

2012 SEATTLE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL
FILMS THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The Norman Lear
CENTER

An edited transcript of a panel held at the Seattle International Film Festival on June 3, 2012

The Norman Lear CENTER

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The Norman Lear Center is a nonpartisan research and public policy center that studies the social, political, economic and cultural impact of entertainment on the world. The Lear Center translates its findings into action through testimony, journalism, strategic research and innovative public outreach campaigns. On campus, from its base in the USC Annenberg School for Communication & Journalism, the Lear Center builds bridges between schools and disciplines whose faculty study aspects of entertainment, media and culture. Beyond campus, it bridges the gap between the entertainment industry and academia, and between them and the public. Through scholarship and research; through its conferences, public events and publications; and in its attempts to illuminate and repair the world, the Lear Center works to be at the forefront of discussion and practice in the field.

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SEATTLE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

As part of the 2012 Seattle International Film Festival — the largest and most-highly attended festival in the United States — Vulcan Productions hosted a forum examining how filmmakers are using innovative campaigns to deepen the impact of their work titled, Films that Make a Difference. The event was held at the SIFF Film Center on June 3, 2012.

The forum was moderated by Warren Etheredge, founder of the Warren Report (www.thewarrenreport.com), and included Johanna Blakley, Managing Director, The Norman Lear Center; Bonnie Benjamin-Phariss, Director, Vulcan Productions; Ted Richane, Vice President, Cause + Affect; and Holly Gordon, Executive Director, 10x10, a Multi-platform Initiative about girls' education.

The forum examined ways to maximize the effect of film projects through various social impact initiatives.

For more information, on the Seattle International Film Festival, visit: www.siff.net

For more information, on Vulcan Productions, visit:
www.vulcan.com

PARTICIPANTS



BONNIE BENJAMIN-PHARISS is director of Vulcan Productions (<http://www.vulcan.com>). Through its collaborative partnerships, Vulcan Productions initiates, develops, and finances documentary and film projects of enduring significance, and under Benjamin-Phariss's management the company has produced documentaries covering subjects ranging from evolution, global health, the environment, music, education, mental health, and space travel.



JOHANNA BLAKLEY is managing director and director of research and the Norman Lear Center (www.learcenter.org). Based at USC's Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism, Blakley researches a range of topics from entertainment education to digital media. In a recent TedxTalk, she discussed research on how film impacts viewers.



HOLLY GORDON is executive director of 10x10 (<http://10x10act.org>), a multiplatform initiative dedicated to educating girls in developing countries, which uses storytelling and media to give millions of people tools to create change for girls around the world.



TED RICHANE is vice president of Cause+Effect (now called ProSocial Consulting) where he oversees the day-to-day execution of each of the firm's projects, leading strategy development with clients, managing staff and developing and managing relationships with lead partner organizations. He works closely with filmmakers, influencers both inside and outside of government, and funders from the foundation and corporate sectors. (<http://www.prosocialconsulting.com>)

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■ ■ ■ **Warren Etheredge:** I am Warren Etheredge and I am the host of *The High Bar* on PBS. My belief about change is that change starts one conversation at a time, and today we have the opportunity for an incredible conversation. I have conducted over 2,500 interviews and people often ask me, “Do you get scared or intimidated? Do you get nervous talking to these celebs, these stars and actors?” And I always have to point out that you only have to talk to them for about 15 seconds to realize that it’s okay.

Today I’m a research junkie. And learning more about the panelists, I started to get a little nervous because if you were going to think about the world of documentaries and social change, and if you were going to carve a Mount Rushmore, we have four prime candidates for that who are right here.

We have with us Johanna Blakley, who is the Managing Director and Director of Research at the Norman Lear Center. She’s also done about three more TED talks than the rest of us, so very nice work.

To her left, you may recognize Ted Richane, who is the Vice President at Cause and Effect, which has put together more social action campaigns than probably all politicians put together.

Next to Ted is Holly Gordon, the Executive Director of the 10x10 Project, which is being put together by Vulcan and 10x10, Educate Girls, Change the World. I believe in that. Girls have always been smarter than boys. Ted, you’re an exception. But thank you, and Holly, for joining us.

And on the end is the very modest but incredibly accomplished Bonnie Benjamin-Phariss, Director of Vulcan productions who is overseeing and responsible for such wonderful documentaries and multi-part

series as *Evolution* and *This Emotional Life* and *RX: Hearts for Survival* and Martin Scorsese’s *Blues*.

By my last count, there are about 3,700 films to choose from at the Seattle International Film Festival and people often ask me what I should see. I always go with documentaries because even when a documentary is not that great, you can always learn something. I’ve seen some great documentaries in the past few days, including one I absolutely loved. I found it incredibly affecting. The love of my life was with me and she was crying throughout this thing. And at the end, there was no call to action. And so Johanna, I want to start with you. Is it enough for a documentary these days to be entertaining, or should there also be something more?

Johanna Blakley: This is something we were talking about last night at dinner. Documentaries and narrative feature films have an opportunity to get people engaged in social issues that they may not have thought about before they experienced this powerful piece of media. There’s an opportunity always somewhere in that film to give people a hint as to where they could go next — a phone number to call, a website to visit, a message they could text to find out how they might intervene or become a part of some movement that a documentary or narrative feature film addressed.

And it’s unfortunate that even with some great documentaries that were clearly made in order to encourage audience members to get involved, they’re nervous about putting those things in the film. They’re nervous about making movies into message movies because they think that audiences don’t like them. I’m sure that there are plenty of people who don’t, but there are as many people who would have liked the opportunity to know. Because it can be very confusing.

You leave all fired up about an issue and you think, “Well, I’ll power up my browser and I’ll take a look around the Web and see what to do.” And then you find a cacophony of voices, a lot of different efforts out there and you don’t know which ones are valid, which ones have been around for a while, which ones are vetted. Some direction from the film

“ [Filmmakers are] nervous about making movies into message movies and they think that audiences don’t like that. ”

Johanna Blakley

can be very helpful for people.

When we did a survey recently on *Food, Inc.*, this was one of the main complaints that we heard from people in the open-ended section of the survey. We asked, “What could this movie have done better in terms of teaching people about sustainable agriculture and the issues in the film?” They said, “Tell me what to buy. Give me a list, send me to a website that gives me instruction. I trust you now, I saw this film and I want to know more.” Frankly, the filmmakers were shocked by this. They thought that people would respond badly to that. But if you make your film right and you’re polite about offering information about where to go from there, most people are not going to be annoyed and many will be very pleased.

Warren Etheredge: Ted, with that in mind, and having run so many campaigns, and the way that Cause+Effect works, is that something that you have to determine from the outset?

Ted Richane: Often the problem is that the filmmaker will begin the production process with an idea of what that call to action should be. But it won’t necessarily sync with what society needs. So even in those instances where there is a call to action at the end of the film – where it says: “Go to a website” or “Take these 10 steps.” Sometimes those calls to action are synced with messaging in the film, but they’re not synced with the reality. Films take a long time to make especially documentaries, because they are being paid for as they’re being built. You start a project in 2008 for example and the film comes out in 2012. There is no priority on making sure that what you set out to do in 2008 isn’t still needed and that the calls to action are still impactful when the film is out in theaters or on television or on a different online platforms.

Ideally, you start at the very beginning of the process thinking, “Okay, we want to make this film and we want it to tell this story and we want to show these characters, but we also want to have this impact. Ideally, you start early. But even if you don’t, you need to have that opportunity to stop and say, “What is it that we want to accomplish and is it going to make sense? Are our viewers going to be able to take those actions and

are they going to be interested in not just taking one, but two or three?” So it’s a process that doesn’t get much attention until the very end.

Johanna mentioned texting. We had worked on a project a couple of years ago where the filmmakers were dead set on giving a text contact number to the audience at the end of the film. It seemed great. It’s seamless and the audience member can give \$5 and that’s how you help. But they didn’t think about the fact that when you sit down in a theater you turn off your cell phones, right? So they were surprised by the fact that it didn’t work out and not that many people did it. People were fumbling with their phones before the number disappeared. It just takes a little bit of work and planning ahead of time.

Warren Etheredge: I’m curious to hear what the solution will be to that.

Johanna Blakley: A little warning.

Ted Richane: A little bit of warning. They were also so set on donations as being the only way a person could take action. If you’re inviting someone to take part in a campaign, all we were willing to ask people to give was \$5. But in fact, people are open. When they’re inspired and educated or angry, they’re willing to do a whole heck of a lot more. If 100 people watch a film — 80 of them might tell their friends, “Hey, it was great.” And then 20 of them are going to be willing to take action. Of those 20, even a smaller amount are going to become an evangelist of some sort for the cause.

If all you’re asking of those folks is to give \$5, then that’s all they might do and it’s a short-term thing. Frankly, I would rather have that person become a longer-term change-maker. Save your money. Instead, give me your time and your commitment and then down the road maybe that turns into more money, but also more change. Social change is about more than taking out their checkbook.

Warren Etheredge: In fairness to the documentary I mentioned, there was a text-to-donate thing, but I would rather do than donate. Not only



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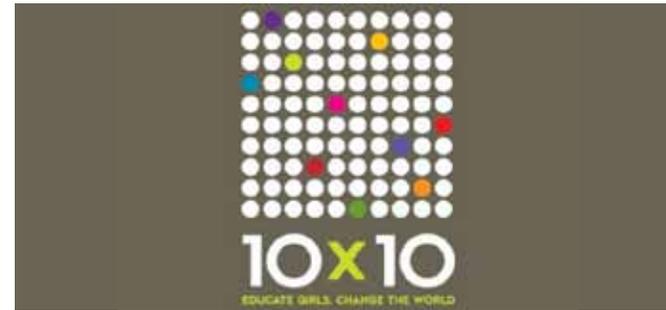
Ted Richane

because I'm cash poor, but I want to get involved. So Holly, with 10x10, the project has not even been done yet. You clearly are thinking ahead. When I work with filmmakers, we talk about where we're going, but we also want to allow for something organic to happen in the process. Does this focus on social action lead people down a certain path rather than discovering things on their own?

Holly Gordon: That's a good question. At the core of 10x10 is an idea that's based on data: when you educate girls in the developing world, amazing things happen. You're absolutely right, we started out thinking about what our impact would be. We are all journalists and have been creating stories about what's happening in the world for many years, putting them out in newspapers or on television, and hoping something would happen. And we saw things happen. One of my partners on the project, Tom Yellin, did some of the earliest reporting on tobacco and that reporting led to that famous picture of the tobacco executives swearing that nicotine wasn't addictive. From there, lots has happened. In New York, you can't smoke almost anywhere now.

We take for granted that media can change the way people behave, but we wanted to prove it. If you're going to prove that, you first have to do two things. One, you have to figure out what you're trying to get people to do. Instead of waiting until the end of the project to think about how people could take action, we knew from the beginning that we wanted to build a community. We wanted to have a strong message around girls' education that was data-driven and engage people in many ways. If it's giving quickly, we're going to have an opportunity for that, but if it's evangelizing, we want to take advantage of that because conversations happen in small places, not big groups. Having individuals create small events is as important an outcome to us as having someone text to give.

Now, if you're going to make a film that changes people's minds, then you have to make a good film. Our project is divided into two pockets. In New York, we are focused on creating a campaign with a film at the center that drives behavioral change. In LA, they are making a movie. They are making a stunning movie that starts with the stories of 10 girls.



Each girl's story is written in the developing world. Each girl's story is written by a writer who's achieved global acclaim for her abilities as a storyteller. So there's craft, there's narrative in there. Those stories that the authors write are then crafted into a screenplay and then we shoot each of the 10 stories using varying film techniques. Nowhere in the film do you hear the words: "Educate Girls, Change the World."

I was at the Ford Foundation recently and I heard Spike Lee talk and Michael Moore speak. It was amazing to be in that audience. Both of them said one thing, "You've got to start with a great piece of content and if you let your message get in front of the content, you're sunk."

The film team is focused on telling these organic stories that will move you, that you will want to act, not because we told you to act, but because the characters in the film are so powerful that you want to do something to change the trajectory of the future.

Our job as part of the campaign team is figuring out how we harness that energy and give each audience member an opportunity to engage in a way that makes sense for them. A lot of this means creating tools and partnerships with community leaders who are already educating girls in the developing world and need more opportunities to tell their stories.

One thing we're doing a little differently is we're looking at a distributed model for engagement. We are making this film ourselves, but when it comes out, we are sharing it with our partners who are educating girls in the developing world, so that they can use it to engage audiences to

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Holly Gordon

advance their agendas. So we're using storytelling, strategy, relationships and partnerships to achieve scale.

Warren Etheredge: How much do the storytellers know about what your goals are in the end? What do you tell them?

Holly Gordon: That's a very good question. That's a question for the director, Richard Robbins. But if he'll forgive me, I'll try to answer it. He's very honest with the writers and very liberal with his instructions to them.

Our film team goes out to 10 countries in the developing world, and we meet and interview 100 girls about their lives, their stories and their histories. We're looking for that sparkle that will light up a screen, and a story that in its own telling encompasses the barriers to education that girls face. Then we approach the writer, who is also from her country, with the top six stories. We have writers who have achieved global acclaim. Edwidge Danticat is our writer from Haiti. I don't know if you've read her work, but she's incredible.

Edwidge is the one who internalizes the story and writes the piece. This is an easy thing to get people behind, so we're not explicit about telling the writers that they need to write something that tells people in the audience to educate girls. They just need to write a good story.

Warren Etheredge: Bonnie, Ted used a phrase a little while ago about "what society needs" and it sounded so wonderful and objective. Bonnie, you are a gatekeeper and you've determined what Vulcan is going to make and what projects you take on. How do you know what society needs?

Bonnie Benjamin-Phariss: I'll clarify and say I don't decide what Vulcan does. At the end of the day, the decision is from the owners. We look at a lot of projects, and the topics and issues are the ones a lot of people focus on: the environment, education, energy and climate change are a few of the big issues we're facing today. What we try to do is look for projects that address them in a meaningful way. The film is at

its core, whether its theatrical, scripted or documentary.

We don't believe you can wait and figure out what you want to do with your film after you've started shooting. We've done projects like that and our campaigns were not successful. In the most successful campaigns that we have done, we were figuring out what we wanted that film to do before the first development stage.

A call to action doesn't have to be money. It can be a drive to learn more. We worked on a project with This Emotional Life with Cause+ Affect and Ted and his team. The call to action developed as people wanted to learn more.

If we hadn't supported the project post-broadcast for a couple of years, we wouldn't have gotten all of the resources, like handbooks, out like we did. The Pentagon would never have found out about it and now demand for information is so intense. We're turning in out digitally because we can't print it out fast enough. That's a sign of change. It's not necessarily good to donate, it's also about learning more about global health about girls in the developing world.

Warren Etheredge: Holly, you worked at ABC News for 12 years. You were deep in the heart of the 9/11 fabric, right?

Holly Gordon: Yes.

Warren Etheredge: Is getting the truth now enough?

Holly Gordon: That's so interesting. I'm glad you asked. I wanted to follow up on what Bonnie and Johanna were saying. I don't believe that getting information out is enough anymore and partially because news has become a commodity. In fact, what's so interesting about having been a journalist, and looking at the way that information spreads today, when I first started at ABC News, there was no email. The scripts came in by fax from the bureaus around the world.

We decided on what went on the evening news from the desks in New

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Bonnie Benjamin-Phariss

York. Then we would fax the scripts back out to Moscow and Hong Kong and wherever the news was happening around the world. Everything went through a funnel in New York. You think about how they reported on Vietnam. They shot on film; they flew it back to the United States. They spent a day cutting it and then Walter Cronkite told America what was happening. Now, who needs Walter Cronkite when Syrian citizen journalists are taking pictures? So that filter is gone.

I still believe there is a place for news that has been vetted, for sources, for reporting that you can believe in and trust. But you can be sure that in New York, every major network is rethinking the role of news organizations. To the next part of your question: if you put something on the front page of CNN.com and tell me that something is awry in the world and tell me to do something about it, it's got to be more than leaving a blog post or comment.

That presents a risk because journalists are supposed to be objective and not endorse organizations. I challenge journalists and say, "That's your next job. Look at the organizations and investigate them. Are they keeping their books properly? Is donated money going to the right places? If I give a check to this organization versus another one, what am I supporting? Tell me if I put a check mark next to this organization versus this organization, what am I backing up?" Help your audience get the commodity and then give them the extra service of what they can do about responding to what's happening.

Warren Etheredge: That sounds fantastic, but I barely trust our journalists to get the facts right.



Holly Gordon: You're absolutely right. Especially for the cable news, and the 24/7 operators, you're not seeing news as much as you're seeing opinions about the news. It's just an endless water-cooler conversation. During my tenure at ABC, I'd spend weeks on a story — either 9/11 or the Monica Lewinsky trial, pouring over pages of deposition. The news cycle moves so fast nowadays. Journalists don't do that anymore — a couple do — but for television journalists, they move from story to story to story because nobody wants to have the same water-cooler conversation for very long. What we'll see is a winnowing.

Not true with all organizations. I read that the ratings for NPR have gone up after a long trajectory because they've focused on straightforward reporting. I can't speak anymore about trusting journalists, other than I agree with you, so we'll see what happens.

Ted Richane: In the evolution of news, it's become a commodity — people can shoot video with their cell phones and they can also blog about it because they see something going on in their neighborhood. And so too does the research that you were just talking about. Like that report on the Monica Lewinsky deal that came out 15 years ago, there are a lot of sites that will do crowd-sourced research and will put that document online.

They'll say that the news cycle is moving quickly and will put out a call to action to their community. They'll say, "Help us report the news" and they break up that 300-page report into small packets. Your job, as a reader, is to download a packet of information, analyze it, look for different words, come back and report that. What used to take you two weeks to go through, now takes a site two hours and a couple of thousand people to do that research.

Just technology evolves and reporting evolves, so does the research. If I'm CNN.com or a leading news blog, it's the same thing. It's social action, involving people in the process. If I'm someone who's sitting at home in my pajamas, but I've just done research and reporting, then I feel a sense of ownership of the story and also of the possible solutions. I'm going to be more willing to take that next step because I feel like it's

not just something that's happening over there. It's something that I'm intimately involved with.

Bonnie Benjamin-Phariss: As journalists and as filmmakers who are dedicated to making films that matter, we have a responsibility to guide folks who look at our work and our medium to the organizations who are trusted and vetted. We're not experts in girls' education; we're not experts on military matters; but what's critical is that you partner with expert organizations who do work in this area.

Holly Gordon: Day in and day out.

Bonnie Benjamin-Phariss: Those making the film have built these phenomenal relationships with some of the strongest NGO partners in the world. So their whole campaign is focused on guiding folks who see their work to the NGO partners that make a difference. That's a critical ingredient as you're thinking about ways to make a difference with your films — building deep partnerships.

Warren Etheredge: I love the idea of the partnerships and I love the idea of the reporting. Although it often feels like opinion, rather than actual reporting. Johanna, you've done a lot of research in terms of how documentaries can impact people, specifically on *Food, Inc.*

Johanna Blakley: We did an online survey. About half of them had seen the film *Food, Inc.* and about half of them hadn't. The goal of this survey was to figure out whether having been exposed to the film changed your behavior. One of the reasons it's hard to do this research is that only certain kinds of people go to see certain kinds of movies, especially little niche films like a documentary about sustainable agriculture in the United States. That's a very specific audience.

So it's hard to do this research, but we came up with a clever way of assessing the propensity that people have to see a film, whether you have a high propensity because you've been giving money for years to different organizations that are devoted to sustainable food, you support farmers' markets, you are a sustainable farmer. There are several other

signs that you might be a person who would see that film.

So we asked those kinds of questions in order to ascertain what your propensity would be to see the film and then we assign you a number that has to do with how high or low that propensity is. Then we compare you to the person who has exactly the same score, but they didn't see the film. A person who has a very high propensity to see the film *Food, Inc.* versus the person who has *Food, Inc.* in their Netflix queue and they haven't quite seen it yet. Are there behavior differences that you can witness between the two that has something to do with the call to action you saw in the film?

The results were extraordinary; they absolutely blew us away. We saw the same results in every single sector of the propensity scale — and we cut it up in every imaginable way, into 10 quadrants, into five quadrants, into three, and then we did one-to-one matching, single person to single person. We found in all quadrants that people were more likely to have taken the call to action if they saw the film compared to a person with the exact same propensity who had not seen the film. So this is a tool that filmmakers have been looking for forever. The reason they haven't done it is it's hard and there's a lot of math involved.

It's basically like a clinical trial. When drug manufacturers assign a drug to a group of people and they randomly assign people to the placebo group and to the exposure group. That's what we concocted with this survey instrument. It's as if we were randomly assigning people to see the film and not see the film.

We had to put together a list of factors that would tell you whether somebody had a high propensity to see the film and it turned out there were 17 that were statistically significant and only three of them had to do with demographics. None of them included race, income, age or gender. (See figure A on p. 10) Let me tell you, when we reported back to the filmmakers and their marketing people, their jaws dropped.

There were three items that were demographically related. One had to do with whether you worked in the media industry. We had a question



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Johanna Blakley

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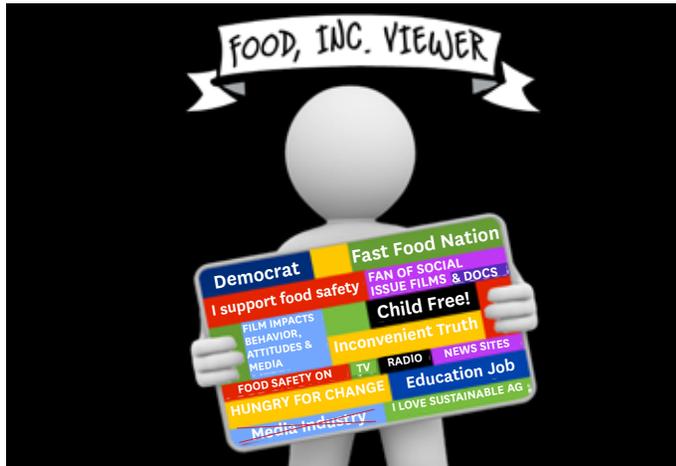


FIGURE A: A slide from Johanna Blakley’s TED Talk identifying the 17 characteristics of the *Food, Inc.* viewer.

related to what industry you worked in. It was likely that you didn’t work in media and it was likely that you may work in education. That was the second one. The third one was you probably don’t have any kids, which also shocked the marketing department. They said, “We thought people who watched food documentaries had kids because they’re buying food for their children and they’re worried about it.”

It was a reminder to us that if you don’t ask the right questions, if you only ask demographic questions, you’re not going to find out why certain people want to see your film.

Warren Etheredge: In your TED Talk, you call them “child-free.”

Johanna Blakley: Yes. The marketing person in the room said, “Oh, they’re child-free.”

Holly Gordon: Applause for Johanna. You can get more information about the study by Googling her TED Talk. It was in Phoenix, right?

Johanna Blakley: Yes.

Warren Etheredge: It was a great talk.

Johanna Blakley: Thank you.

Warren Etheredge: You come to the conclusion that values mean more than demographics.

Johanna Blakley: Yes.

Warren Etheredge: Do you use the study to market as well?

Johanna Blakley: You can certainly use it to market. The marketing department at Participant Productions — the media company behind *Food, Inc.* — is hungry for this information and we only did this survey well after the film was in and out of the theaters and already out on DVD.

One of the interesting things about this survey research is that it will also tell you as much about the low-propensity people as it will about the high-propensity people. So we were able to segment out and look at the “already converted.” But it turned out that we had stronger results in the lower end of the propensity scale because those are the people who are young, they don’t have kids, maybe they’re just out of college, they don’t have a lot of money and they haven’t developed long-term habits at the grocery store. They are ready to change their behavior. They’re ripe to be told, “Guess what? The pictures you see of cows and farmers in the supermarket, that’s not the real story. That’s not what agribusiness is about. Here’s what it really looks like.”

And they say, “Ahh! It’s horrible. I’m never going there again, I’m getting cage-free eggs for the rest of my life. If I have to pay 50 cents more, I don’t care. I will feel too guilty otherwise and I’m going to my farmers’ market. There is one around the corner now and I’m going to go.” And you see this sustained behavior change basically among people who had a very low propensity to see this film.

Warren Etheredge: In the TED video, you put up a map too of people who responded to the survey. In 23 states, it’s less than 1%. (See Figure B on p. 11)

Johanna Blakley: Yes.



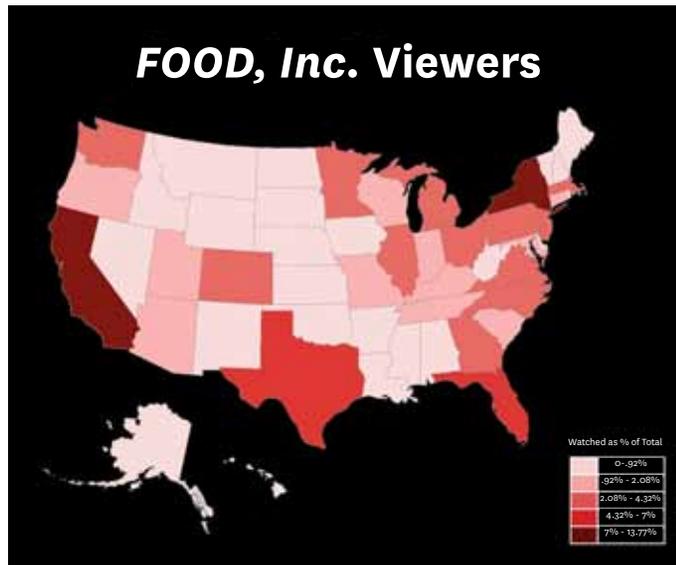


FIGURE B: A slide from Johanna Blakley’s TED Talk identifying the number of *Food, Inc.* viewers per state.

Warren Etheredge: So is the trick to reach more viewers, or to reach the right viewers?

Johanna Blakley: Participant would like to do both. It depends on the nature of the documentary. If you have a film that is talking about an issue and you want to reach people who have a bit of knowledge about that issue, you can take those audience members to the next level of action. It might be that you want to aim at the higher end of the propensity scale. Then maybe you don’t care whether people in Middle America are going to see your film.

The Gates Foundation, for instance, is interested in targeting people who are opinion-makers and policy-changers, people at the high end of the food chain. There is an opportunity to target material to them. Obviously, these are niche audiences. But if you’re going for a broad audience, what I’d suggest is you make a thriller like *Contagion*. You want to tell people about global pandemics? You make an entertaining movie with a bunch of A-list stars and an A-list director. You get a huge marketing campaign and you’re number one at the box office for three weeks in a row. Guess what? You’ll get some messages out about public health. We’re going to be evaluating the effect of that film as well.

Warren Etheredge: I wash my hands so much now. It’s bordering on OCD. Ted, this idea of reaching opinion-makers or knowing your audience, is that something that you have in mind when you develop a campaign?

Ted Richane: Yes, absolutely. Johanna mentioned foundations. Often they’re approached by filmmakers who say, “I’m making a documentary about saving the whales.” Whether it’s a foundation or other funders, one of the questions the filmmaker will be asked is “Who’s the audience?” Filmmakers are trained to say, “Here’s what I’m thinking about, here’s who’s going to see this film.” But when it comes to the question of, “What’s the impact going to be,” often times, they haven’t thought that through and they don’t know the answer.

In a best-case scenario, you start thinking about impact at the very beginning of the film. But if that’s not possible or if you’re just too focused on other activities, you need to think about what some of the outcomes will be. What are the things we want to accomplish? It’s not unlike working with any social action campaign whether if it’s related to a film or not.

The fastest way between point A and point B isn’t some giant public engagement campaign. It might be paying a few thousand dollars to the right lobbyists in Washington to sneak some language into an appropriations bill. It’s not the most attractive thing that we’re looking at in terms of change. But if it means the difference between kids getting or not getting school lunches, then maybe it’s the faster way and a better use of resources.

When we’re talking about public engagement, sometimes we’re saying “We want to be seen by everybody. We want to have it on HBO and we want to have a giant premiere and then we want to go on a road show to every single state.” Not only does that cost a ridiculous amount of money, it’s also hard to pull off.

What is it that we want to accomplish? Everyone working in the organization, they know what needs to be done. Where do we need to direct



the momentum of this film? It could be in a national campaign, or it could be in four states.

From a business perspective, you expand distribution because you need to sell more tickets or you need to sell more advertising. But from a social action perspective, it could be that you focus your attention on a specific area.

What happens too often is that people don't have that honest conversation with all the people at the table and so they say "We're just going to put it out there and we're going to get as many people to see it as soon as we can."

It should start with sitting down and saying "What is it that we want to do?" The film has to be great but let's put the film aside for a second and look at this with tunnel vision. If that film wasn't there and we were just creating a campaign, what would we want to do? And how do we develop that content so it can achievement momentum.

Warren Etheredge: As a point, I love that and I want to make sure I understand because the old film used to be "Will it play in Peoria?" But you're saying "Can we speak for the people in Peoria?"

Ted Richane: It goes back to what it is that you want to do, and Holly and Bonnie can certainly to speak to this. I've spoken to a lot of filmmakers who have found themselves evolve into social activists when really they want to be filmmakers. They want to tell a story and produce that film and they want it to be seen by as many people as possible, and then they want to move on to the next film.

But if the film is intended to be at the center of a social action campaign, then you have to figure out where you will allocate your resources for maximum impact. Are we going to allocate resources to Peoria and have the audience follow up by doing A, B, C and D? Documentaries are lucky to have any funds or abilities for outreach. So when they have those funds, we have to plan strategically.

Bonnie Benjamin-Phariss: While you were talking, Ted, I was thinking about when we did the film, *Evolution*, we were trying to figure out how we could make a difference. We're not going to impact the conversation of the school board in every township in this country. It's a PBS series that, by definition, has a certain audience.

We wanted to consider, "Who's the audience we're trying to reach?" We realized it was the tenth grade high school biology teacher. He or she is the one on the front lines struggling with this issue. They're either not trained to teach it effectively or not supported by the principal. The school board doesn't want them to teach it.

We thought we could make a difference with this. We could provide free resources for these tenth grade high school biology teachers to have this conversation with their students and with their principals if they aren't being supported. We could help them understand what intelligent design is and isn't. We made sure that every high school biology teacher in the country had this free resource, either physically or on a disk.

A dozen years later, if you type in the word "evolution," our website is either the first or second results with Wikipedia. And we're number one around April when most high school biology teachers get to that part of the textbook. That's a statement of change. We created something that people still find usable.

Warren Etheredge: Wouldn't another bubble be the Texas school board that makes so many decisions about textbooks and evolution?

Bonnie Benjamin-Phariss: I'm not so sure if I would call it a bubble.

Warren Etheredge: You talk about filmmakers getting more focused in their outreach. I remember speaking to Ricki Stern and Annie Sundberg, who are wonderful documentary filmmakers. But they both said "Please, please, just make a documentary about something that doesn't change the world."

“We wanted to consider, “Who’s the audience we’re trying to reach?” We realized it was the tenth grade high school biology teacher.”

Bonnie Benjamin-Phariss

“Should every documentary or film have a call to action and I would say “No.” Some are just great stories well told.”

Holly Gordon

Holly Gordon: Should every documentary or film have a call to action? I would say “No.” Some are just great stories well told. The interesting thing is that film is a wonderful scaled tool. You make the film once and it can be used often. So the whole idea is that you’re trying to achieve scale with the story. What Bonnie is saying is “Okay. So make their scale tool, but then be laser-focused in the way you use it.” And that’s the definition of trying to cause change.

Warren Etheredge: I want to go back to Bonnie, when filmmakers come to you with a concept, what are the common mistakes you see them make that will keep you from pursuing it?

Bonnie Benjamin-Phariss: What do we look for? Sometimes we see projects that come to us with a campaign attached. Not that often. Organizations like Cause+Effect can help them understand what they can do with it. We look at films and we go, “All right. Could there be a campaign?” and we spend a lot of time thinking about what it would be. In addition to being topics that are of interest to our founders, we look to help them define what it can be and we look for films that are thinking about the broader cultural issues that they can address. We don’t look for films that say they’re going to make this big, huge zeitgeist change, because they’re not. Films don’t make a zeitgeist change.

Warren Etheredge: I still have a ton of questions, but if you in the audience have a question, please raise your hand and we’ll call upon you as well. Does anybody have anything?

Audience Member: I get all my news from Twitter. I know that I got extremely depressed after the Iran elections. Is there a way to find out if organizations on Twitter are providing good information without having the reach that a large corporation does?

Holly Gordon: Other than doing the work, I don’t know. Citizen journalism is risky because everyone has access to Twitter. What’s to stop me from tweeting that there’s a bomb about to explode, causing complete panic in central Seattle? Twitter exists, and citizen journalism exists. I’m sure there’s a common law of honesty. There was a big article in *The*

Wall Street Journal about lying that said 1% of people are just born to lie.

So the answer is, no, I don’t think that there’s a way. But I also think what is so incredibly exciting — and Johanna is on the leading edge of this in the work she does — is that social media is remaking almost every industry and the roles that people play in society.

The same is true for journalism. The new challenge for consumers of the news is finding information you can trust.

Try to get your information from lots of different places. If you’re reading *The Huffington Post*, and then you’re reading *The Drudge Report*, you know you’re getting news that’s curated by two very different agendas. That goes back to objectivity in journalism. It’s crap; it’s always been crap. Journalism is not objective because somebody is making a subjective decision, whether they think it should lead the half-hour evening broadcast, or whether it should be the kicker at the end.

Rick Kaplan was my first boss in television and he went on to run CNN and MSNBC. Rick used to teach a class on how he broadcast the evening news, back when the evening news broadcast was something that we all would tune into — this was when Peter Jennings was the anchor. He said, “The evening news is based on vital, important and interesting. So every morning when I walk in I have to decide what is vital, what is important and what is interesting.” By saying that, it’s clear he’s making a subjective decision. The news has never been objective and in fact, we’re so lucky now because we are able to sample. You don’t have to take anyone else’s news. You can create your own.

Ted Richane: Just like everything else, the cream hopefully rises to the top. It’s not always perfect, but using Twitter as an example, if you were going to tweet something offensive, you’re going to lose a lot of followers, right?

Audience Member: People are going to vote me off the island.



Ted Richane: When you look at the people who have amazing followings on Twitter, it's people who are interesting. There's a reason to follow them because they're funny, because they tell you stuff that you can't learn anywhere else, because they're reliable, or because they're Kim Kardashian and we're all just sad.

Anyone can say anything about themselves. "Well, we're awesome and you should give us your money and here's why." But in time, the cream does rise to the top.

This isn't just for Twitter and news. It's also for filmmaking. When we have these different platforms where it's democratized — for lack of a better term — the content gets more distribution. There are filmmakers out there who would disagree because they think their content is awesome and it's not being seen. But when something is good, it finds its way out there.

Warren Etheredge: I want to underscore what both Holly and Ted have said. I encourage people to be cognizant of confirmation bias. Get your information from as many places as you possibly can and be proactive about it. The news is not something to be told to you, but something for you to find. The truth is something to find out about, so question what you see and consider what you don't and draw your own conclusions at all times.

Audience Member: I'd like to know about the whole machinery: how you get your film out there, find a producer and a team? Where do you go once you have a story?

Ted Richane: Filmmakers often approach foundations and hear exactly what you just said. "What's your plan for getting this out there? What's your plan?" Kudos to the foundations for thinking about that, but they're a little bit ahead of the game.

You can't expect a filmmaker who has an amazing opportunity to tell a great story to have all those answers. You want them to have a plan for getting the plan. If you are in the early stage, you don't know what

the mobile application is going to be, or for that matter, whether you need a mobile application. People love mobile applications because they sound cool, but often times, they're totally unneeded and they're expensive and you should spend the money on something else.

I would love to hear instead, "I have a plan for figuring out the answers. I'm going to do research; I'm going to talk to my old professor. I want to do A, B and C. I know A, I'm going to accomplish it by making an amazing film, which I just told you about, but B and C in terms of getting it out there and putting it in the hands of students or of activists or religious leaders or whatever it might be, there's a lot of questions that we need to answer, and we haven't answered all them yet, but we are thinking about them and here's our process for answering those questions."

Bonnie Benjamin-Phariss: We look exactly at what Ted just said. "What's your plan for the plan?"

Holly Gordon: And I'm going to say two things. One is a plug for 10x10. We are trying to build a toolkit that, by virtue of the way we have created this project, we hope that we will have a template for how you create a successful campaign with the metrics from the beginning all the way through to the end. Secondly, it doesn't necessarily cost you any more. You've already invested your time and effort in figuring out what your film idea is. Take an extra four weeks to look at the data that's out there already.

Peter Broderick released three studies on social impact films where he looked at *An Inconvenient Truth*, *Waiting for Superman* and *End of the Line*, which was British film. Look at the *Food, Inc.* study. See what has been studied and what the applications are that proved to be successful and then come up with a plan for making that plan.

The other piece — again, plugging 10x10 — is one of my biggest frustrations in this whole process: the lack of funding for media. Why do you think corporations spend millions and millions of dollars on advertising? That is media. They're making little films to make us change



our behavior, but there's no data there; there's no evidence and nothing that a corporate funder or a foundation funder can use to say, "We're going to give you money because we believe that under these circumstances, media can make a difference."

We're hoping with 10x10 that we'll end up with a study we can take with the film and say, "this is what happened. We were able to make a difference so you should fund us."

Bonnie Benjamin-Phariss: Do you know the Fledgling Fund?

Holly Gordon: Yes.

Bonnie Benjamin-Phariss: The Fledgling Fund has a great study on their home page. They work with small films as well. There's *Blue Vinyl*, for those of you who know about it. It's a small film, didn't cost a lot to make. The filmmaker was aghast at the PVCs on the siding of her parents' home and wanted to make a film about it. She didn't know what she was doing for the campaign. It evolved over the years, maybe it cost about \$40,000, which is a lot of money. But it is also not a lot of money when you think that a film has changed the way companies think about manufacturing PVC pipe. It's a wonderful little study that Fledgling Fund has done.

Holly Gordon: And Fledgling gave us our start, so they're a great funding source when you have the kernel of the idea. Then we brought that kernel to Vulcan and they helped it grow into this beautiful thing.

Ted Richane: The kernel popped.

Holly Gordon: Yeah.

Warren Etheredge: So if you're going after more funding, somebody is going to want to look at metrics and impact. How do you measure that?

Johanna Blakley: You can do it in lots of different ways. There are very expensive ways to do it and that's what we've tried to avoid. We in-

cluded that map of the people who took our survey in my TEDx presentation to demonstrate how hard it would be to do an American national representative survey.

Usually people doing survey research would do a random telephone dial survey of maybe 2,000 Americans and say they'll get a representative sample. You wouldn't have been able to do that with *Food, Inc.* In 2,000 people, you wouldn't have found a wide enough range of people who had seen that documentary film. I don't know how many people they would have had to call, but it would have been extremely expensive.

If you have endless vats of money, you can evaluate the impact of anything. But if you don't have a lot of money, you can do something tricky like what we did with *Food, Inc.* because we had access to social networks. It's all about social media. We did not need a national representative sample in order to do basically the equivalent of a gold-standard clinical study because we had tens of thousands of people we could access online. Yes, they were self-selected and there were people who were somehow affiliated with Participant Media websites and social media channels, but we got enough people that it didn't matter.

What we were concerned about was the propensity of each person to have seen the film, not whether they belonged to a certain demographic category. That's a completely different question to ask. For instance, imagine there's a filmmaker in the audience who's thinking of making a film and they think it could have a real impact they want to be able to measure it because a foundation is going to give them money it is likely the foundation will want to see a return on investment.

They're giving you money because they have a certain mission. Is your film serving their mission? If you have access to email addresses of people who are interested in your film, or might have been interested in your film, if you have strategic partnerships with some NGOs that have nice fat mailing lists, that's the most important thing you have in your pocket. You can survey a bunch of people and it's not going to cost so much at all. The analysis is complicated. But the actual administration

of the survey is very cheap and you can do it online.

Ted Richane: Evaluation has to be part of your work from the start and ingrained into what you're doing. You have to get okay with that.

Filmmakers say "Yeah. But a lot of people saw my film." And maybe that's it. Maybe that's the only indicator that they're interested in. I push back on a lot of social media activity because people say "Let's just do it on Twitter." And the jury is still out on Twitter as an amazing tool for social change. So until the measurement tools are better, it's hard for a foundation to justify that expenditure.

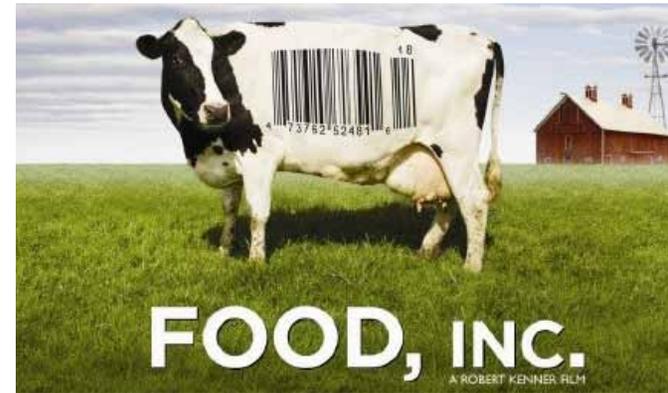
The second point I would like to make has to do with our roles as citizens. When that survey comes up, I take it. How many times have you been on the phone with an airline rep who says, "after you talk to so-and-so, would you like to take a survey?" And the answer is always, "No, no, no." Then we're mad when the airline gives us terrible customer service.

Surveys are a great, free easy way for us to share our opinions. But so often we don't because we're busy, we don't want to be bothered, we don't want to go on some mailing list. But when it comes to social change, it's good to say that you liked it or didn't. I don't know how we accomplish that, how we educate people to become more participatory in the processes.

Warren Etheredge: How many times do you feel like you filled out a survey or got involved in a campaign and that your voice is not heard, not responded to?

Ted Richane: But it's democracy. The problem with democracy is it's democratic, right? You don't always get what you want, but it's about the process and participating in it.

Bonnie Benjamin-Phariss: We also offer resources for evaluation and measurement because it's terribly important that we look at evaluation and measurement right from the beginning.



Warren Etheredge: And a follow-up for you. There is an idea out there that musicians can survive if they have 10,000 passionate fans who buy their albums and go to their concerts. Is there a magic number like that for documentary film that could make a difference?

Johanna Blakley: I don't know. It depends on the difference they're trying to make.

Warren Etheredge: Just change the world, that's all.

Johanna Blakley: Oh, yeah, just that. Depending on the message, you have a completely different target audience in mind and it might be socioeconomic, it might have something more to do with demographics than I've suggested were important in the case of *Food, Inc.* But *Food, Inc.* is an incredibly primal film. It's about what you stick in your body. That's the kind of movie that can reach an extremely broad audience even if they didn't know that they wanted to watch it.

Warren Etheredge: A movie comes out about a certain subject like food and then it seems like 40 more pop up around that.

Johanna Blakley: Oh, yeah, that's Hollywood.

Holly Gordon: That is one of the most exciting things that can happen, with a film or a product. I almost started a baby food business before

“Evaluation has to be part of your work from the start and ingrained into what you're doing. You have to get okay with that.”

Ted Richane

I went back into media. My partner recently said, “Holly, we were such geniuses. Now there’s a huge growth in those fresh-frozen and squeeze-pack baby foods.” You can buy gourmet food for your kids anywhere. And 10 years ago you couldn’t.

Going to another one of Johanna’s TED talks about the fashion industry having no copyright or trademark laws. Copying is expression. It’s the greatest form of flattery.

Johanna Blakley: There is no objective standard for what is good and what is bad. It’s very much about gatekeepers and tastemakers and people who have proven themselves to be trustworthy curators of taste.

That is one reason why you see copying and trends. People validate a concept or an aesthetic, like a color or a hemline. And suddenly you see it proliferate. It’s a very human thing. Strange but human.

Holly Gordon: Which is why 10,000 people is enough for a musician because 10,000 people think you’re good enough. You can’t stick with 10,000 because you’ll have a lot of empty auditoriums, but there are enough people within that 10,000 to get other followers too. Someone told me a story about a funky band playing in an outdoor concert hall. One guy gets up and he starts doing a crazy dance. He’s the fire-starter, right? Then the second person gets up and starts to dance too. It’s the third person who gets up to dance who is the most important person because then everyone is thinking, “Dude! I’m going to stand up too.” It’s the same premise for a standing ovation.

Watch for it the next time you’re in a theater. One person will stand up and applaud, then their friends will because they like that person who has so much passion. You get enough passionate people and then the whole auditorium will stand up. Whether or not they thought the performance sucked, they’ll stand up.

So when you’re making your film, think about who your super-fans are. Engage them early; get them on board. Ask their advice. That’s what we did with our NGO partners. We’ve tried to make relationships with

people who are so deeply committed to this that they’re going to stand up when we finish, even if we suck.

Warren Etheredge: Thanks for explaining Seattle’s tendency to give everything a standing ovation. (Laughter).

Audience Member: There’s a book called *Shaking the Money Tree* that lots of people swear by.

Warren Etheredge: That book is by Morrie Warshawski, yeah.

Morrie comes to Seattle and does a lot of house parties to talk about funding for documentaries and about the resources right here in Seattle.

Bonnie Benjamin-Phariss: Learn PowerPoint. Learn to think like a businessperson. If you’re going to ask someone to give you money, they won’t do it because you’re nice and have a nice idea. You have to have a solid plan and you have to be able to explain it in terms a businessperson can understand. It’s all about return on investment.

Audience Member: I’m working in the LGBTQ community and I had a chance to talk to Mikkey Halsted who did the film *Live Free or Die*. He has tremendous resources that I was hoping to tap into.

Holly Gordon: Just be bold. The worse thing he can do is say “no.” If you’re worried he might say “no,” network around him so that you can have some other points of contact so you can say “So-and-so thought we should connect and here’s where I see that this can work for you and for me.” This is the way I believe you create success today, which is finding your network and building your community. Walter Cronkite had it easy. Everybody turned on the television. FDR had it even easier with his fireside chats. The OJ Simpson trial is what turned the tide on cable television news. Before the OJ trial, nobody cared about cable TV.

It used to be easy to find your audience. It’s hard now. You need to create partnerships everywhere you can. Go for a few strong partners

“So when you’re making your film, think about who your super-fans are. Engage them early; get them on board.”

Holly Gordon

instead of 57 who share your belief and ideals because the one thing that's true about NGO partnerships, they're under-resourced. You can have a great idea, but they don't have a marketing team to help you launch that great idea. So a few deep partnerships that you build over a long period of time will turn out to be much more constructive than the ones that are put together at the last minute a couple of weeks before a film comes out.

Bonnie Benjamin-Phariss: I want to echo Holly's point. There are too many partners with hidden agendas, and you need full-time staff to manage the partnerships. That just gets insane and so less is so more in this case.

Holly Gordon: And don't let them all be in your same field because they compete. Businesses don't hand hold and say "Kumbuya." If you sell doughnuts, you might partner with the soda manufacturer, but you're not going to partner with the other doughnut shop.

Ted Richane: Think of partnerships as not just something to help you fill a theater when it opens, but a real, genuine thing. It's give and take. What we tell our filmmakers is that this is a gift, we're giving you a way for you to tell your story or talk about your issue in a way that you wouldn't otherwise be able to. What we're getting from you is expertise, is leadership, is credibility, is reach.

Warren Etheredge: Cause+Effect talks about this idea that you do social change that's grounded in research with an eye on sustainability. It sounds fantastic. Tell me about that eye on sustainability. How do you generate something that is going to be sustainable?

Ted Richane: With research, right? One is putting in place those evaluation tools so it's not about looking back two years later and saying, "Okay. Here's what we've accomplished." It's more about present tense and figuring out, "Okay, here's what we're accomplishing right now." If we're trying four things, two of them might be working well. One of them might need some tweaking, and the fourth thing may be a total failure, so let's stop doing it. We're beating our heads against the wall

here and we're wasting money.

Part of it is capturing that data and using it in real time, which allows you to sustain. Technology for viewing content might not have been available two years ago, but now it is. So how do you repurpose that content on a few platforms? Part of it is public engagement, giving ownership to your participants. Not just watching what they're doing, but asking what they want. On Facebook, we ask questions: Did you like this clip? Do you like this effort? Hearing people tell us what they liked and didn't like, we'll then use that information and not just give it lip service. We factor that into strategy.

It's just like anything else. If you plan from the very beginning that we want to be doing this for two years and then two years after that, like we did with *This Emotional Life*, Vulcan made a significant and almost unparalleled investment in this project to go on for two years, but there had to be an end. So then we wondered how are we going to turn this over?

From the beginning, we asked partners, "Would you be interested a couple of years from now in taking this project over?" It requires thinking ahead of time, otherwise you end up never moving on to the next thing.

Warren Etheredge: So you had more of an exit strategy than our government technically does?

Ted Richane: We tried to, right.

Bonnie Benjamin-Phariss: So back to thinking like a businessperson.

Ted Richane: Right, absolutely.

Warren Etheredge: Because you need to go on to the next project.

Bonnie Benjamin-Phariss: And you want to know that your movies have life, but you can't continue to breathe life into it. It goes right back

“ Think of partnerships as not just something to help you fill a theater when it opens, but a real, genuine thing. ”

Ted Richane

to Ted’s point about research.

Warren Etheredge: Johanna, I have a question. On the Norman Lear Center site, there’s this idea that American culture is becoming America’s real foreign policy. Are documentaries becoming our domestic policy?

Johanna Blakley: Oh, I wish. (Laughter). I would say the latter is not quite true, but the former is so true. In terms of what the rest of the world knows about this country and who we are, it’s most likely they’re going to find out about us through our entertainment products. Those things are rabidly consumed around the world.

Warren Etheredge: So apologize when you travel.

Johanna Blakley: When people ask where I’m from, I’ll say, “Los Angeles, Hollywood.” And they often ask me, “Have you seen Leo DiCaprio? Does he live in your neighborhood?”

People feel like you are somehow behind the curtain if you live in L.A. In that respect, I believe that entertainment has a very powerful role to play politically in this country. It’s ironically a very controversial role because the government doesn’t have much control over the entertainment exports that come out of Hollywood. Some people believe that there’s hand holding between DC and Hollywood, but I can tell you that is not the case at all.

There are moments where they collaborate with one another. If you see any Air Force equipment or US military equipment, that meant that an official from the Armed Forces worked specifically with the film. Filmmakers had to submit their script to that division of the Armed Forces to make sure it was okay. Otherwise, they couldn’t use the equipment. The stuff that comes out of Hollywood is cooked up in order to make money. They’re not in the business of exporting realistic portraits of what America is about, its ideology, its values, its people. They’re putting together fantasies that they think are going to sell.

Ted Richane: I would have an easier time defending the entertainment products than I would some foreign policy decisions. Not to say what’s right or what’s wrong, but people around the world love the craziness that comes out of Hollywood. The entertainment industry cares more about how *The Avengers* does overseas than how it does here in the United States. It’s because they know that there’s a bigger audience abroad.

Warren Etheredge: We have time for one or two more questions from the audience.

Audience Member: In any of your research, have you been able to prove or disprove that documentary films had any influence on corporate responsibility or have they changed the behavior of corporations?

Johanna Blakley: We haven’t done any research specifically on that. It’s a tough research project to do, but it can be pulled off. There was an article on the front page of *The New York Times* Business Section about how some portion of the agribusiness industry has changed due to the film *Food, Inc.* It should be a wake-up call and reminder to anybody who is making film.

You can hurt people and hurt industries with a film that has a negative message. If you haven’t presented it accurately, you may have done a disservice to an entire industry, to a sector of the economy. There’s always fallout when there’s social change. You can’t assume it’s always good. Somebody gets hurt along the way, so you have a lot of responsibility.

Representations have a huge impact on people. You can watch a fictional film and you can walk out thinking a different thing about women, about girls, about a racial minority you never thought twice about. Make sure those messages that you’re putting out there are ones that you want people to act on.

Warren Etheredge: You talk about filmmaker responsibility. Is there also a responsibility on the part of the audience? They see a film like *Super Size Me* or *The Cove*. Is the audience responsible for being diligent?

“There’s always fallout when there’s social change. You can’t assume it’s always good. Somebody gets hurt along the way, so you have a lot of responsibility.”

Johanna Blakley



Johanna Blakley: Oh, sure. Every individual is responsible for the kinds of choices they make in terms of what organizations they support, what they say to their friends, what they publish on their Twitter feed, what they say in their blog, where they spend their money. But I'll take this as an opportunity to mention how important media literacy is. This comes back to an issue we've discussed. How do I vet these people? I want citizen journalists to be my news source. I want people on the ground who aren't beholden to a media or corporate interest to be my news source. But how do I know whether they're any good? Do I have to go back to *The New York Times* reporter to make sure their facts are straight?

That's the hard work of being a smart media consumer. It's important that we become more serious about training kids, little kids in elementary school, to be critical readers. We need to help them develop a good understanding of multimedia and how messages get out and how to deconstruct them and pull them apart and figure out what they're saying.

I used to teach college classes on this, on popular culture, and it was like pulling teeth to get college students to tell me what the argument of a single magazine ad was. What's the thesis of this ad? They looked at me like I was crazy. I'd play an episode of a sitcom and say "So why was that joke funny?" They'd look at me like, "I don't know, I don't reflect on that." But it is important.

This is not a skill set that we all naturally have and it's a tough skill set to learn.

Holly Gordon: Can I take the corporate question? In the new media environment, you have fewer budget lines to support a project like 10x10 — which at its heart is a creative piece of journalism. But corporations can be media creators' new best friends. It's a very careful line to tread. It's like when Kellogg's used to buy whole swaths of television in the 1950s, right? They would underwrite soap operas.

Intel is a funder of our project, but Intel is a funder in a very specific

way. For one, they have no editorial control over the piece of content, what countries we choose, what writers we choose, how the film looks. And that has been the case from the beginning. They are not even allowed to tell us whether or not they like the rough cuts. They have to live with them, a big gamble on their part.

On the other hand, they have been making investments in education for girls and women for 15 years and they are a very data-centric organization. They walk the walk, they talk the talk. And they share that information at panels sponsored by the UN, where global business and policy makers come together to talk about the way that we can all use business to change the world. It's a very specific audience. The beauty of a partnership with Intel is that they have 9 million followers on Facebook, offices around the world and 97,000 employees, all of whom they can activate around a call to action. In this case, it is to educate girls, save the world — change the world.

If you're Intel you can make education a pillar of your corporate values and at the end of the day you'll have better consumers because a more educated population will need the tools that you provide, i.e., access to technology. So you grow your marketplace.

I'm not afraid to say that I agree with Intel. I want more educated people around the world because educated people make better citizens. It just so happens that girls are left behind at a greater rate than boys, so that's where the challenge is. It's not that girls are smarter; I just think that equal access is smart for all of us in a civil society, because you're educated and you have the tools to make the decisions. We share a business objective with Intel.

The second part is that Intel provides learning to us that we never thought we'd have. I didn't know how to do PowerPoint when I first started this project. In fact, I remember having a lunch with a funder who was a banker on Wall Street. She said to me, "Holly, I can't even look at this project until you show me a PowerPoint." And I was like "No problem," and I left the lunch and I called back to headquarters and was like "What's PowerPoint?"



Warren Etheredge: “What’s PowerPoint?”

Holly Gordon: “What is she talking about?” The Deputy Director of 10x10 is Tara Abraham and she graduated from Harvard Business School. She knew how to do PowerPoint. You can’t present a project or an idea at Intel without a PowerPoint. When you have a meeting at Intel, you better send them an agenda four days before and give them time for feedback. You had better keep it to the exact amount of time that they allotted for that meeting. Story meetings at ABC News would start at 10:00 and end at 12:30. Would we make any decisions? Maybe. Would we come up with some story ideas? Maybe. We’d have a great time brainstorming.

Not at Intel. You come in with your agenda and you discuss everything that you have on your agenda and you don’t leave without your ARs, which are called “action required.” We have a contract with Intel that has deliverables in it that we have to meet. Every quarter, we have to meet a certain number of deliverables. For a creative team, this has been a great blessing. Working with Vulcan is the same, so at least we’ve been beaten into shape with the Intel relationship, but Vulcan has deliverables. This is a serious process and there are funds that are being transferred and there are deliverables against them.

So I love doing PowerPoint now. As Bonnie can tell you, we’ve been working on one for five days. It keeps everybody organized. I would have meetings and tell them what they were supposed to be doing next, but now they know months in advance because we have it all mapped out.

Okay. The third thing about a partnership with Intel is that Intel didn’t just fund this from their corporate social responsibility fund CSR and that’s enormously important. They gave us money out of the foundation because that’s where they’re spending money on women and girls’ education around the world. They also gave money out of their marketing budget.

They gave us money out of their human relations budget. Why is that important to us? Because they have given us access to the agency that

runs their Google Ad Awards Program. Many of you may know, if you qualify, Google will give you \$10,000 of Google Ad Words for your organization if you’re a 501(c)3. That means you get free advertising on Google. That’s huge. If you’re an NGO with limited resources, how do you even begin to set up that program? It’s like you have a wonderful tool kit, but you don’t know how to use anything inside it, right? And guess what? Intel has an agency. Having Intel’s agency run our Ad Words is a huge in-kind resource.

Their marketing team and our marketing person helped us think through our marketing strategy. As a journalist, I never knew what marketing was. You tell a story and the audience does something or doesn’t. I didn’t know that you could change the way people behave by doing things in a specific way. That is an important piece that they understand deeply.

The human relations piece is win-win. If they’re going to activate all their 97,000 employees around Educate Girls, Change the World and get them involved in volunteerism and philanthropy, then that’s 97,000 people who are all high functioning, well connected, global business people who we may never have reached otherwise.

What do we give Intel? It wasn’t that they’d been investing in women and girls for 15 years and we were the Hail Mary. No, they’d been doing that very well and they’d didn’t need us for that. They realized that they needed to retain and recruit more female employees. Their female employees felt a lack of connection with a male-dominated engineering company. But Intel saw that having an equal workforce was important to their bottom line and they needed to recruit more female employees.

They needed a way to get on college campuses and talk to girls about STEM — Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics — and they would do it in lots of different ways. This was not an easy sell within Intel. But the people who believed in what they were going for believed in 10x10 as a vehicle to solve a business problem: which was, how do we retain our female employees, get them excited about a pro-

gram that we support and believe in and how do we recruit new ones? And it's been an amazing partnership.

Ted Richane: That would be a *real* partnership.

Holly Gordon: We are partners with Intel and the partnership has to work for all of us. Most NGOs are not used to working with their sponsors in such an open way. It's usually "Okay. We'll take the check. We'll put your logo on" and that's the end of it. But I can tell you, there is so much productivity when you collaborate.

Warren Etheredge: Holly, we're running out of time, but in the spirit of your new devotion to PowerPoint and ARs, maybe each of you could leave us with a little AR — a little call to action for the audience — starting with Johanna.

Johanna Blakley: Something I do in one of my classes is to ask everyone to reflect on what a call to action might have been for any film that they've seen, and not just documentary films that seem to have an explicit message, but even a TV show, any piece of entertainment that you watch. What message do you think that thing was trying to leave with you? What was the frame? Not just what was it about, but what argument did it seem to be making and did you buy it or not? And if you bought it, is there something you would want to do in order to further that message? What would that be?

That's an interesting mindset to have, to think of art and film and media as filled with utility, that it's trying to do something. It's just not been very explicit about it. Documentaries are the only ones that have been explicit, and advertisements, of course. But media is trying to do something. And it's so interesting to figure out what it is.

Ted Richane: Yeah. We talk about social change and the way that films change the world and I would look at the actions that we all take and think about the impact that they have. This is something I'm projecting right now because I'm trying to do this in my own life. Look at the organizations you give to or groups you volunteer for, or things you do

in your daily life. What impact are we having and how much of this is because someone told me to do it, or someone on TV said it was a good organization.

But how do I figure out what impact I'm having when I buy this, give to this group, or teach my kids something? Go that extra step and say to yourself, "Okay. What's the impact?"

Holly Gordon: My AR is totally self-promotion. I want you to like 10x10 on Facebook, and follow us on Twitter, please. I would love you to leave me your business card or your email address and I'm going to add you to our mailing list. And in a few weeks, you'll be getting a tool kit to help you participate in the International Day of the Girl.

I don't expect all of you to be girl champions, although I hope you are. But I'd love you to take a look at that toolkit and let me know what you think. You guys are all here because you care about this.

Then I'd love for you to pass it along to someone in your life who may want to join us on the International Day of the Girl to raise a powerful noise, to prioritize funding for girls' programs both here and abroad, and to raise money for girls' programs in the developing world. So that's your AR and it's short.

Bonnie Benjamin-Phariss: I second Holly. Also, think about something you saw, or something your kids or friends saw, that forced you to change the way you think about something. Why was that? Was it a label or PSA or billboard? Whatever you're doing in your life, whether it's making a film or creating a social media project or whatever, try to incorporate that into what you're doing.

Warren Etheredge: I want to leave all of you with one final thought. Can documentaries change the world? Clearly, the answer is yes. Art has always changed the world. I know it personally because of a documentary that came out called *Sharkwater*. My nine-year-old daughter saw it years after it came out. She was so moved by the plight of the sharks that it's become her passion for several years now. We did a

“*We are partners with Intel and the partnership has to work for all of us. Most NGOs are not used to working with their sponsors in such an open way.***”**

Holly Gordon

couple of screenings here at the Seattle International Film Festival that she wanted to host. We're taking it down to Tacoma. She's converted her classmates slowly but surely.

I keep thinking about the idea of having faith about making change — faith in change, whether you're a filmmaker or whether you're a producer or an audience member. There is still the opportunity to make change in this world if we take art in, and we're proactive about it, and share it with others.

I am so grateful to all the people on the stage today for an incredible conversation. Thank you so much. A round of applause for all of them.

(Applause)

