

PING
PONG

Impact Distribution

Case study



The Film

Pensioners from across the planet compete in the over-80s World Table Tennis Championships in Inner Mongolia.

8 players with 703 years between them guide us through the extraordinary world of veteran sports including Australian legend Dorothy de Low who at 99 years old creates a sensation as the oldest competitor at the Championships.

Ping Pong is a funny and emotional film about people who might be old, but still want gold. Directed and produced by two new filmmaking brothers, Hugh and Anson Hartford (Banyak Films) with a modest budget.



Impact Distribution

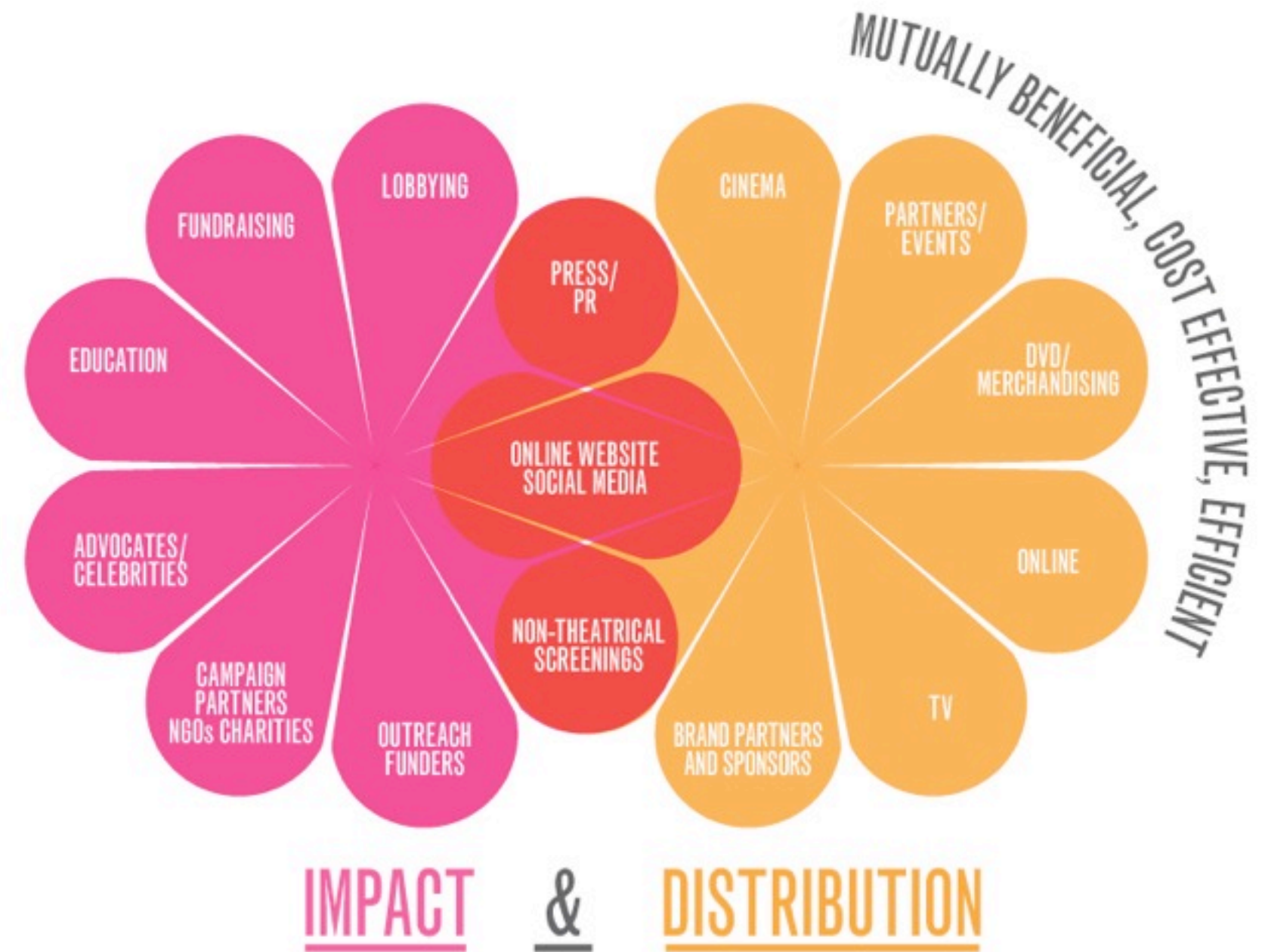
Our aim was to deliver an Impact Distribution Strategy:

To get the film to as wide an audience as possible via multiple platforms.

To do the most social good by hitting targeted audiences.

To make a return for the filmmakers.

The idea was to make both activities complimentary - so they could get cost savings from sharing a website, a press and pr agency and pushing non-theatrical screenings aimed at our target audiences who don't necessarily visit the cinema.



Different Goals

IMPACT

- Spread education about happy, healthy ageing.
- Promote intergenerational understanding and activity.
- Encourage and enable our elderly to become more active.

Non-profit activity. Any profits put back into campaign

DISTRIBUTION

- Cinemas nationwide (Not just digital, DVD and TV).
- Use wide range of partners to promote the film.
- Break even in 6 months
- Fair deal with filmmakers: They start to see a cut after external costs are recouped 25:75 then 50:50 after internal costs are recouped

For profit activity - profit shared with filmmakers

The impact work with the film is a non-profit activity accounted for separately from the distribution of the film. Costs for key elements such as website and press are shared between both activities.

UK Premiere
ExtraCare Brunswick Gardens
14th June 2012

UK Festival Premiere
Sheffield DocFest
15th June 2012

London Premiere
Theatrical Launch Party - ICA
7th July 2012

Premiere Events



Older audiences in the residential village

Industry folk who like table tennis and beer

GB Olympic Table Tennis team players finding it surprisingly hard to beat our veteran stars

Distribution Delivery

- Nationwide tour of 125+ cinema screenings, including many at Picturehouse and independent screens
- Most cinemas had a table tennis table supplied by English Table Tennis Association/Ping! and had a filmmaker Q+A
- Full takeovers of cinema spaces, such as the Ping Pong Weekender at the Rich Mix
- Ping Pong screened as part of the Cultural Olympiad.
- Day-and-date digital release July 2012, including a promotional partnership with the Guardian. Followed by online sales directly via the Ping Pong website and iTunes.
- A dedicated *Ping Pong Care pack* was delivered to encourage non-theatrical license sales.
- DVD was held back - and is still held back - whilst non-theatrical screening market still strong.
- TV premiere on Film4 scheduled for 2013



Early evaluation proved the film's effect on audiences

Audiences over 65 gave the film an average score of 8.7 / 10

The top words chosen to describe the mood the film created:
inspired, happy, emotional & optimistic

What was the message of the film to them?

'Don't sit and vegetate' 'Never give in, age is just another word'

28% 'definitely want to play' Ping Pong after watching with another 36% who 'could be interested'

We knew we had a film that motivated older people to get active



Young People Loved the film even more!

Under 21's rated it 9.1 / 10

They learned:

'You're never too old to do anything'

'You can still have a lot of fun when you are old'

We knew we had a film for young and for old audiences

One Press and PR Strategy

Margaret PR handled press for the film and the campaign over a 6 month period. They secured massive press coverage. Including:

- Telegraph Saturday Magazine
- Empire 4* Review
- BBC Breakfast (including live Table Tennis match with the stars)
- CNN

Estimated figures for PR work during first 2 months of release provided by cuttings agency Durrants:

AVE (Average equivalent ad value) = £1,694,892

Total circulation of print coverage = 24, 646,203

Total reach of print coverage = 73 938 609

In addition to this we also had a high level of broadcast coverage (not included in the figures above). Estimations for some of the shows are: The One Show (average of reach 5 - 6 million daily) and BBC Breakfast is the UK's most watched morning TV programme with an average daily reach of 6.838m people (39.6% share).

This also doesn't include online viewing of articles such as Telegraph.co.uk

BRITDOC secured celebrity endorsement from *Susan Sarandon* and *Boris Johnson* (both being mad Table Tennis fans and who also believed in the social goals).



"Who could have imagined there were people over 100 years old with more passion and determination than most people 1/5th their age! The film is baffling, inspiring and sweet, and it's wonderful to see how ping-pong has transformed their lives."

Susan Sarandon

One website to handle everything

We used Assemble (built by BRITDOC Creative Director James Franklin), which is a cheap and flexible modular website which we could update ourselves easily, including:

Shop selling direct downloads and streams, link to iTunes, DVD's and Care Packs

Mailing list sign up

Auto updates to Facebook/Twitter

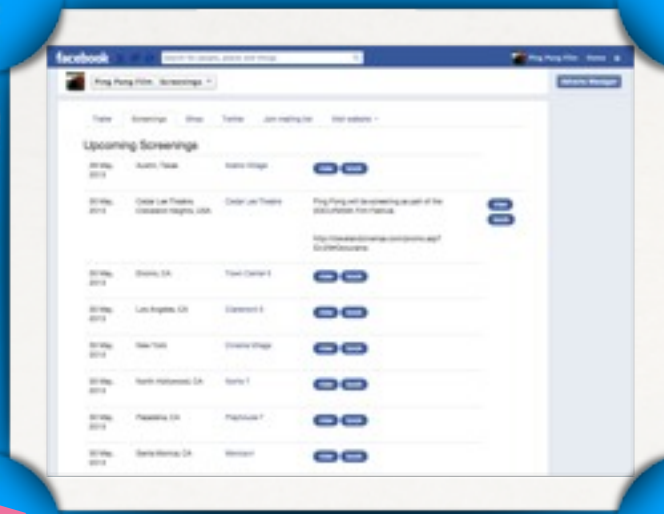
Screening list and map

Demand screenings in your area

Campaign page with benefits for older people

Embeddable player, which acted as our 'mini website' on partner sites, allowing sales via 3rd party websites.

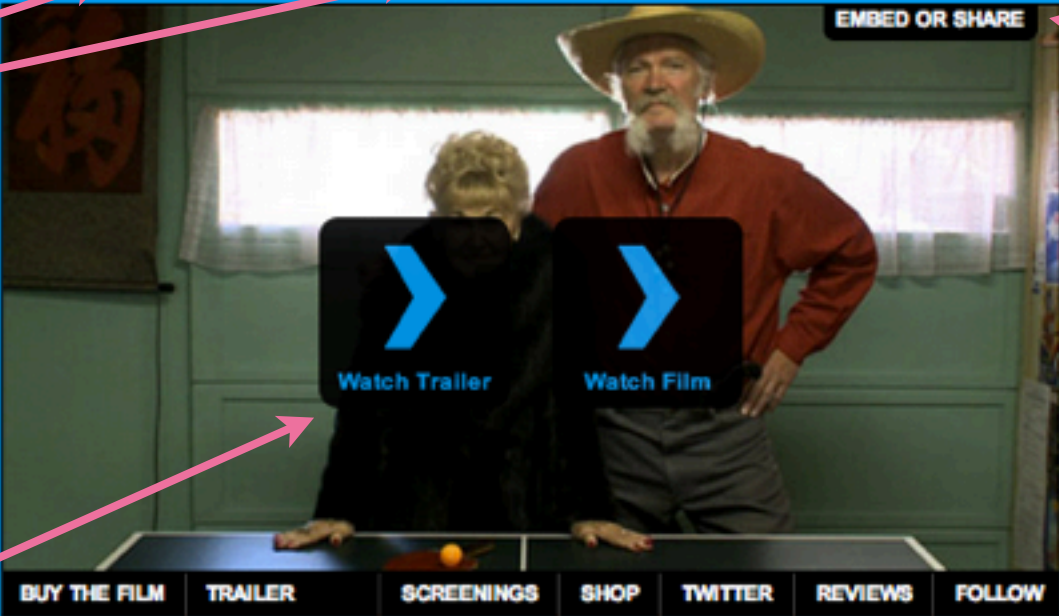
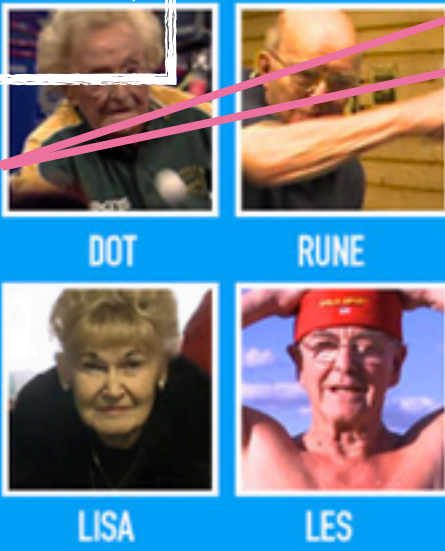




Links to a screenings map that shows both traditional (cinema) and non-traditional (care home) events.

System automatically updates Facebook fans

Include Social Issue campaign information on main film website. Useful also for multi-territory (here both UK and US campaign homes)



Embed or Share the screening widget so that you can place on partner websites to increase sales. Such as the ETA homepage. This will also list all upcoming screenings, reviews, shop, twitter feed and mailing list sign up

Watch the trailer and download or stream the full film direct from the home page

8 players with 703 years between them, compete in the World over 80s Table Tennis Championships in Inner Mongolia. With intimate and candid portraits of life back home 'Ping Pong' explores the hope, regret and immediacy of growing old.

Tweet 582 Like 2.5k Send

★★★★★ "CINEMA EVENT OF THE YEAR" FILM NEWS ★★★★★ "HILARIOUS" EMPIRE ★★★★★ "SINCERELY MOVING" TOTAL FILM

★★★★★ "REMARKABLE" DAILY EXPRESS ★★★★★ "POWERFUL" THE TIMES ★★★★★ "WARM, FUNNY AND HUMANE" DAILY MIRROR

Impact Delivery



BRITDOC partnered with English Table Tennis Association (ETTA), Ping! and Age UK in 2012 to initiate our impact objectives - to get more people trying to play table tennis, especially older audiences. We were extremely pleased to receive a Big Lottery Fund grant in order to deliver the *Ping Pong Care Campaign* for the rest of 2013.

Research has showed the huge health benefits of table tennis for the elderly and we aim to commission a new study with Kings College as to the added benefit for those with Dementia.

Ping Pong Care Packs were created that include: a DVD of the film with screening rights, mobile table tennis net and bats, and a guide to the game for care home residents. There was also an Audio Description track included to help those with poor sight.

£330,000 of income has been generated from Age UK and the Big Lottery Fund to reach over 2500 care homes and day care centres during 2013 with the packs, including a non-theatrical screening license allowing multiple screenings to large audiences.



Impact Evaluation

An individual pack sells for £125 on our website and bulk orders from care homes, local authorities and sheltered accommodation receive a discount for ordering over 10 units.

We decided this figure based on the average viewing group across the campaign as being 30 guests in the audience - although care homes are able to host larger events if they wish. They can even use the event to raise money for local initiatives by charging a ticket price.

With that in mind, we estimate that 75,000 older people will see the film in this setting. This is in addition to the estimated 10,000 who have seen the film already in live screenings, DVD and online.

At the close of 2013 our evaluation will establish how many saw the film and then played table tennis. We will also look at whether playing increased the health of the audience. The ETTA will evaluate how many people have joined local leagues.

BRITDOC are piloting a new platform called *Doc Academy* which provides lesson plans for Key Stage 3 English lessons. The Ping Pong guide discusses stereotypes around ageing and encourages intergenerational play. We hope that schools and care homes will come together for joint screenings of the film.



Distribution Numbers

Figures for 6 months consolidated from 7th July 2012 - 7th January 2013

Revenue £58,080

£8,249 Theatrical Income (Gross £26,000)

£1,111 Digital income (went on itunes October).

£3,670 Short run retail DVD (out in Sep 2013) including
LOCOG (Cultural Olympiad fees)

£45,050 License from non-theatrical screening fees

Expenses £84,332

Net Profit/(Loss) (£26,252)

BFI Grant £51,131

Repayment to BFI £24,879



Lessons learned

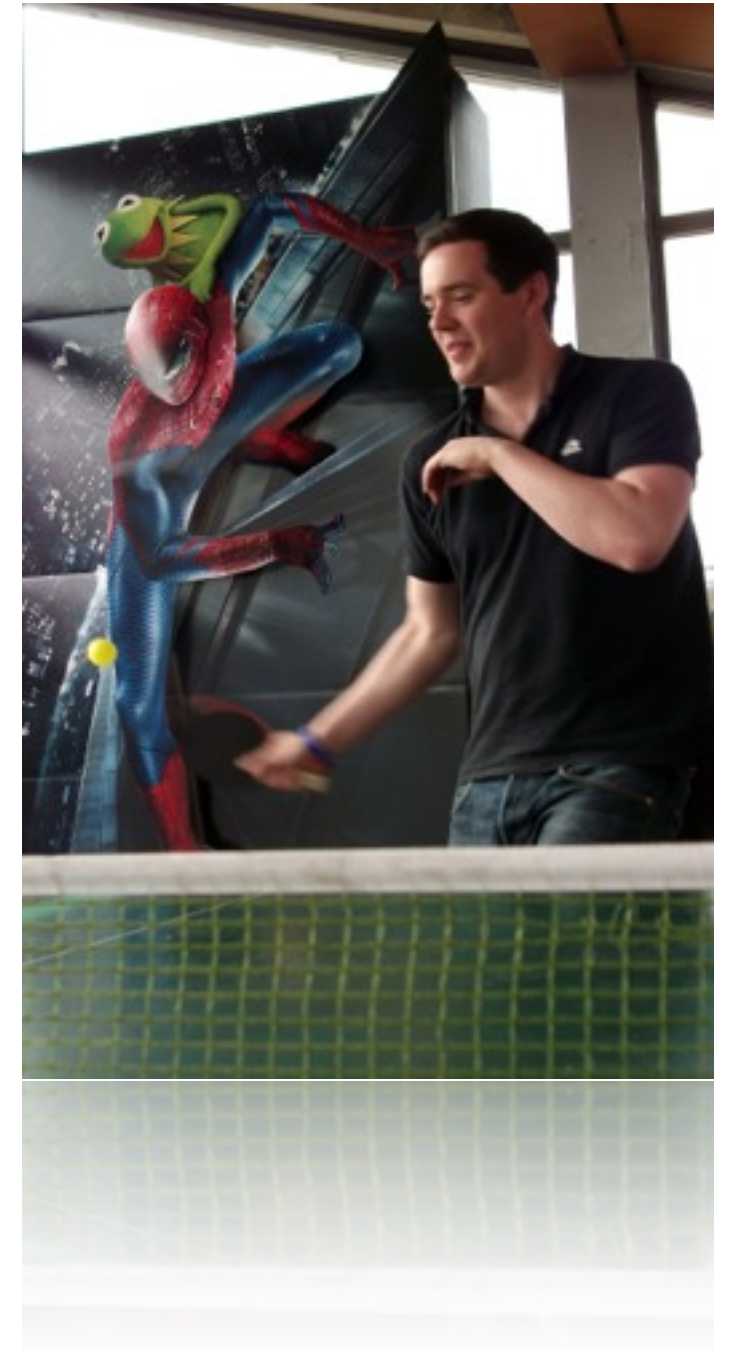
- Theatrical still garners considerable press interest and still positions a film well to potential partners
- Non-theatrical screening income has great potential and was easier to convert than online/DVD sales for this title.
- Care homes are an untapped audience for screenings
- Digital incomes are still very low (although a long tail is expected)
- Ideas for the film, such as the screening-and-play pack came during the process, hard to predict before you start
- Partners like English Table Tennis Association were central to the plans
- In this instance, Impact and Distribution were highly complimentary

The learning has been shared with international distributors who are able to capitalise on the non-theatrical screening potential for the film.



What could we have done differently?

- We released the film just prior to the Olympics hoping to channel a counter culture of sports fans to see a film about ageing stars. In reality with the overwhelming amount of sports programming on television it was difficult to get vast audiences to attend cinema screenings of a sports movie at that time.
- For the Day and Date release perhaps we could have partnered with a platform (Netflix/Itunes etc) rather than a Media Partner (Guardian) in order to drive sales. Customers are more likely to stumble across the purchase potential on a familiar platform.
- It would have been beneficial to hire an additional staff member to coordinate all of the Ping Pong related logistics. Table Tennis tables are hard to move around!
- Perhaps delayed online in order to add more cinema screens, as certain exhibitors would not screen whilst the film was available online. This would have meant more logistical work and expense for the delivery, but increased the Box Office Gross for the filmmakers legacy.
- **However with reference to the point above, if we can change the way that we evaluate a films 'worth' above and beyond the Box Office Gross of a film, *Ping Pong* had a great release. It reached a very wide audience, engaged them on a deeper level and improved the health and wellbeing of the audience. We would encourage that a new set of goals are used to define a films success in the future above and beyond Box Office figures, in the case where an Impact Distribution Strategy is relevant.**



About BRITDOC

BRITDOC is the award-winning non-profit foundation behind a string of stand-out documentaries in recent years. Founded in partnership with Channel 4 in 2005, BRITDOC funded eco-fishing documentary *The End of the Line* which partnered with Waitrose, Sundance winner *Afghan Star* and Oscar-nominated *Hell and Back Again*. We are currently working on *Project Wild Thing* in partnership with The National Trust, which will launch at Sheffield DocFest 2013.

We have recently released *One Mile Away*, Penny Woolcock's Edinburgh award winning feature documentary about reducing violence on the streets of Birmingham.

A small Soho-based team, BRITDOC also runs the international event The Good Pitch in partnership with Sundance Institute and Ford Foundation and supported by Edelman which matches documentaries with brand and NGO partners.

Ping Pong was their first release as Impact Distributors.



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