



THE SANDS WILL RISE. THE HEAVENS WILL PART. THE POWER WILL BE UNLEASHED.

TEACHERS' NOTES

This study guide is aimed at students of Media Studies at GCSE, GNVQ and A' level. It may also be useful for Business Studies and elements of English.

SYNOPSIS

In 1719 BC in the Egyptian city of Thebes, a forbidden love between the evil high priest Imhotep and Anck-su-namun, the Pharaoh's mistress is exposed. When Anck-su-namun takes her own life, Imhotep's subsequent act of desperation in Hamunaptra, the City of the Dead, defies the gods. For his unholy acts he is given the ultimate curse - his mummified body will remain undead for all eternity - a torturous existence, but one that will cease should his rotting corpse ever be released. As Imhotep's screams of pain from within the sarcophagus grow muffled while he is lowered into the earth, the curse is set in motion, and his evil, vengeful heart lays beating in the dark, growing stronger and stronger.

Stars: Brendan Fraser, Rachel Weisz, John Hannah, Arnold Vosloo, Kevin J O'Connor, Jonathan Hyde.
Director: Stephen Sommers
Running time 125 mins. Certificate: TBC

MARKETING THE FILM

Launching a new film into the market- place is like launching any other new product - the public need to be made aware of its existence. It is the role of the distribution company to promote the film as widely as possible in order to maximise its chances of success at the box office. There is, of course, only one chance to do this - if the film is not a hit when it opens there is no opportunity to re-release and try again at a later date. We make our decision about whether to go and see a film at the cinema on the strength of what we have seen, heard or read about it and the marketing campaign must persuade as many people as possible that this will be a film they will enjoy.

This study guide looks at the marketing campaign for Universal Pictures' 'The Mummy', distributed by United International Pictures (UIP) which was released at the cinema in June of 1999.

KEY FACTORS

When a distribution company has negotiated the rights to market a particular film, the marketing team meets to decide the key factors in the campaign:

- Audience
- Unique Selling Point (USP)
- Budget

The Audience

The distributors want to advertise the film to as many people as possible, dependent on its certificate. However, they also know that there will be a particular group, or groups, to whom it will really appeal and therefore they will make this group the target audience for the marketing campaign. They will also aim to schedule the release date for the film so that it does not open at the same time as another film hoping to attract the same audience. With a film as strong as 'The Mummy' the distributors will rearrange their schedules.

The Unique Selling Point (USP)

The Unique Selling Point - also known as the USP - will be the factor that makes this particular film different from others in the same genre and will be evident in the images that you see on the poster and trailer. The marketing campaign must aim to give the public information about the genre, story and stars of the film so they feel confident that this will be the type of film they will enjoy coming to see. However, whilst stressing the familiar elements of the film it must also highlight how the film is different.

The Budget

The success or failure of a film can depend heavily upon the amount of money spent on marketing in the run-up to its release at the cinema. The budget for the marketing campaign will be set according to how much the distributors think the film will make at the box office. They have no real way of knowing this as each film is unique and sometimes there are unexpected successes or failures, but calculations can be made looking at other films of a similar type. Influential factors may include the cast and crew of a film, when and where it will be released, audience research from early test screenings of the film and how well the film has performed in the US, as it usually opens there first.

The Campaign

A marketing campaign is divided into three areas:

Advertising • Publicity • Promotions

Advertising - which must be paid for and consists of press, television and radio advertising as well as posters and 'new media', such as the Internet. The advertising budget is an 'above the line' cost as the amount spent and what you get for it can be worked out exactly. Additionally there is 'in cinema' activity, which only costs distributors the price of production. This comprises supplying posters, trailers and other materials, such as banners, standees (three-dimensional

cardboard cut-outs) and mobiles to Exhibitors. There is no charge for this, as it is obviously in the cinema's interest to promote films which they will be playing.

Publicity - which is not paid for but is generated by the publicity department, includes reviews, articles and interviews in any media. This is a 'below the line' cost; the cost of bringing a star over from the US can be calculated fairly accurately, however the level of awareness raised about the film through this visit cannot be guaranteed.

Promotions - which are also a 'below the line' cost for many of the same reasons as publicity are often run in conjunction with other companies to coincide with the film's release (see page 4). These will include educational activities such as the distribution of this study guide. However, the success of some promotional activities, such as competition leaflet giveaways, can be measured quite accurately.

Each of these three areas will work together to raise awareness of the film. As the release date of 'The Mummy' approaches, and particularly as the film hits the cinemas you will see more and more elements of the campaign emerge. For any upcoming film, make a collection of anything you find and display it under the category heading to which it belongs; advertising, publicity or promotions.

- Which of these categories made you most aware of the film?

THE TEASER CAMPAIGN

If the film is to be a particularly high profile release, with a large promotional budget to spend, the main campaign may well be preceded by a teaser campaign. A teaser campaign can contain many of the elements of the main campaign such as posters and trailers but is designed to tease the prospective audience, to arouse their curiosity about a film without giving too many details away. It may be set in motion as far in advance as six months before the release date, whereas the main campaign will not usually begin until there are approximately six weeks to go. Both campaigns need careful handling as too much exposure runs the risk of losing the prospective audience's interest. The teaser aims to get people talking about the film, the main campaign aims to raise the profile and get them into the cinema to see it.

What film teaser campaigns are running at the moment or can you remember from past releases? What information do/did they give you and what questions do/did they raise?

Can you think of teaser campaigns from other media? How do they work?

The Poster

The poster is the primary tool in the marketing campaign. It must be instantly eye-catching, because often it is seen only briefly, yet it must offer clues as to the genre (type) of film it promotes, information as to narrative (story) and the stars, and sell the film as being unique.

Make a list of all the places you might see a *film* poster *Which of these places would be the most appropriate for a teaser poster?*

The teaser poster for 'The Mummy' is shown on the last page of this guide. Look at this and answer the following Use this information to discuss the following questions. Be as detailed as you can in your answers.

Artwork - Images

- What colours have been used? What associations do these colours have? Are they unusual for a poster?
- A What is the key (main) image we see? What impression does this give? How is it different from the traditional image?
- What images do we see in the lower half of the poster? What associations do these carry? How realistic are these images?

Copy- Text

- A What is the significance of using gold lettering for the title graphics? Why do you think this font has been chosen?
- What does the central M remind you of? How does it make you feel?
- Look at the shape that the title makes. What other shapes does it echo on poster? (Look carefully!)

The tag line or catch line as it is sometimes called, featured on the poster is also shown at the bottom of this page.

- How many sentences are in the tag line? Why? Why are they presented in this the order?
- What repetition can you see in vocabulary and structure of the tag line? What effect does this have?
- Comment on the final use of the word 'unleashed'.

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Use this information to discuss the following:

- What genre of film do you think 'The Mummy' will be?
- What might be the USP of this film?
- Who do you think the marketing campaign is aimed at?
- What extra information would you expect the poster to give us if it were part of the main campaign?

- Design a main poster for 'The Mummy'.
- Choose a poster from the main campaign of a film you know well. Design a teaser poster- or a set of these- for your film, being careful to whet the public's appetite to see the film but not giving away too much information.

The Trailer

The trailer works effectively to market a film because the audience experiences it actually in the cinema auditorium. In this way, we can get the full impact of the moving images and sound, which is far more effective than any still picture could be, and the connection in our minds has been made between the cinema environment and the film.

Trailers are not randomly shown before a film; they are carefully chosen to appeal to the same type of audience as the main feature, so a trailer for say 'The Rugrats Movie', a children's film, would not be shown before a late night horror show aimed at teenagers. Trailers also receive a certificate, and can only be shown with main features of the same, or higher certificate. The trailer for 'The Mummy' is a PG. We are now going to explore the trailer separately in terms of sound and images.

Sound

Arrange your seating or the television so you cannot see the images. This will help you concentrate on the sound only. Play the trailer through.

- What are the first sounds you hear? What atmosphere do they create?
- What happens to the music throughout the trailer?
- There are five dialogue spots in the first half of the trailer. Split the group and listen for one of these each. Share your findings and write the script. How do these fit together to form a little narrative of their own and through the way they are said, what clues do these give us about what might happen?
- Why *is* a voice-over used?

- How does the sound hold our attention right through from the very beginning to the very end of the trailer?

IMAGES

Now watch the trailer through with the sound turned off.

- What images are repeated? Why?
- What do we see in close-up?
- What words appear on screen? What happens to them?
- How are we made aware of the time period of the film?
- How are we made aware of the special effects in the film?
- Why is the editing swift? What effect does this have on us?

You may now want to view the whole trailer again.

- How do the teaser poster and trailer link together?
- What overall impression are we left with of the film?
- What might the main trailer from the film contain?

PUBLICITY AND PROMOTION

Press kits and EPKs

Press kits are sent to journalists all over the country to give them information about forthcoming films. They are one of the basic tools of any publicity department. Press kits include:

- **a set of stills** i.e. photographs which have been taken during the making of the film. These may be images from the film itself, studio portraits of the stars, photographs of the production crew working with the actors and so on. These stills have been authorised for printing in newspapers and magazines.
- **production notes** form the bulk of any press kit. This gives the journalist a synopsis of the film and provides interesting information such as elements of costume design, location choices, issues raised by the film, choices in casting and how the stars feel about their roles; all the sort of material which could be used to write an article for their publication.
- **a list of cast and crew credits.** Journalists writing about the film need correct information and correct spellings!
- **biographies and filmographies** of the cast, director and producer.

The front page of a press kit will display the title of the film, written in the graphics which have been chosen for all the publicity surrounding the release. It will also contain the title and logo of the company which is distributing the film.

Electronic Press Kits, usually known as EPKs, are available to journalists working in television. These take the form of a video tape; radio journalists will have similar information on audio tape. The EPK may include:

- a trailer for the film There may be more than one version of this.
- short clips from the film showing dramatic or funny moments, authorised for showing on television without further copyright clearance. For the promotional period of the release, these are the clips you will see on film review programmes such as Moviewatch and in more general programmes featuring film e.g Popworld. There will be a variety of clips, not only to show the different features of the film but also so that the audience for a certain television programme can be shown an appropriate clip for their age and interests.
- short extracts of the director, principal stars, screenwriter talking about their role in the film, how they feel about it, what's new about it etc. These clips can be used by television presenters to make it look as if they are actually interviewing the star, but of course without the massive cost that this would involve.
- - the B-Roll. This is footage shot behind the scenes. It will often show the director at work or it could be showing how animals were trained; anything which may be of interest to anyone wanting to know about the film's production.

Look at the synopsis of 'The Mummy' which you will find on the first page of this guide. What words and phrases are used to sensationalise the story?

Look at the following extracts below from the production notes of 'The Mummy'.

- a) What information are we given?
- b) How does the language used make the film sound attractive?

When Alphaville founders James Jacks and Sean Daniel first learned that Stephen Sommers was interested in writing and directing *The Mummy* they immediately arranged an informational meeting and began discussing the project. They had never met Stephen before, but had seen his widely-praised Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book* and were quite impressed. ...Sommers says, "I really wanted to do a big roaring romantic adventure set in ancient Egypt, and *The Mummy* offered all that and more".

The producers agreed as they wanted to keep *The Mummy* a period film - a huge action-adventure film with a hint of romance.

"I set the main story in the 1920s because, to me, it's the most romantic era," says Sommers. "The tone, the feel of the movie just felt like it belonged in that period."

John Berton, industrial Light & Magic's(ILM) visual effects supervisor on *The Mummy* was given the daunting task of overseeing the film's numerous visual effects sequences - many which involved *The Mummy* itself.

Berton says, "We first had to figure out what *The Mummy* would look like and we knew we wanted him to look totally unique - we didn't want him to just be a guy in bandages. He had to be mean, tough, nasty and something that had never been seen by audiences before."

Promotional partners and merchandising

Distributors may link with promotional partners to generate additional publicity for their films. Fast food retailers may be approached to run promotional packaging featuring the film or electrical outlets to run trailers on televisions in shop windows. Media partners may be asked to run preview screenings or to give away holiday packages or other exclusive items related to the film. Prospective partners may be shown a sizzle reel to give them an idea of what the film is about, as the film may not be finished when the tie-ins between the two companies are being discussed.

Merchandising will be also produced to promote a film. This can be of two types:

a) Sweatshirts, baseball caps, pens, mugs, lunch boxes etc. which will be given to journalists to provide a constant visual reminder of the film and will be used for competition prizes in the press and so forth. This is all given away.,

b) Licensed merchandise, whereby companies will buy the rights to make toys, clothes and other goods featuring the film. These products are sold.

View the two extracts from the 'sizzle reel' for 'The Mummy' What impression of the film does each extract give? How does it do this? Be as detailed as you can in your answer How is the 'sizzle reel' different to the trailer? Why might the 'sizzle reel' be a more effective way of interesting a promotional partner?

If you were marketing 'The Mummy' for UIP? what promotional partners would you show the 'sizzle reel' to, and why? Which extract would you show to each?

Design a set of merchandise for 'The *Mummy*'. Explain your decisions and how it is aimed at your target audience.

THE PREMIERE

The Premiere of a film is its first major public showing, although it will have been screened to the press previously so reviews can be written and the film publicised in newspapers and magazines at the time of its release. The Premiere screening is often a high profile event, perhaps for charity, with stars and directors in attendance and a themed party after the film. It is an excellent opportunity to gain publicity for the film as there will hopefully be television and press coverage of the night and as such, every effort is made to make the Premiere a little different. If the stars are not available, as is the case with 'The Mummy', as they are working on other films, a Premiere would not be held. However, assuming you had all the stars available, your task is to organise a Premiere for 'The Mummy'.

- Working in pairs, prepare a presentation to the rest of your group outlining your ideas. Be inventive and be prepared to explain your ideas. Your presentation should include:
 - ideas for a venue
 - ideas for a menu
 - -dress code
 - - a design for an invitation
 - -entertainment
 - -an unusual stunt which will set everybody talking.
- Using the teaser poster and trailer as your inspiration, design two standees for the cinema foyer to be used at the Premiere and afterwards. Elaborate standees can have moving parts and/or be fitted with electronic sound, if you wish.