



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SUMMER MOVIES QUANT+QUAL 2014

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The purpose of this study is to compare 5 action movie trailers for movies to be released in June, July and August of 2014. The stimuli will be trailers for these movies. Using a Quant/Qual approach, the study will identify appealing and unappealing elements of each trailer, as well as identify areas where the trailer could be improved. The study will also identify the trailer that respondents are most interested in seeing in the theaters.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. Quantitative Study: Screen 5 action movie trailers, identifying word of mouth potential and plans to see the movie in theaters
2. Qualitative Study: Test top 3 trailers based on the Quantitative study and determine the most appealing elements and ways to optimize trailers in order to drive interest in seeing the movie in theaters.

AUDIENCE AND SCOPE

For both groups, GutCheck talked to adults age 18 to 54 who has seen a movie in theaters within the past 6 months, and who enjoyed watching action movies.

The quantitative portion surveyed 203 respondents, recruiting equal numbers of males and females using Instantly. These respondents were shown five movie trailers and each asked two questions regarding interest in discussing the trailer with others (word of mouth) and interest in seeing the movie in theaters (purchase intent).

The qualitative portion surveyed 25 respondents (12 female and 13 male) using GutCheck's Instant Research Community. These respondents were asked a total of 18 questions over the course of two days, and given the opportunity to interact with other respondents as well as answer moderator probes.

STIMULI

1. Transformers: Age of Extinction
(2:30) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CKD5SNYUpUk>
2. Marvel's Guardians of the Galaxy
(2:49) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=89q_HH-3ghk
3. The Expendables 3
(1:06) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5bPJrbzjLIs>
4. Sin City: A Dame to Kill For
(1:23) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nqRRF5y94uE>
5. Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
(1:31) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VZZ0PnDZdZk>



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KEY FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

General Appeal of Action Trailers

In general, respondents like action movie trailers that offer a glimpse into the cast and plotline without feeling like they have seen too much. Trailers between a minute and a half and two minutes long seemed to be the preferred length, as some begin to feel too long, convoluted, or drawn out. Respondents also tended to have stronger positive reactions to music choices and to highlighting of special effects, and many said special effects can provide incentive to see the movie in theaters versus renting at home — if a trailer highlights strong visual effects, respondents were more likely to say it would be “worth it” to see it in theaters. This also extends to perception of “family-friendly” movies — if a trailer showcased that a movie was appropriate for all ages, respondents saw it as an opportunity for a family activity and therefore were more likely to be able to justify seeing it in theaters.

While the cast provides significant draw to a film, respondents are sometimes weary of franchises, especially if they did not have positive associations with previous installments in a series of movies, or are unfamiliar with previous plotlines. Additionally, respondents often look to trailers to provide a brief context and confidence that they would seamlessly be able to understand the plot without prior experience.

Top performers

Transformers 4

Transformers was the most popular trailer in quantitative polling, and the least polarizing in directional qualitative feedback. Appeal for this movie lay in its franchise success and viewers’ previous positive experience with the series. Respondents also liked the large scale of the action and the special effects. However, this trailer was seen as a bit long and convoluted, and some felt the plotline was trite or clichéd.

Marvel’s Guardians of the Galaxy

The humor used in the trailer for this movie made it stand out and gave it broader appeal, as many said this looked like something their entire family might be able to see in theaters. However, some felt that the humor might be cheesy or confusing in the context of a sci-fi action movie. For this reason, in qualitative feedback this trailer was also polarizing.

The Expendables 3

The Expendables included what was seen as the most appealing cast with a strong indication of action and explosions, though some were leery that this franchise lacks substance or plot. While it enjoyed considerable positive feedback, this was the most polarizing in qualitative feedback and ranked as the third overall most popular in quantitative polling, only slightly edging out Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles.

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DETAILED FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

This section expands on the Key Findings and includes verbatim responses from respondents.

1. Quantitative Findings

In order to keep quantitative surveys within a manageable timeframe, respondents were shown the trailers to each of the five movies and then asked their interest in discussing the trailer with others and their likelihood to see the movie in trailers. Top two box results for each of these questions were tallied in terms of number of responses, which were then converted to overall percentages:

Word of mouth

Please rate your agreement with the following statement: "I plan to discuss this movie with friends and family, now that I have seen the trailer."	Number of responses answering "Strongly agree" or "Somewhat agree"	Percentage
Transformers 4	167	82%
Guardians of the Galaxy	152	75%
The Expendables 3	150	74%
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	139	68%
Sin City	111	55%
N=203		

Purchase intent

Based on the trailer you have just seen, how likely are you to go to the theater to see this movie when it premieres?	Number of responses answering "Very likely" or "Somewhat likely"	Percentage
Transformers 4	164	81%
Guardians of the Galaxy	140	69%
The Expendables 3	136	67%
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	124	61%
Sin City	96	47%
N=203		

After exposure to all five trailers, respondents were asked which of the five they were most likely to see. Results are shown below:

Overall Appeal – Most likely to see in theaters

	Responses	Percentage
Transformers 4	92	45%
Guardians of the Galaxy	54	27%
The Expendables 3	24	12%
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	20	10%
Sin City	13	6%
N=203		

Therefore, in all categories, Transformers, Guardians of the Galaxy and The Expendables were considered the top performers and were shown in qualitative testing to further understand appeal.

2. Qualitative Findings

Scope of Analysis: As with all qualitative research, the findings reported in this section should be considered directional and not serve as a means of statistical significance.

Transformers

Appeal

In general, respondents seemed to have stronger positive connotations with this franchise based on their experience with the first two movies, and therefore expressed strong interest in this trailer. More specifically, they discussed the 'large scale' feel of the action, CGI and special effects concerning the robots themselves, often noting the incorporation of dinosaurs. Respondents with children were also interested in this trailer because the movie appeared to be child-friendly and they felt they would be able to take the family. On a secondary note, the addition of 3D effects, as well as Mark Wahlberg, were also appealing, though a few said they missed Shia LeBeouf. Michael Bay as director was also an indication of a superior action movie, to some.

"The new characters and new robots combined with all the action, makes it very appealing to me. I will take my boys to see this one the day it comes out!" – Female, 35, KS

"The 3D special effects is what would drive me to go see this movie in the theaters. Unless you have a 3D TV with surround sound, you won't get the same experience." - Female, 25, MN

"I excited beyond to watch Transformer 4. I'm a big fan of transformer and watched every one of them. Though the fact I'm not used to Mark Walberg because I actually like Shia LaBeouf a lot, but something new always doesn't hurt to watch." – Female, 35, NY

"most appealing is the special effects. transformers on their own and the story line are a little lame but the special effects makes it just a nice summer fun movie to escape from reality for a couple hours. optimus prime looks great in the preview, as well and all the various machines that come to life look mesmerizing." – Male, 42, AZ

Concerns

Some respondents mentioned that the transformers franchise might be trite or waning and that the "end of the world" plotline seemed a bit overdone. This trailer was also on the longer side, which some felt was too much. A few respondents noted that they do not like to feel like they have seen the whole movie after watching a trailer. A few also mentioned that the trailer felt almost too fast or "cluttered."

"It looks like the movie is going to be spectacular with excellent special effects, but another world's going to end movie. I'm kind of burnt out on those." – Female, 51, TX

"It looks well made,well acted and extremely exciting, but with all that being said I have never really been able to get behind the whole Transformer thing even having grown up during the 80's when the Transformers were born so to speak. I went to see the first one and didn't really like it so i never went to another one. I am not belittling the movies or those who enjoy them they are just not for me." – Male, 44, NM

"The movie sounds like it has the typical end of the world plot. The realistic effects of the transformer robots would be really neat to see in 3D." – Female, 25, MN

"it did seem a bit long for a trailer but to me the length really isnt the issue its optimus giving away the entire plot basically" – Female, 28, VA

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Guardians of the Galaxy

Appeal

The most cited positive aspect of this trailer was its use of humor as well as action and effects — respondents felt this comedic element would give the movie broader appeal, especially for younger audiences, and it stood out as different than the other trailers. The introduction of new characters was also seen as unique, and many said the characters were the most memorable or appealing aspect (John C Reilly and the raccoon were noted by name). The music (Blue Suede's "Hooked on a Feeling") was also regarded positively.

"The movie looks really funny and full of action. Chris Pratt is a hilarious to watch. This is also does not look like your typical Marvel movie either. Almost like a B-Team instead of an A-team approach." –Female, 25, MN

"waht i liked about the tráiler were scenes, the environment in which the film unfolds.it seemed very short, they didn't show the story of the film. Only action scenes." – Male, 28, TX

"This movie looks great. it looks extremely funny and the cast is amazing. i think the effects are just right and the makeup and costumes are amazing. the music is really good... The humor is what attracts me the most. i love science fiction, but it's more appealing to me when it's funny and the sense of humor in this seems perfect for me." – Female, 30, PA

"this is super funny. love this trailer and i will be seeing this movie for sure! like the humor, special effects, action scenes. the humor is the best part in my opinion." – Male, 45, TX

Concerns

Though humor was appealing, some felt the use of too much comedy and jokes were confusing and that it might not work well in the genre, and others specifically stated less interest in Marvel or "science fiction" movies. The use of the raccoon was also noted as a bit "cheesy" by a few respondents, and others said that while they liked the characters it was unclear how the plot fit together or what guardians of the galaxy actually meant.

"I went back and forth on this one. First I thought it looked funny, then I thought it looked pretty dumb. I don't think i would watch this in the theater but maybe once it was out on DVD. My son might enjoy it... I would say not to have the raccoon character in the trailer but would in turn be upset if I didn't know there were a mix of animals and humans in a super hero type movie when i showed up at the theater. I'm not really a fan of "funny animals" in an action based super hero/comic movie." – Female, 30, WA

"It was ok. Something my son might like. The trailer makes it seem like it would be more of a comedy than an action hero movie. Which is a bit confusing for someone who has never heard of Guardians of the Galaxy until now... [use of comedy] just surprised me. It didn't seem like it fit with the movie, then I saw a raccoon in the trailer & it all came together. This movie might be cheesy." – Female, 29, VA

"the only things i liked about this was John C. Riley and the raccoon. this preview really doesn't tell me anything as far as what the movie goes. Yes, I see they are the guardians of the galaxy but what are they guarding against? why is there a raccoon? is the raccoon a good guy or bad guy? the ad really made this movie look unappealing... they were trying too hard and it just didnt seem funny. " – Male, 42, AZ

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The Expendables 3

Appeal

The biggest draw and appeal of this trailer was the cast and the names billed — the cast extended to multiple big names and many people reiterated these names in their comments. Additionally, those who had seen previous Expendables movies mentioned that this cast was even larger than others, which they found enticing. They also felt it would be fun and action-packed, many said they like to see this kind of intensity and “explosions” in action movie trailers.

As a secondary interest, several said they liked the music used (Billy Squier’s “The Stroke”) and the “teaser” aspect, not being given the plot ahead of time. A few male respondents also mentioned that it felt like a masculine movie, which held appeal to them.

“My God, Snipes, Gibson, Come on, I got to see that one. About my review, About Action sequences and Camera Trackins are excelent, But What I dont like is that Stalone focus to much on the action and not in the story line, and for me, the story line matters, because it builds the road for me to keep wanting the movie for the movie and no for the starts in it.” – Male, 40, CA

“Now this is exactly what I am talking about. I thoroughly enjoyed both of the earlier Expendable movies. Sylvester Stallone and crew never disappoint in these Expendable movies. If you don't enjoy these movies please surrender your guy card at the door as you exit the room. It looks like a totally bad ass story line, but why wouldn't it be with the cast assembled for this one.” – Male, 44, NM

“It looks like a great movie.I liked it because it contains action scenes.Also I liked it because of the actors:Lee,Stallone,other famous actors.I think it is big plus for a movie.Also I liked the music in the preview” – Male, 51, NY

“Definitely the type of movie I would go to the theater to see. I love Jet Li, I haven't seen enough of him recently. Action movies are my all time favorite to watch in the theater with the surround sound.” - Female, 25, MN

Concerns

Some respondents were concerned that if they haven't seen the others they might not like the 3rd, or that the plotline won't be strong or interesting since it was not featured as much in the trailer, which relied on the stars. On a similar note, some felt that the trailer should have left some cameos as a surprise, or featured more women. Additionally, a few mentioned that they had heard the other movies in the franchise were not strong, and therefore were not confident that this one would be any better.

“i absolutely love the cast. all actors i grew up watching. i havent seen the first two expendable movies but i do remember hearing they were awful so that is my concern about this movie. a third movie in a series almost always is terrible. however, this cast and the fact its a complete MAN movie, i might be interested in seeing it.” – Male, 42, AZ

“it seems like it's a tired plot/premise that has been done over and over again in Hollywood. I cannot justify spending the money for the high movie ticket to watch this film when it feels like I've seen this type of movie/plot before. It's all action and no substance.” – Male, 35, MA

“I really didn't get a sense of what the movie was going to be about. More details would be nice to spark more interest in going to the theatre to see it.” – Female, 38, KS

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Comparison

Respondents were also polled qualitatively on their likelihood to see the movies, both individually and comparatively. These polls bolstered qualitative feedback showing that The Expendables as well as Guardians of the Galaxy were the most polarizing — they scored high in both most and least likely to see comparatively. Additionally, Transformers saw the least amount of negative feedback, which may indicate it will outperform others in this category, echoing quantitative results.

It should be noted that many respondents indicated that they would be seeing all or more than one of the movies in theaters.

Likelihood to see - individual

	The Expendables 3	Transformers	Guardians of the Galaxy
Very likely			13
Somewhat likely			4
Neither likely/unlikely			2
Somewhat unlikely			3
Not at all likely			3
			N=25

Side-by-side comparison – likelihood to see in theaters

	Votes: MOST likely to see	Votes LEAST likely to see
The Expendables 3	10	9
Transformers	7	6
Guardians of the Galaxy	8	10
		N=25

“That’s a tough call between Transformers and The Expendables. Transformers would be an all family movie, though, so more likely to see it at home, where we can pause, come back to it if we need to. My husband and I would enjoy seeing the Expendables.” – Female, 31, IA

“The whole military style of THE EXPENDABLES really appeal to me, and that is the movie I will be going to see as soon as it hits the theater. Action packed and has its feet planted in a reality based story line, and that appeals to me.” – Male, 44, NM

“after watching these trailers I expect to see them all in the movies theater but I choose [Guardians of the Galaxy] because I think this has the most interesting storyline. basically it goes beyond a basic action movie and has some comical moments in it” – Male, 34, CA

“by far and away, transformers. great cast, great special effects and it looks like mindless fun. [Guardians of the Galaxy] looks ridiculous. the expendables seems to be all cast and no story.” – Male, 42, AZ

“My husband would love the Expendables, my son and I like the Transformers and only my son would enjoy the Guardians of the galaxy so I’m sure we would wait for it to come out on DVD. Transformers is something you have to see in theater to get the full effect in my opinion.” – Female, 30, WA