

Insights and inspirations from the world of...

Reruns, revivals and sequels: Doesn't have to be a value call between past and future By Rhea Blanken

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From Broadway to the big screen and back to the little one, the world of reruns, revivals and sequels is alive and well. People are flocking to them wherever they appear like a moth to a flame. Yes, a few are really good, maybe even great, but some should not have gotten past the cutting room floor.

There is always an entertainment critic or two who complains about movie sequel being made just for the 'money factor' and decrying how it is inferior to the original with no artistic merit. But be it Superman or Batman, James Bond or Indiana Jones, Harry Potter or Star Wars, movie sequels have been around for decades. As for television, we wouldn't recognize that entertainment outlet without its constant reruns. Several cable channels exist just for that purpose - to supply us with reruns from our youth. And then there is Broadway, where critics often speculate on the lack of imagination and originality that's forcing so many award winning plays to re-appear.

What is it about reruns, revivals and sequels that has made them so much a part of our entertainment culture AND how does this phenomenon relate to the world of assns? I believe the parallels are many but first let's define our terms:

Rerun - a repeat showing of previously recorded broadcast; **Revival** - a renewal of interest in something that results in its becoming popular once more; and **Sequel** - a movie, novel or play that continues a story begun in a previous movie, novel or play. To cover all our bases, let's also include: **Spin-off** - a new product, material or service from something that already exists.

Why Do It?

The motivation is different for each. With reruns, it might be a timing or availability issue. HBO is known for repeating original programming numerous

times in a given week or month thus allowing many more people to engage. With the production factor divided over multiple showings, the show's various sponsors receive additional opportunities to make an impression. It's simply maximizing the investment and increasing participation.

With Broadway revivals, the scenario might go like this - whatever the original play, success was present; people clearly liked it then and the timing seems right to bring it back now. Backers are eager to support a proven winner giving you an old show "new again." It's a recipe for feeling secure based on past performance.

Sequels are a whole other formula. It's based on: a big box-office success; an audience base appearing to be loyal; market awareness reflecting a known "brand" experience; and timing being in your favor since absent promises to make the heart grow fonder. Plus, the show promises to deliver value above and beyond the original, which already has viewers hearts and minds.

In each situation - something was considered successful that is worthy of continuing. In one case, it is exactly as previously shown. In another, it is with slight "updates" but mostly as previously shown. And last, it's a new and advanced version of what was previously shown.

What are your association's reruns, revivals and sequels?

If the original success sets the stage for all that comes later, then how do you know (really know) what was successful? What are you counting and why do those measures matter? What worked and what didn't, for whom, and what is the existing market awareness for them now? The answers to these questions are critical to having reruns, revivals and sequels more successful than their originals.

More to consider:

Having staff willing and able to reinvigorate "the show" rather than people who want its death is key. If staff gets bored with the show, its production or any of its characters, that spells trouble. At one point, even Sir Arthur Conan Doyle tried to kill off Sherlock Holmes but his readers insisted he bring him back! Also, knowing

the competition's schedule for their offerings will assist you in planning yours. Stay informed about the timing for their reruns, revivals and sequels.

Also - how are you planning to exhaust the offering, the storyline? Is it time to move your Annual Meeting from revival to sequel or even to change the genre all together and invent something really new? What is rerun and what is sequel in your educational programs, your curriculum for certifications and credentials? Your Legislative Day or Awards Programs?

If having more loyal viewers and participants is the intention for your association's reruns, revivals and sequels, then how is your assn keeping current members engaged and future members attracted? Maybe it's time for a spin-off or three.

"Familiarity, truly cultivated, can breed love." - Dr Joyce Brothers

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