

How 20th Century Fox changed movie marketing forever with 2016's *Deadpool*

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Introduction

Superhero films aren't exactly few and far between. With so many action-packed blockbusters following such similar formulas, standing out amongst the crowd is certainly difficult. Of course, there's more to producing a successful Superhero film than simply being different. The production company must find a way to cater to viewers who have been fans for years, while still enticing potential viewers who have never picked up a comic book before. Despite the odds, 20th Century Fox and Marvel managed to please everyone with 2016's *Deadpool*. Through the use of an innovative social media campaign, viral stunts, and virtually unheard of marketing tactics, the team at 20th Century Fox was able to give *Deadpool* the highest-grossing opening weekend of 2016 ("Deadpool," 2016). To date, *Deadpool* has grossed over \$600 million (Mendelson, 2016b), despite having a budget of only \$58 million, something that *Deadpool* star Ryan Reynolds himself admitted was chump change compared to what most Superhero movies get (Rottenberg, 2016). This margin was, before *Deadpool*, unheard of.

Yet *Deadpool* continues to break records (see Appendix A). It surpassed *50 Shades of Gray* as the highest President's Day opening of all time, is second to *The Matrix* as the highest R-rated opening of all time, and is the highest-grossing 20th Century Fox film not directed by James Cameron or George Lucas (Sood, 2016). These records seem astounding for a movie that executives have now admitted was never meant to be made (Kuchera, 2016). Looking back on the film, from inception to release, this success can be attributed to one thing: the innovative campaign that was used to promote the film. The marketing team at 20th Century Fox dared to attempt something that had never been done before, and, months before there was even a trailer for the film, *Deadpool* was sold to consumers around the world. It is hard to say if this campaign, or a campaign like this, would see similar success with a different film, lead actor, or crew. Ryan Reynolds' passion for the character and his devotion to the film's success surely helped the campaign thrive. Still, much of the heavy lifting came from the marketers at 20th Century Fox, who created the largest, most all-encompassing media campaign to be seen in film marketing to date. In this

paper, I will analyze past film marketing campaigns, including promotional campaigns that *Deadpool* borrowed from, to illustrate how Fox's team created something wildly different and truly remarkable.

Before *Deadpool*, digital communications had little to do with film marketing, especially when it came to Superhero films. Many films relied on their trailers to entice viewers (Finsterwalder, Kuppelwieser, & de Villiers, 2012). *Deadpool* opted not to do this - something that was noted by critics leading up to the film and will be analyzed later as a key component of the campaign's success - and, in turn, won the hearts of viewers through a series of viral videos, innovative billboards, and crucial interviews. Previous Marvel partnerships with production companies other than Fox centered around characters that were well-established and had a franchise behind them; since the success of the first *Iron Man* film, nearly every other Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) film tied, in some way, back to Tony Stark (Mendelson, 2016b). *Deadpool's* Wade Wilson was venturing into uncharted territory. 20th Century Fox had no *Iron Man* of their own, and so they had to create one. Fox's ability to realize that this would be a slow process lends directly to the fact that the promotional campaign for *Deadpool* began so early. *Deadpool's* campaign was meant to be a standout from the start. When Marvel was reluctant to greenlight the project, test footage from the film was mysteriously 'leaked' online (Kuchera, 2016). After the footage went viral, demand for the film was so high that Fox, Marvel, and Disney had their hands tied. The success of the viral test footage granted the marketing team at 20th Century Fox with a unique opportunity, and so they continued with their digital campaign.

Eleven months before the film's release, a single promotional photo was shared online. It featured Ryan Reynolds in *Deadpool's* suit, laying across a bearskin rug à la the famous Burt Reynolds photo (see Appendix B). With fans so protective over the character of *Deadpool* after his mistreatment in *X-Men Origins: Wolverine* (2009), the photo was meant to gently test fans' approval of the costume (McClintock, 2016). Feedback from fans became another crucial component to the success of the promotional campaign. For example, when fans begged for an R-rating over social media, Fox listened, and went to bat with Marvel, who reluctantly granted their wish (2016). Social media's ability to provide direct

feedback to the directors and producers of *Deadpool* proved to be a pivotal element to the film's success. A deep understanding of the film's genre and audience were also key parts of the campaign's effectiveness. By capitalizing on the popularity of emojis and internet memes, Fox's marketing team was able to cultivate content that was directly designed to go viral. As this was something that had never been done before, it was a gamble. All research on past film marketing practices pointed to a stricter strategy; previous facts and figures indicated that *Deadpool's* campaign would never work. While Fox certainly borrowed a few traditional ideas from films of the past, the ignorance of these marketing 'rules' is surely what led to *Deadpool's* overwhelming success.

Literature Review

In the past, traditional film and movie marketing had little to do with digital communications. Though digital technology was casually adopted into television production, via interactive hashtags and online streaming, the film industry was slower on the uptake. Aside from generic movie hashtags that saw little to no engagement, digital technologies were often underused or ignored when it came to film promotion. Film marketers relied on trailers, expert reviews, and word of mouth to win over consumers. As time went on, certain digital aspects, such as analyzation of big box office data, were adopted, but digital-heavy marketing campaigns were still avoided. Much of the film industry's use of digital technologies was geared towards increasing ticket sales. Any social media promotions that may have occurred had only one goal: to sell more tickets. The most recent example of a successful social media campaign (outside of *Deadpool*) involves Zac Efron's smash hit *Neighbors*. During the promotion of *Neighbors*, Efron sent out a tweet-deck with a direct link to Fandango, where fans could buy tickets (Contrino, 2014). While this promotion certainly increased ticket sales, that was all it did, because that was all it had been designed to do.

Deadpool's campaign used digital media in a different way largely because Fox and Marvel had a different task to accomplish. Their goal wasn't simply to sell tickets. First, the character of Deadpool had to be introduced to an audience that was mostly unaware of his true personality due to his mistreatment in

his only other MCU appearance. Next, diehard fans needed to feel that the movie would be done well, while casual fans were enticed with content that teased at the concept of the film without revealing too much. Finally, Fox had to adjust their strategy to account for the fact that *Deadpool* could not merely be marketed as a Superhero movie. *Deadpool* was sold as an R-rated comedy, a romance story, and a Superhero movie all wrapped up into one, to widen the scope of the audience (McCormick, 2016). To do all this, an innovative strategy that didn't rely on trailers to carry the full weight of the film's success was sorely needed. This was considered to be a gamble because previous studies had shown that film trailers are "the most effective promotional medium [...] and are most influential on consumer expectations," (Finsterwalder et. al, 2012). In fact, when consumers were surveyed to determine which marketing techniques were considered most influential on the expectation of the film's content, "posters and viral marketing attempts" were ranked fourth out of six potential influencers, behind word of mouth and previous knowledge of actors or directors (2012).

The importance of word of mouth in marketing a film further illustrates how little digital communications has had to do with the film industry prior to *Deadpool*. Marketers' reliance on word of mouth to spread film information completely ignores social media, the online word of mouth. Despite acknowledging the poignancy social media and digital content have in society, research by Kim, S.H, Park, N., and Park, S.H., illustrates that word of mouth and expert reviews play the most important role in a consumer's behavior and response towards a film (2013). Kim et. al even asserted that word of mouth is "the single most important factor for the long-term success of movies," something that *Deadpool* has long since disproven (2013). Had previous research not made a distinction between word of mouth and posters/viral marketing attempts, the spread of *Deadpool*'s content over social media may have been considered a type of word of mouth. Subsequent research has since shown that any filmic success that occurs as a result of viral content deserves its own category in today's ever-changing media landscape. Concurrently, Kim et. al found correlations between high-budget films and large box-office revenue, as well as between positive expert reviews and the long-lasting success of a film (2013). This is another

point that shows the uniqueness of *Deadpool*; aside from the virtually unheard of margin between the budget and the revenue, *Deadpool*'s massive opening weekend received little help from critics.

Due to the trailer's obscuration of the film's content, critics had no idea what to expect from the film. Early critic reviews for *Deadpool* simply did not exist, as the first people to see the film were selected fans that camped out in costume in large premiere cities (Poggi, 2016). Critics and consumers alike were unable to predict the film's content before buying a ticket, something that past research showed would likely hinder the film's success. While innovative new campaigns like that of *Deadpool*'s are changing the way films are advertised, certain staples remain constant. Every film has to have a trailer, especially given the established importance of trailers on consumers' expectations. When Finsterwalder et. al researched the importance of trailers, they looked specifically at what parts of a film were most influential on the consumer's perception (2012). It was found that genre and actors were the two largest defining factors when it came to the consumer's expectations and their behaviors towards a film (2012). Past studies also showed that not only was a strong trailer pivotal to ticket sales, but that without word of mouth and substantial expert reviews, a film would fail (Kim et. al, 2013). Much of a consumer's exposure to a film's content was through "traditional" marketing methods, including commercials, billboards, and posters (Olenski, 2015).

In general, previous studies and literature based on movie marketing explained that a campaign like *Deadpool*'s would never work. The research showed that, if a film was to be successful, strong critics had to voice their support as early as possible (Kim et. al, 2013). Studies also displayed an urgent need for a trailer that was a mini-narrative itself, with a beginning, middle, and end, to introduce the characters and tease viewers with an overview of the plot (Finsterwalder et. al, 2012). Past research argued that viral content was unimportant, that there were other larger, more important factors that could predict a film's success, and that social media should only be used to sneak direct links to buy tickets past consumers (Contrino, 2014). Nearly every study displayed the same results: that digital communications had yet to be used effectively in film, and that the pattern most marketers chose to use to sell movies was effective

to the point that the trailers were solid and the critics were kind. Since *Deadpool*'s release, many industry leaders have stated that film marketing is about to see a large change (Poggi, 2016). Marc Weinstock, President of Domestic Marketing at 20th Century Fox and the leader of the team that created this campaign, said himself that *Deadpool*'s smash success "reaffirmed [his] faith in social media" (2016). Weinstock called *Deadpool*'s success "a template for the future," proving that the previous research has room to improve (2016). For all intents and purposes, *Deadpool*'s strategy shouldn't have worked. Still, *Deadpool*'s success does not disprove past analyses entirely, as Weinstock and the team from Fox borrowed more aspects of classic marketing to sell *Deadpool* than they would have the world believe.

Analysis and Observations

While most information surrounding film marketing insisted traditional techniques were what would gather the most viewers, studies also showed that attempting a social media campaign boosted ticket sales (if it was effective). Research by Westland, J.C., showed that, if used properly, social media technologies could boost ticket sales by as much as 64% (2012). However, Westland also attributed a film's budget to its success; on average, he found that films with higher budgets saw more search engine engagement and larger box office sales (2012). In this regard, *Deadpool* was certainly different. Typically, promotional budgets for films range from half to two thirds of the general production budget for a film, and larger blockbusters can, of course, have larger promotional budgets. This helps trailers run on popular television networks over and over again, until viewers understand a film completely. However, one social media placement for a film has since proven to be more effective than 200 paid advertisements (Contrino, 2014). Gaining these placements is trickier than paying for advertisements; these placements have to be earned. For a film with a miniscule budget, compared to its competitors, this is clearly the route to go. Social media placements are a maximization of effectiveness with a minimization of payment, and if there's one thing that digital communications has taught marketers, it's that the quickest way to get something discussed on social media is to create something that will go viral.

“How Deadpool Spent Halloween” and “Deadpool Does Australia Day” (see Appendix C) were the first instances that the character of Deadpool was sold to consumers. These videos were so well-received that, over the course of the next nine months, several other viral videos featuring Ryan Reynolds as Deadpool were produced and uploaded to YouTube. Each video featured Reynolds in character, fully suited up as Deadpool, discussing something random or topical. Videos encouraging viewers to “touch themselves” for an at-home testicular exam in honor of MoVember were uploaded, along with a tongue-in-cheek “love story” promotion that faux-marketed *Deadpool* as a Nicholas Sparks-esque film. *Deadpool* benefitted heavily from the “trending” nature of the content produced. After Kanye West hosted Saturday Night Live in February and audio of a full-blown Kanye rant leaked, Ryan Reynolds uploaded a Deadpool response video the same day. Entitled “Why Deadpool won’t be hosting SNL,” the video featured “leaked” audio of Deadpool imitating West’s rant, and, even though the video was posted after the film had already debuted at the box office and seen record-breaking success, it still went viral in a matter of hours and has been shared over 5 million times since on YouTube (see Appendix C). Capitalizing on these newsworthy events without coming across poorly was no easy feat, yet Fox managed to pull these videos off - mostly due to one factor: Ryan Reynolds.

As previous research has shown, actors are an important component to a consumer’s expectation of a film (Kim et. al, 2013). While Reynolds had played Deadpool once before, *X-Men Origins: Wolverine* was years ago, and the film’s mistreatment of Deadpool would eventually become part of a running fourth-wall break gag during *Deadpool*’s promotion. For example, in *X-Men Origins: Wolverine*, Deadpool’s mouth is inexplicably sewn shut, even though this is something never seen in the comic books. During the viral video “How Deadpool spent Halloween,” after Deadpool harasses a group of costumed children, one child dressed as Wolverine remarks, “I liked him better when his mouth was sewn shut” (see Appendix C). This nod to the old film in such a tongue-in-cheek manner assured old fans that the upcoming *Deadpool* film would not go the same way *Wolverine* had. The joke put already secured fans at ease, and was subtle enough that new fans could still enjoy the video even when the joke flew

clear over their heads. *Deadpool* and Fox benefitted significantly from casting Reynolds. Time after time, he proved to be the perfect person to introduce the world to a new character. Throughout each viral spot, the viewer is able to forget that they are watching a costumed-Reynolds, and instead, the consumer is free to learn the nuances of Deadpool.

Fox also employed the use of fourth-wall breaks to continuously make jokes about Reynolds' past as a Superhero film star. Jokes about the critically panned Green Lantern film, in which Reynolds starred in 2011, were made at Reynolds' expense throughout the promotion of the film and during *Deadpool* itself - all from Reynolds, in character as Deadpool. While Deadpool routinely breaks the fourth-wall in his comic book editions, using the infamous fourth-wall breaks in this way (the paradox of Reynolds-as-Deadpool making jokes about Reynolds-as-Green-Lantern) made viewers feel as though they were "in" on the joke. This is likely something that no other film would have dared to attempt, and, had Reynolds not played Deadpool, the opportunity to poke fun at the Green Lantern so much might have never arose. At the same time, Reynolds' main job was to sell Deadpool to viewers with the character's personality. Since trailers and promotional spots for the film mainly recycled the same footage to different bars of the same song, the online content produced by Reynolds and Fox carried most of the burden of endearing consumers to the plot and characters of the film. When viral content was not being produced, Reynolds' out-of-character tweets about the film were being circulated on social media. Reynolds' enlisting of past co-star Betty White, from *The Proposal* (2009), to post a swear-word laden endorsement of *Deadpool*, was another stroke of genius that came from Reynolds' out-of-character brain. Thus, Fox benefitted by having Reynolds in two ways: first, to sell Deadpool as Deadpool, and, second, to sell Deadpool as Ryan Reynolds via his charm.

Despite all this, digital content was truly the star of this campaign, which never would have gotten off the ground without the marketing team at 20th Century Fox. With more than seven other Superhero films premiering in 2016, doing something different was the only possible way to stand out amongst the crowded marketplace (Faughnder, 2016). While repeated social media use and viral

promotional spots were certainly standouts during *Deadpool*'s campaign, perhaps most interesting was Fox's involvement of television to help sell *Deadpool* in a new way that didn't involve simply playing a commercial over and over again. First, as an April Fool's Day joke, Mario Lopez interviewed Ryan Reynolds on *Extra*, and, when the issue of the film's rating came up, Deadpool showed up to kill Mario Lopez (see Appendix C). Next, Fox convinced Conan O'Brien to change the rating of his late-night show on TBS for one night so that the red-band trailer could debut (2016). Finally, rather than pay for a Superbowl commercial, Deadpool held an in-character press conference in the city of the 2016 Superbowl and attracted patrons and media for free. That's not to say that paid opportunities didn't arise. Fox purchased three hours of content from five different Viacom networks in the week leading up to *Deadpool*'s release, so that viewers would not see commercials, but, rather, viral *Deadpool* spots and trailers instead (2016). This ensured that the last small margin of consumers that had somehow remained untouched by *Deadpool* marketing got as hooked as everyone else did.

While Fox has not publicly stated how much money was spent on promoting the film, it is clear that what Weinstock and his team managed to accomplish is not something easily pulled off with other actors and films. For proof of this, one should look no further than *Zoolander 2*, which flopped at the box office despite an intense social media campaign and attempted viral stunts, including having Ben Stiller as Derek Zoolander walking in Paris Fashion Week (Faughner, 2016). This kind of social media promotion either works or it doesn't; while an Instagram account for Derek Zoolander saw little to no engagement, Deadpool's in-character live tweeting of an episode of *The Bachelor* was a spur-of-the moment success. Much of the content that was create for social media by Fox simply worked and got fans talking, however, Fox also benefitted from certain promotional spots that were not originally made for social media. After debuting a billboard advertisement made only from emojis (see Appendix C), consumers were left confused. Not everyone knew what the skull emoji, the poop emoji, and the letter L were meant to be selling. Rather than allow this confusion to derail promotion, Fox refused to accept a loss, and instead had Ryan Reynolds tweet out a second promotional spot for *Deadpool*, with the title Skullpool

where the film's real title *Deadpool* should have been. The two images were then shared side-by-side across various social media channels, allowing Fox to stumble into more free buzz that had not been anticipated.

Fox's utilization of social media, online platforms, and traditional television marketing, both earned and paid, displays a true understanding of digital media and the 17-and-over demographic. Despite the insistence of previous researchers that most of a marketing budget should be devoted to trailers, *Deadpool's* decision to obscure the film's content from making its way into commercials was praised (Mendelson, 2016a). While certain cynical journalists felt that perhaps interesting content was not being included in the trailers because the film had no interesting content, a majority of consumers and reviewers were left eagerly awaiting the next viral spot, as trailers and commercials had left them unsatisfied and without a 'real' look into the film (2016a). Building this anticipation among consumers was not only a smart decision, but one that clearly paid off, despite past studies' assurance that it would not. However, it seems that, even though the research put the odds firmly out of his favor, Weinstock never lost hope that the campaign would work and the film would be a hit. In fact, his statement to Entertainment Weekly during the film's smash opening weekend, "Originally always wins. Audaciousness always wins. When you show something to the audience that they've never seen before, they get excited," has obviously since been proven true (Sullivan, 2016).

Discussion

Studying *Deadpool* has shown me several things I never knew about the film industry. First, as the research was so easily disproven, *Deadpool* serves as a reminder that new techniques can work. Though *Deadpool* is the first film to have created such an accomplished social media campaign, the failures of past campaigns teaches marketers that understanding your audience is key. For example, a viral video used to advertise *Toy Story 3* altered the animation style of the *Toy Story* toys to create a 1980s antique toy advertisement that was uploaded to YouTube and meant to go viral. However, the vast majority of viewers of *Toy Story 3* were, generationally, not old enough to understand the reference,

making the spot fall flat (Westland, 2012). *Deadpool*'s viral spots were tailored regionally (in some countries, translators were hired to get the jokes just right) so that miscommunications could be avoided, displaying a prudent knowledge of the spots' audiences (Sullivan, 2016). The first takeaway that researchers should examine when attempting to recreate the success of *Deadpool* is therefore that, while marketers should not be afraid of trying new things, a deep understanding of the audience, tone, and theme are vital.

Second, *Deadpool*'s prosperity teaches that marketers should not be afraid of newsjacking (taking headline news about an unrelated topic and relating it back to your topic). To date, *Deadpool*'s reenactment of Kanye West's SNL rant is one of the most widely shared promotional spots for the film. The quick response time and the utilization of Ryan Reynolds's social media channels to promote the spot shows that film promotion does not stop at the film's opening weekend, despite tradition dictating that over 90% of film promotion should occur before a film's release (Huang, Strijnev, & Ratchford, 2015). Instead, the success of these videos proves that generating positive thoughts and feelings about the overall brand of the film is more important than simply boosting ticket sales, especially for a film that might spawn a franchise. Research has shown that if advertising can "generate goodwill," that goodwill will increase box office dollars substantially over time (2015). *Deadpool* managed to accomplish this in a way that no other film to date has been able to do. *Deadpool* sold viewers a likeable character; consumers 'met' *Deadpool* and got to know him through the videos that were created. Rather than past efforts to engage fans on social media that mostly involved finding new ways to send out links to ticket-buying websites, *Deadpool*'s campaign increased interest in the *Deadpool* brand as a whole, and in turn, in Fox-Marvel and the budding franchise starting to take shape.

Another thing marketers can take away from this study is that they should not be discouraged by setbacks. After the emoji billboard fell flat, *Deadpool* marketers found a way to spin the confusion for their benefit. Additionally, *Deadpool* marketers learned to ignore critics and reviewers, as they learned that their endorsement was unnecessary, once the viral efforts were recognized as the most important part

in the campaign. This showed that the rigid ranking of factors most likely to influence a consumer's expectations could be changed, and again proved that there is no single marketing strategy that will successfully sell a film. Each film must capitalize on its strengths - for *Deadpool*, one of these strengths was clearly Ryan Reynolds, and another was *Deadpool*'s propensity to break the fourth-wall. By making jokes at the expense of 20th Century Fox, and Fox's previous greatest Superhero success, the X-Men franchise, *Deadpool* was able to engage viewers in a way that few other Superhero films would be able to do. Given the saturated nature of the Superhero film market, anything that would set *Deadpool* apart from the competition helped. While these were unique circumstances, they provided important distinctions that, in turn, increased ticket sales at the box office - something that traditional marketers always considered to be the end goal.

The *Deadpool* viral campaign's success has several implications for the film industry and digital communications. Marc Weinstock's insistence that *Deadpool* has changed the movie marketing game forever is not unwarranted; there will undoubtedly be copycats in the future. Primarily, *Deadpool*'s success has opened the door for marketers, so that film advertisers can now see a tangible and practical way to use social media and digital content to their benefit. While, previously, only the untapped potential of online content was observed by the film industry, now that *Deadpool* has taken the risk, other film franchises are free to reap the rewards. Just as *Deadpool* chose which aspects of traditional marketing to use in its promotional strategy, newer films can choose which pieces of *Deadpool*'s strategy are likely to work for them. Digital media is about to see more engagement from the film industry than ever before. Just as many other industries have turned towards building a brand, rather than selling a product, films will follow their lead and try to emulate the goodwill-inducing branding that *Deadpool* has achieved.

Recommendations and Conclusions

Moving forward, I recommend that any marketers who wish to recreate the success of *Deadpool* realize that *Deadpool*'s marketing strategy is not a one-size-fits-all plan that can simply be copied. This plan instead needs to be tailored to fit the film and actors being sold, or, like the team behind *Zoolander 2*

learned, it will not work. For social media marketing to translate into box office dollars, many factors must seamlessly come together. Only having a deep understanding of the audience, or only having a clever idea to sell a film will not allow for the record-breaking success *Deadpool* has seen to happen again. *Deadpool*'s success illustrates massive potential for the film industry. If marketers can treat future films the right way, it is very possible that a *Deadpool*-esque situation might happen again. Marketers must find a way to get consumers talking on social media. This is the largest hurdle; past films have seen poor engagement with branded hashtags, and instead pay for advertisements to infiltrate consumers' social media feeds. If marketers can get social media users talking without invading their big data or paying inordinate amounts to saturate the online market with ads, the magic behind *Deadpool*'s success will surely be back (Contrino, 2014).

Though Fox and Marvel greenlit a sequel before *Deadpool*'s opening weekend had finished, I am not sure that a second viral campaign is the correct way to proceed. Part of the appeal of 2016's *Deadpool* was the novelty of the viral campaign and the way that Fox always managed to create the unexpected. Videos went viral of their own accord, because people thought they were funny and interesting; the modernity of the promotional spots was what attracted so many people to this 'new' Superhero. The second time around, consumers will be expecting funny, quirky promotional spots. Unless Fox finds a way to push the envelope even further than they already have, promotional spots for *Deadpool*'s sequel may fall flat in the same way that Derek Zoolander's Instagram did. Fox needs to find a way to catch viewers off-guard, so that any content produced moving forward can replicate the organic way *Deadpool*'s promotional spots went viral. Weinstock's work on *Deadpool* proved that social media can "make or break" a film's opening, so it is important that *Deadpool*'s sequel finds a way to achieve the social media spread its predecessor did (Sullivan, 2016).

In conclusion, *Deadpool* can be considered a unique case when compared to films that came before it. At the same time, *Deadpool* can be considered not unique, because it is certainly about to be followed by a slew of movies that will attempt to make its marketing success commonplace in the

industry. *Deadpool's* adoption of social media marketing, viral video production, and new-age advertising experiences, coupled with a brand that intrigued viewers and a leading star bursting with charm shows that the right mix of old and new marketing techniques can completely change an industry. When digital technology is used to communicate a message to an audience, unexpected results can become the new normal. The big screen has been begging for a push into the 21st century, and *Deadpool's* flawless use of digital communications has achieved that, and then some. Film marketing may never be the same again, but, more importantly, it is likely that viewers will no longer be subjected to the typical promotional experience. Consumers will no longer be forced to view traditional trailers over and over again to learn about a film. Instead, if marketers want to go the *Deadpool* route, consumers will be able to engage with new brands that want to win over their feelings, something that just might make Hollywood as a whole better off after all.

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Appendix A

Deadpool's Box Office Records (retrieved from Wikipedia)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deadpool_\(film\)#Reception](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deadpool_(film)#Reception)

<i>Deadpool</i> box office records		[hide]
R-rated opening weekend	\$132.7 million ^[92]	
Biggest 20th Century Fox opening	\$132.7 million ^[92]	
Biggest IMAX 2D and R-rated opening	\$132.7 million ^[92]	
Biggest Feature directorial debut	\$132.7 million ^[92]	
Biggest IMAX February gross domestic	\$8.9 million ^[94]	
Biggest Valentine's Day/Presidents Day	\$150 million ^{[92][95]}	
Largest January/February opening	\$132.7 million ^[92]	
February opening day	\$47.5 million ^[96]	
Biggest IMAX February gross international	\$18.6 million ^[94]	
R-rated IMAX preview	\$2.3 million ^[96]	
February IMAX preview	\$2.3 million ^[96]	
Biggest Thursday night R-rated film	\$12.7 million ^[92]	
Biggest Friday R-rated film	\$47.5 million ^[92]	
Biggest Saturday R-rated film	\$42.6 million ^[97]	
Biggest Sunday R-rated film	\$42.6 million ^[97]	
Biggest PLF R-rated Opening	\$17.6 million ^[92]	
Ryan Reynolds' career opening weekend	\$132.7 million ^[97]	
Holiday/Long weekend opening weekend	\$132.7 million ^[97]	
<i>X-Men</i> opening weekend	\$132.7 million ^[97]	
<i>X-Men</i> four-day opening weekend	\$150 million ^[97]	
Winter season opening weekend	\$132.7 million ^[98]	

Appendix B
First *Deadpool* promotional photo, March 2015
(retrieved from McClintock, 2016)



Appendix C

Deadpool Viral Promotional Videos

1. How Deadpool Spent Halloween - Nov. 3, 2015:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hr1YnpLijC8>
2. Deadpool Celebrates Australia Day - Jan. 21, 2016:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bv3FWCdO0rw>
3. Why Deadpool won't be hosting SNL - Feb. 19, 2016:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cFYDD7XqiIA>
4. Is 'Deadpool' Going to be Rated R? -Apr. 1, 2015:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z5TB0pKLj0Y>

Deadpool Billboards

Ryan Reynolds ✓
@VancityReynolds

Just 29 days til, "Skull Poop L"!

