

THE HOOPING LIFE **EVENT PLANNING GUIDE**

The Hooping Life wishes to thank Abby Albaum from the Hoola Monsters who put together this guide after she hosted a fantastic screening of The Hooping Life at the Sarasota Film Festival.

So, you're interested in hosting THE HOOPING LIFE in your town? Great! Now what?

Well, for starters, it's important to become familiar with the objective, strategy and tactics for your special event planning efforts.

Objective: To sell out THE HOOPING LIFE screening(s) in your market, in turn, inspiring people by introducing the art of hoop dance to those who may otherwise be unfamiliar.

Strategy: Involve hoopers, public, figures, and businesses in the community to generate excitement about the film through street team promotions, media relations, hoop dance demos and grassroots marketing efforts.

Tactics: Street Team Promos
Pre-Screening Hoop Jams
Hoop Dance Workshops
Marketing Materials Distribution
Press Release Outreach and Follow Up

Step 1: Appoint A Street Team

You'll want to gather up a group of reliable friends committed to helping make your event successful. This is your "street team." Together, you will develop and execute an action plan for your local marketing efforts. Organize weekly meetings with your street team to discuss progress, challenges and details related to the upcoming events. At the event, it's helpful for the crew to be identifiable so event attendees, members of the media and passersby will know who to come to with questions. It's also a good idea to arrive early and plan on staying late for most events. Be sure that the street team is all on the same page, in terms of who's doing what. And as with any event, expect the unexpected!

Step 2: Work Closely with the venue where you are screening, no matter what it is, a theater, a club, a church, a school, a park...

Let's say that you want to bring THE HOOPING LIFE to your town, but the venue you have in mind has no clue what hooping is all about. What do you do?

- Send a very nice and informative letter that incorporates a brief description of the film and the success of the documentary's previous screenings (see Press Kit), along with a link to the movie trailer (which can be found at www.thehoopinglife.com). Ask the venue to send the info to their email lists and add it to their website/FB page/blog.
- Host an informal hoop jam outside of the Venue, with your street team. Make them notice you! Offer discounted tickets for members of the venue.
- If you are a performer or work with a hoop dance performance troupe, pitch the idea of performing at clubs, performance spaces near the venue leading up to the screening as well as farmers markets and whole foods and the like and consider sell discounted tickets to the screening at these events.

Step 3: Organize Pre-Screening and/or Post-Screening Hoop Jams

A Pre-Screening Hoop Jam can go a long way to get people amped up for the film. And a Post-Screening Hoop Jam channels all the inspiration from the film into some immediate satisfaction. Hoop Jams are an important part of transforming a passive film screening into an exciting interactive event. The more opportunities you provide to get the audience into a hoop at your event, the better!

With the help of your street team, identify a high-traffic location (with LOTS of space) for your pre/post-screening hoop jam(s). Is there enough room in front of the movie theatre for your hoop jam? Ideally, the hoop jam should start at least one hour prior to the movie screening and you'll want to end at least 20 minutes prior to the start of the film. If your hoop jam venue also has a screen (or a blank white wall), consider using The Hoop Loops VJ Mix DVD for the perfect cinematic backdrop. Here's our guide to hosting the perfect Hoop Loops Hoop Jam:

https://www.facebook.com/note.php?note_id=10150404416787754

Hoop Jam Checklist:

- Sound system
- MUSIC (ensure you have a great play list or DJ for the jam)
- Beater hoops for people to borrow
- Promotional materials (The Hooping Life flyers, info on local classes, business cards, etc.)
- Volunteers to answer questions and handle hoop sales, if you decide to vend
- Information table to display marketing materials
- Water

Step 4: Add Vending Opportunities to your Event.

Consider setting up a vending area to promote local hoop classes and sell hoops. If you're including other community businesses in your event, you'll want to negotiate their participation as well. Maybe the local juice bar would like to provide samples at the Hoop Jams? Designate someone from your street team to manage this process. It's also a great idea to get in touch with Christabel Zamor (a.k.a. HoopGirl), to have her local bookseller participate by ordering, bringing and selling: *Hooping! The Book* during each jam. The greater diversity of hoop dance goods, the better. There should really be one person in charge of merchandise arrangements at each screening. Have local hoop instructors plan to bring 'free class' cards to distribute to interested audience members and passersby. Keep in mind, the jams are serving two audiences: hoopers and hoopers-to-be!

More ideas for monetizing your event:

- Take \$1 donations for photos with a life-size cutout of a hooper from the film or better yet, with a live hooping local dressed to the hilt for the event.
- Raffles! Raffle off an hour or a half hour of individual hoop instruction, a specially-taped hoop, a single hoop class or series ...

Step 5: Organize Workshops for Visiting Hoop Stars and Local Instructors

So, you've got a bunch of badass hoopers coming to town. Now, what do you do with them? Workshops, for one! After all, it would be a shame to pass up an opportunity to learn from these fabulous hoop dancers, while enabling them to make a few bucks in the process. First, find out who is

available and interested in teaching. Next, scout an appropriate venue. Appoint someone on your street team to handle this task. Visit the venues. Ensure that there is at least 100 square feet per hooper. Make an educated guess, in terms of expected attendance, and then do the math. If you expect 15 people to show, then you'll want a room that's at least 1,500 square feet. If you choose to have the workshops outside, then you'll want a rain/ snow plan just in case... Also, you'll want to set a price point that takes venue rental fees into consideration. Work with the hooping instructors to set a price that's reasonable. VISIT THE VENUES! Make sure the space accommodations are what you envision before signing contracts. Check the sound system, headset mic requirements (if applicable), etc. Also pay attention to the ceilings. Is there enough room for hoopers to execute vertical moves? Is there a water fountain or should attendees bring their own? Then, work with the instructor to set up an online ticketing system, so people can purchase in advance.

You should also consider having a beginner-level hoop dance workshop, for soon-to-be hoopers inspired by the film. This is a great way to promote local hoop dance instructors AND get new people into the spin.

Step 6: Promote, Promote, Promote!

Great! We're setting up workshops; we've got our hoop jams covered. Now comes the fun stuff. Promote the event!

- Set up a Facebook Group to communicate event details to interested parties. Start discussions on ride shares, places for visiting hoopers to crash, how to buy movie tickets, where to purchase workshop tickets, info. about the hoop jams and just about anything else you can think of related to the events. Social networking sites are your BEST FRIENDS for a couple reasons... 1) they're FREE and 2) you're able to provide up to the minute info. as details unfold. So, network away! Also, don't limit yourself to your immediate area/ city. You'll be surprised at the number of people willing to travel to your town to see the movie.
- Get the word out with flyers/posters. Is there a spot where hoopers gather? How about coffee shops, local pubs, community boards, rec centers, dance studios and drum circles? Downtown locations are great because they receive lots of foot traffic. So, why not have a hoop jam downtown and pass them out there? Be creative and strategic in your materials distribution.
- Reach out past the hooping community. The Hooping Life film will interest more than just your existing hooping community. Contact local fitness organizations, businesses, and public figures (gyms, yoga studios, dancers, teachers, health food stores!). The Hooping Life interweaves the stories of eight men and women who risk it all to found a movement (Anah), work for themselves (Christabel), heal themselves spiritually (Baxter) and physically (Sass), save and educate their communities (Tisha and Jeffrey), and radically challenge the status quo (Karis). So local colleges, LGBT associations, Women's Centers, and other community activists are all groups to contact about participating. Don't forget your local Chamber of Commerce. Invite local officials, invite the mayor! Hooping has something to offer everyone and is accessible to every *body*, so don't feel limited - reach out!
- As for additional print items, all events/jams/workshops/showings/performances associated with a screening must have a centralized source of necessary information for attendees and interested parties. This should include: a flyer for face-to-face

interactions, equipped with an event schedule. All of the information needs to be synchronized: any last minute changes in details should be included on ALL FORMS (online and print), and all should include: Day/Date of Event, Location, Cost, Who will be in attendance/performing (locally known hoopers, stars from the film, etc).

Step 7: Media Relations

Do you have friends or acquaintances who work for your local newspapers, blogs, radio stations or TV channels? If so, send them a press release (provided by The Hooping Life). Be sure to include a link to the movie trailer. If you are not directly connected to members of the news media, search for contact info by visiting their websites. Pick up the newspaper and find out who handles Features and Lifestyle stories. You'll also want to check for 'Film Critic' contact info. Gather a media list (name, phone number, email and publication). Then, submit the press release to appropriate members of the news media. You may also want to check with your venue contact to see if they can point you in the right direction. And don't be afraid to pick up the phone and call the reporters. You'll be surprised at the level of interest you receive. Be sure to designate an on-site spokesperson at the hoop jams and workshops. Hoopers draw attention, and most likely, members of the news media will notice. Make sure that The Hooping Life team is in the loop on all media opportunities.

Step 8: It's Screening Day!

Have a pre-screening meeting with your street team to make sure all your bases are covered. Field questions/concerns and last-minute changes. Make sure you have at least one member of your street team designated for documenting the event. Photos and videos of the screening events will come in handy for promoting your business/organization/community long after the event. And they'll help inspire and educate future screeners.

Step 9: Wrap-Up Party

Congrats! The hard work is done. The movie is sold out, and you're exhausted but still smiling. Now, it's time to celebrate. Pick a fun location for an informal gathering. Maybe some drinks and dinner at a nearby eatery. Show the street team (and yourself) some love by getting together for a small appreciation event or party. After all, you deserve it!

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