

When movies cost \$10.75

Have you been to the movies lately? The ticket prices keep creeping up and this past Sunday I paid \$10.75 to see True Grit (a great movie, by the way, and worth watching). Just a few months ago, tickets were \$10, and before that \$9.50 and back in the last century, one could catch a flick for about \$5.

Consumerist reports that movie ticket sales were at their lowest point since 1996 (back in the last century) in 2010. At the same time, movie prices are at their highest point in history. Coincidence? I think not. The article also says more people are staying home to watch streaming video or waiting the shorter time between a movie's theatrical release and its DVD release. But, I think, the real cause is the high cost of the movies versus the cost of staying home/watching online or on DVD.

What this illustrates is that no matter the quality of your product (and there are some excellent movies out there) or the frequency of your advertising or the success of your public relations efforts there are reasons that people will not buy your product (or service). Consumers will determine whether your product offers value and whether they are willing to pay for that value.

When movies cost \$10.75 and you have a family of four, or you are taking your significant other out for a date, or you are just killing time, you may think twice about it. After all \$10.75 could buy you a meal or even a book. Pricing matters and higher costs will translate into lost customers. There is a balance point where you are charging more to fewer people and still making money—and that probably is the holy grail of pricing.

How does movie price affect your movie watching? Are you going

to the movies in spite of the higher costs?

Interest and Julie & Julia

Last night I saw the movie Julie & Julia, about Julia Child and Julie Powell. Julie Powell wrote a book about her experience blogging about cooking her way through Child's Mastering the Art of French Cooking. I liked the movie and would recommend it, especially if you enjoy food and want to feel inspired.

But this is not a movie review blog, it is about marketing communications. And here's the thing: the movie has stimulated the sales of Julia Child's books, biographies and of course, of Julie Powell's Julie & Julia. In fact, there is a renaissance in interest in all things Julia Child. This is probably due to Meryl Streep's excellent personification of Julia on screen and a compelling storyline about following your dreams and believing in yourself.

The marketing lesson to draw from the success of Julie and Julia is that interest stimulates action. It goes back to the AIDA principle we have discussed before: attention, interest, desire and action. If you make something interesting, you will stimulate action on the part of your intended target audience. The movie made all things Julia and Julie interesting. The audience was loving the food, and now, naturally, wants to partake in it. The audience was inspired to learn more about Julia (and Julie for that matter).

Movies are great marketing vehicles because they reach mass, captive audiences. This is why we see so much product

placement in the movies, and why there is advertising at the movie theater. A good movie is by nature, interesting. If it has to do with a historical figure, we want to learn more. If it showcases music (like Walk the Line did for Johnny Cash), you want to go out and listen to the music again.

The other lesson is to put things in front of the right audience. In Julie & Julia's case, the thing is both cooking and following dreams, for a female audience. Last night, I would say that 90% of the audience was female, and I would venture to say that most were under 45.

In any case, Julie & Julia reached its intended audience and is proving that people always want to know more if they are stimulated to do so.

Did you see the movie? What did you think?