

Film Trailers

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The primary author is the individual who drafted the first version of this section; a section that could have been modified since it was originally published.



Advertisements are all around us in our world today. Everywhere you look you see billboards and magazines. When you listen to the radio you hear advertisements and for every 15 minutes you watch you watch 5 minutes worth of someone trying to sell you a service or product. Some of these advertisements are for future movies coming out; these are called trailers. When you go out to see a movie before it even starts you have to sit through ten minutes of trailers for the next coming movies.

Movie trailers are nothing more than a few scenes spliced together to entice you to want to see the movie being advertised. Although television advertising was not common until the 1950s, we did see movie trailers before that. In 1913,

Nils Granlund started what would become movie trailers. He was the manager of Marcus Loew Theaters and he made a short promotional film for the Broadway play *Pleasure Seekers* (1913) using nothing more than some footage from the rehearsal. Around the same time, Colonel William Selig introduced us to the idea of "tuning in next week" to find out what happens. He created *The Adventures of Kathlyn* (1913). Each week the show would end in a cliffhanger enticing audiences to want to watch the next episode. Theaters started catching on to the phenomenon, originally making promotions themselves, until 1916 when movie studios caught on to the idea.

Movie trailers were very basic in the beginning with nothing more than snippets of the film with text showing the cast of the title of the movie. In 1919, Herman Robbins started the National Screen Service (NSS). This company would start contracts with movie theater owners and rent out their posters and trailers on a week to week basis. NSS dominated the business from the 1920s thru the 1960s creating trailers for studios all through the United States. NSS started to fall apart toward the 1970s when movie studios took control over their promotions.

The first movie trailer that successfully had a wide release was the movie *Jaws* (1975). With that studios started to compete for the biggest release and getting the most out of their movie advertising. With this idea of having the biggest premiere also started what some might call the "voice of God" in the movie industry.

Many of us have heard the deep voice of Don Lafontaine who brought his talent to trailers. He voiced over 5,000 trailers and did thousands of commercials. Lafontaine was not the only one changing the movie trailer business because the MTV cutting style came about with fast paced edits and this brought trailer to what we see today.



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Photo Credit: Don Lafontaine was the voice behind 5,000 trailers.

Though movie trailers have become the thing to do, many studios are losing more money advertising the movie than the money the actual movie is bringing in. Using the Internet had made it easier for people to access movie trailers. The Internet is helping raise numbers for film- advertising due to the number of people that wait for trailers to come to the web so they can share them with friends and family on Facebook and other social media sites.

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