FA/DESN 4123 Social Media Strategies
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Project 2
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Stratford Film Festival Social Media Strategy

Who is the Stratford Film Festival?

The Stratford Film Festival (SFF) is a non-profit annual 4-day festival based in Stratford, Ontario. With a 69-year-long legacy, being one of the first North American events to celebrate international film (History - Stratford Film Festival, n.d.). The SFF's prime focus is on showcasing innovative and independent films and filmmakers from around the world. Offering a platform for various voices to showcase their movies, features, short films, animations, and documentaries (4-Day Annual Festival - Stratford Film Festival, n.d.).



(Harris, 2025)

Who

(Stratford Film Festival, n.d.)

What

What does the Stratford Film Festival do?

The SFF is a 4-day annual festival where they gather film lovers to participate in live screenings, panel discussions, social gatherings, filmmaker Q&As, and an award ceremony. We hand out nine awards. The way the SFF selects the features is through a submission and screening process. Where industry professionals and general viewers watch incredible films and judge using a point based system. Creating a lineup of features, short films, animations, and documentaries. Celebrating filmmakers locally, globally, and nationally.

Goals

What are the Stratford Film Festival's goals?

The SFF is a 4-day annual festival where they gather film lovers to participate in live screenings, panel discussions, social gatherings, filmmaker Q&As, and an award ceremony. We hand out nine awards. The way the SFF selects the features is through a submission and screening process. Where industry professionals and general viewers watch incredible films and judge using a point based system. Creating a lineup of features, short films, animations, and documentaries. Celebrating filmmakers locally, globally, and nationally.



(Stratford Film Festival, n.d.)

Stratford Film Festivals main goals are:

Creating a platform for diverse voices.

They aim to build a community of film enthusiasts.

Support independent filmmakers and emerging talent.

Competitors and Peers

Who are the Stratford Film Festival peers and competitors?

There are a minimum of 26 film festivals that are extremely popular within Ontario, with some notable names being Grand River Film Festival (GRFF), The Forest City Film Festival (FCFF), and the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF). Considering the regional proximity of the GRFF and the FCFF, they are considered direct competitors (Film Festivals in Ontario, n.d.). Especially since these festivals have the same goals and programs as their focus on celebrating local, national, and international films creating a festival within their city. Where TIFF, while also a competitor it operates on a much larger scale due to its recognizability. TIFF is primarily a partner to the SFF with their Film Circuit programme.

Examples:

Grand River Film Festival (GRFF) - A film festival hosted annually and which also hosts programs year-round. Located in the Waterloo Region (Cambridge, Kitchener, Waterloo). Showcasing local, national, and international films. Creating a community and building relationships (GRFF Grand River Film Festival, n.d.).

Forest City Film Festival (FCFF) - A film festival with the goals of creating a spotlight for new filmmakers and then creating a community connected within London, Ontario (Forest City Film Festival , n.d.).

Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) - TIFF is one of the most anticipated film festivals and is internationally recognized. TIFF Film Circuit, a national film outreach programme, is partnered with SFF. Utilising the strong community partnerships to bring the best of world cinema to communities nationwide.

What strategies are being put to use?

Grand River Film Festival (GRFF)
Instagram: Upkeep an active Instagram account with updates even after the festival took place. Keeping a consistent brand identity on social media to create a connected presence. GRFF also uses reels to promote volunteer opportunities with an interview style video to create interest.
Facebook: Using Instagram's assets and posts to reach a different audience than what Instagram would provide.

Forest City Film Festival (FCFF)
Instagram: Creating clear-cut reels dedicated to answering questions that interested attendees may have. Interviewing directors who have hands-on experience in the film industry. Pinning specific posts to ensure the most important information is at the top of the feed.
LinkedIn: Using a professional social media platform to not only push their festival out to a professional audience but also to repost those who volunteered and took part in the festival.

Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF)
Instagram: Uses widely known actors and actresses as cover photos to capture viewers' attention. Already has a credible fanbase surrounding the event, so simple posts work very well for TIFF. Has a fun feature of "what we're watching" to show recent movies that have been released.
YouTube: Posting feature trailers, interviews, behind-the-scenes of the features, and Q&As. These videos are typically over 30 minutes long typically with less reach than other social media, but still a lot.

For the SFF a cross-platform approach with emphasis on Instagram to push a vast variety of content for the target audience being the general mature community in Stratford and the larger film enthusiasts communities around and in Stratford.

Audience

Who is the Stratford Film Festival's audience?

The SFF is for everyone, and there is technically no specific target group, but the festival particularly focuses on film enthusiasts, general movie lovers, and film professionals. As well as individuals and families in or around the area who appreciate the art of cinema. In a town like Stratford, where it's hosted, the average age is 44 years old, which indicates a certain level of maturity that values the art of film. With 23% of the population being 65+, 15.5% being 55 - 64, and 11.9% being 45 - 54 (Point2Homes, n.d.). Stratford's strong value index for confidence in small businesses is 122, meaning that collaborating with small businesses within Stratford would help promote the festival and bring in more traffic through social media. As well as a 117 for aversion to complexity, so as to comply with that, keeping social media platforms simple with the design and formatting of the posts will be crucial.



(Youtube, n.d.)



(Instagram, n.d.)



(Facebook, n.d.)

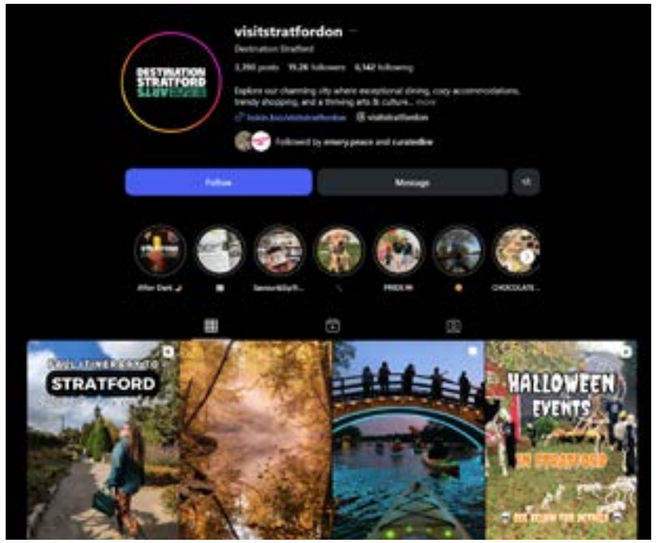
Which platforms will the Stratford Film Festival use:

Focusing on maintaining and upkeep of three specific platforms: YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram. Since the festival is located in a large town with a population of only 33-thousand people, and the majority of the population being relatively on the mature side. Since Youtube, Facebook, and Instagram are on the 30 - 69 + age range. As 50-64 year olds use YouTube (86%), Facebook (70%),and Instagram (36%). 30-49 year olds use YouTube (94%), Facebook (78%), and Instagram (66%). Then, 65+ use YouTube (65%), Facebook (59%), and Instagram (19%) (Sheikh, 2025). Also in Stratford, Ontario, Youtube (82.5%), Facebook (65.2%), and Instagram (35.9%) are the top used social media apps in Stratford (Community Profile: Stratford -Downtown Stratford, 2022). In order to allow all age groups to stay updated on the SFF, including those who are not as proficient with technology, it's crucial to spread the content the SFF posts out onto a good range of platforms, especially following statistics on which age group uses what platform.

Rollout

What media will be needed for the platforms.

For the platforms chosen, they all require short-form and long-form content. With a priority on short-form content like interviews, information about the festival, videos from past festivals, teasing the upcoming features, and more. Simple still posts, such as one-three pinned posts on Instagram and Facebook, will provide easy access to essential festival information like passes, timings, and schedules. Long-form content would be in-depth interviews with famous stars or directors, as well as behind-the-scenes footage of the features to create interest. Other videos that would be made are videos showing the work in progress of the festival and learning more information about the directors, cast, and workers for the features that would be playing at the festival. For Facebook, a Facebook Group can be created for fans of the festival to join and follow along, where there would be special updates specifically on the group, pushing exclusive content in the group. It'll be where SFF can interact with fans with questions or special posts.



Stratford Film Festival's rollout strategy.

Weeks 1 - 4 are focused on all platforms, but start putting out teaser trailers for the features as well as teasers for the actual event. Overall content from these weeks will be lighter. They will include video form content of the different features to get followers and non-followers excited.

Weeks 5-7 are focused on creating more traction from local Stratford residents and others in neighboring cities by collaborating with accounts like @curatedkw & @visitstratfordon (and more!). During this time, ensuring more short-form content for Instagram, Youtube, and Facebook are in collaboration with the SFF pages so they show up on the SFF pages and the respective accounts. Instagram has a collaboration post feature which can be used for this. During these weeks, the tickets will be launched, and having early bird pricing for these tickets and promoting them on various social media platforms using stories, short, funny videos will be an important way to market the festival.

Week 8 posting simple carousels providing more information for the festival that is going to be pinned on Instagram (including the schedule, regular ticket pricing, and mini events in the festival).

Weeks 9 - 12 postings count down, longer teasers, and interviews regarding the festival (these would be posted on all three platforms). As well as asking collaboration accounts to repost to remind people the festival is happening (these would be posted on all three platforms). Posting call to actions (CTA's) will create engagement with the smaller audience but still create interesting content for the mature audience.

Sustaining Engagement.

Posting on stories and using features like polls, quizzes, and using more call to actions. To create conversation and peak interest with the audience. Posting regularly as another way to sustain engagement so viewers don't forget about the upcoming festival and stay up to date. Collaborating with content creators is one of the best ways in today's society to stay relevant, so constantly talking with small or large content creators who can promote and talk about the festival with VIP passes or exclusive meetups as compensation (which can also be filmed for content).

Hashtag Strategy.

When creating hashtags, there will be four different groups of hashtags used. Group one being generic Stratford Festival related hashtags (#StratfordFilmFestival, #SFF, #Stratford, e.t.c). To ensure it's easy to find content related to the event. Group two would be feature related hashtags, which would represent the individual feature films. Group three would also be collaboration hashtags like #Stratfordcollab and more. Finally, any general hashtags which relate to the post itself so if a feature is about baseball, then hashtags like #baseball and #bluejays, e.t.c. something to create a bit more fun within the posts.



(Stratford Festival, 2025)

Strategy

Success

Success for the Stratford Film Festival

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Citations

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