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Marketing 'The Romantics': A Case Study in Branded Partnerships

By Michelle Kung



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Galt Niederhoffer with the cast of "The Romantics"

To help promote her drama "The Romantics," [writer-director Galt Niederhoffer](#) decided to take matters into her own hands — literally. Out of the Sundance Film Festival, her film — which stars Katie Holmes, Anna Paquin, and Josh Duhamel as part of a group of college friends gathered for a wedding — was presented with two vastly different distribution offers. She ultimately elected to take the bigger studio's deal, but

added her own caveat. To protect her investors and to extract the highest marketing dollars she could for her film, she helped set up a "pop-up distribution company" that would work in tandem with new distributor Paramount Famous to promote the film.

"The indie film market has changed over the last several years, so I thought it wise to create a new innovative scenario," said Niederhoffer. So she, along with her partners, including Ron Stein of Four of a Kind Productions, raised an additional amount of money and assembled a grassroots team to help market her film. When brainstorming for partnerships the team immediately thought of J.Crew, who had already provided some of the wardrobe in the film. "We presented this idea of a cross-promotional partnership — our product sells their product — and within 24 hours, the wise people at J.Crew said 'hell yes, let's join hands,'" Niederhoffer said.

With a plan in place, the pop-up marketing team galvanized the entire cast to assemble in New York for a photo shoot, and J.Crew ended up being so pleased with the result, they decided to put the spread into their Fall 2010 catalog. What followed, Niederhoffer said, was a "snowball effect" where other companies — including wedding site theknot.com and People Stylewatch — began approaching them with deals.

"It's been shocking to witness the power of branded partnerships with the viral power of the Internet," said Niederhoffer. "In film, the consolidation of indie film labels into larger studios has lent itself to a defeatist attitude among many indie filmmakers, but there are still uncharted methods of marketing your film that costs a lot less and seem to reach a lot more people than traditional means."

In the case of "The Romantics," Niederhoffer says the reason her production has been successful is two-fold: "One, because the movie is good, and two, because the cast thinks the movie is good. Without their support, J.Crew wouldn't have returned my calls," she said. "I'm very lucky for that, but make no mistake, it is a trade. J.Crew has gained this beautiful endorsement and we've gained a ton of eyeballs. And that's a trade."

[Galt Niederhoffer, The Romantics](#)