events/marketing, as Joanna clarified, is that the amount sought should bear some relation to what it is worth to the sponsor in terms of coverage (ie. advertising to a market) and prestige. In practice this is not what happens. However, it does throw some light on how to cost a marketing initiative - ie. don't be afraid to indulge in some padding to cover overhead

costs. Always ask for more than you need as sponsors rarely fund against receipts/invoices. And if they ask, you can indicate that it is fair to include overhead relevant to the exercise. Also, hit a number of potential sponsors with the same application - to bear in mind for our catalogue & computer proposal to the Foundation for Sports and the Arts. Especially as boards meet on average, quarterly. Money should also be sought for acquisitions. To this end we need to ascertain how much we need, approach sponsors, get their interest, so that when we find an acquisition we need to pay for we have the money lined up. Or alternatively and more simply, try to get sponsorship to fund a general acquisition budget. Final point: start planning and raising money for next year's marketing budget. An important weapon in the battle to maintain some kind of commitment from the BFI.

Comments on sponsorship for core/overhead/revenue funding.

-Trickier in that the BFI is an unknown quantity. This kind of sponsorship money for next year would be contingent on all the required money falling into place - esp. including that from the BFI. How much to seek? In spite of the fact that we will not get commitment from them, we feel it's important to meet to set some kind of parameters and to let them know of how we intend to approach the whole endeavour.

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION POINTS:

re building up our mailing list: Euro-aim distribution apparently has a list of European colleges and could be useful, therefore, in building up a European mailing list.

-Both Kate and Clara will infiltrate LVA and Arts Council Data bases to supplement mailing list!

-Another important European target is the TV - cable and terrestrial market.

-Catalogue pricing: institutions can be charged up to three times more than individuals; investigate a 'card' system for our catalogue which doubles up as a good marketing tool for pushing individual or packages of films.