

Now Showing: A Sneak Peek to the Philippines' Film and Entertainment Industry brought by Covid-19

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Abstract: - The world as we know has drastically change by the impact of the pandemic. All major businesses were left flustered by the disruption that shifted and created a new normal. Many suffered defeat and loss one way or another when they decided to throw away the towel while others keep being innovative and continuously explore the uncharted territories in hope of discovering new opportunities that will pave a way in their struggling industries. The Philippines' film and entertainment industry is no different, as of time of writing, the evidences written in this journal proved the resilience and how the industry adapted. The old practices were reformed and challenged. In addition, the opportunity that lies in the digital platform as an avenue to showcase its globally competitive talent and production.

Key Words: — *Lock-in taping, digital streaming, pay-per-view, video-on-demand, green screen.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The Philippine entertainment industry reported a loss of PhP 16B (320M USD) since March 2020 while the annual Metro Manila Film Festival that usually earns PhP 1B (20M USD) each year only grossed around PhP 25M (500K USD) in 2020.

Cinemas that used to be the mainstream of film showing has been replaced by the digital media. The industry as we know is now charting to the digital platform in order for their production to be commoditized for the consumption of the viewing public. The way we experience watching our much-awaited movies have now shifted to digital platforms where they are usually available only after being shown in the cinemas.

Ticket sales has now replaced by online subscriptions, date nights now became a share screen activity and family activity outside has been restricted to stay at home movie experience.

Film producers need to adapt to the situation in order to survive, just like many other industries, resilience, stepping out from the comfort zone and embracing the new practices are sure ways to prevent from taking you out of the picture – literally.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Film, music and television tapings usually ensemble a great deal of people and production, this has been changed when the Covid-19 pandemic came into the scene, stole the limelight and started to enact as one of the limiting situations to the entertainment sector.

Entertainment producers, production crews, movie directors, artists and their staffs are going a great length of preparation and adjustment ensuring that safety protocols are being observed and enforced in accordance to the social distancing and 50% on-site capacity. Preventive measures and safety protocols are implemented during pre-production, production, principal photography or shooting, and post-production.

Movie goers started to feel the nostalgia of falling in line in movie theaters, the burnt aroma and popping sound of popcorn and then finally navigating their way to look for their seats in cinema blocks. Avid fans that look forward on seeing their favorite actors and actresses while screaming on top of their lungs during the annual parade of the film festival was no

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longer possible and cancelled. Some even have the experience of witnessing the production first-hand as spectators while taking selfies and photos are now memories stored in their mobile devices.

These have been the restrictions and challenges being faced by the entertainment industry in order to come up and produce a quality production for the public.

III. CAUSES OF THE PROBLEM

3.1 Seize operation

Major productions were put on hold due to the lockdown being implemented. No gatherings are being allowed and controlled movement. There was no clear guidelines and definite time on how things will resume. The chaotic environment as well as the contagion makes it difficult for organizers and film producers to roll out the production.

3.2 Rising cost of production

In addition to the loss of profit due to delays and other factors, 30% is being added in the usual production cost as additional expense because of the strict adherence to health protocols. Taxes are still being implemented for every film production that they make.

3.3 Digital piracy

Movie houses and theaters are the main venues whenever you want to launch your new film offering, but because of the pandemic, film producers need to find a solution for their production to be shown elsewhere, thus, digital platform. However, the risk entails by also allowing movie pirates to steal their work and diminish their possible earnings. It is easy to track profit by ticket sales but how do you monitor earnings via digital streaming?

3.4 The cost of relationship

The roles portrayed by artists in the screen can sometimes be brought in real life. Some love teams with relationship outside their work have been reported in jeopardy. Others miss their loved ones when after taping they can go home but because of the quarantine and lockdown measures, it

prohibits them. Sanity for some is also at risk for not everyone is comfortable of being confined for a long period of time.

IV. COURSES OF ACTION

4.1 Tax Holiday

With the industry at risk, film producers have appealed to the government for a tax holiday to the Senate Committee on Economic Affairs by Atty. Joji Alonzo of the Philippine Motion Pictures Producers Association. Even with the presence of digital streaming, the industry still took a big hit brought by the pandemic.

4.2 Preparation meetings via online

Two months after the whole country was forced for lockdown, the Film Development Council of the Philippines announced and released a guideline for filming under the quarantine on May 16, 2020. As stated on the guidelines, there will be a limit of people coming on the set and they need to present a travel history, no contact policy wherein castings will be done remotely through video conferences and demo tapes, pre-production meetings via online, while following the health protocols articulated in the guidelines and also reminding them of the working or product area to always make it well ventilated, people should be wearing masks, and food and catering, and drinks should be single-serve containers.

4.3 Digital alternatives

One major film producer (Regal Films) has opted to the streaming and pay-per-views. It has migrated and focused the digital platforms available such as Upstream, Netflix, Iflix, Cignal Play, Youtube, Apple iTunes, Google Play and Facebook.

According to the survey conducted by Statista, there have been 31% new users who joined the Subscription Video-on-demand (SVoD) and 26% new users for Subscription Music-on-demand (SMoD) during the pandemic (as of end of 2020).

4.4 New working attitude

The cost of delay is always a tremendous cause of loss in the film-making and production industry. Given with situation, staff, crew and all the way to the various casts and

artists have adapted to the value of time management making sure that all is according to the schedule. Meetings are occasionally being organized as pre-production, during production and post production to ensure all is smooth and accordingly.

V. CONCLUSION

The Entertainment Industry, along with the other sectors and industries has displaced a lot workers and loses a hefty sum of profits in film-making. But it does not mean it is all over and the end of its journey. The pandemic has taught us how to be creative and encourage us to think unconventionally and embrace the wonders and brilliance of technology.

Two major points here to emphasize: First, in portrayal of actual people performing the roles, health and safety is never been compromised. The enormous time spent on making sure that safety protocols are being observed and followed coupled with the care and affection towards co-workers, improved performance where actors are always on top shape and give their best because of the reduced tapings having them more time to rest and the crew as well, all of these creates a meaningful production in their craft as performers and part of the film industry.

Second, producers also opted filming animations or cartoons when actors cannot because of limiting interactions. It can be done in a much-controlled environment with lesser movement, smaller production and logistics.

Though the set-up might be temporary as more and more people have been vaccinated and businesses are starting to open again with the government lowering the restriction levels as Covid-19 cases drops, some might fast-forward to capitalize and adapt in welcoming this new normal through the digital stage allowing them to explore its fullest potential.

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