

PROFILE

an infoletter of the Entertainment Industries Council, Inc.

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Industry Leaders Chart Recommendations for Socially Responsive Entertainment

Drugs and Youth: Tragedies and Truth - "The Sequel" was entertainment industry leaders' focus at a day-long symposium held November 8, 1999 in Beverly Hills. Convened by the Entertainment Industries Council, Inc. (EIC), in partnership with the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) and The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, representatives from 18 industry organizations gathered to discuss their long-term commitment to be responsive to the issues of drug, alcohol and tobacco use and addiction.

Key decision-makers of the entertainment industry sought to continue work begun at the first EIC-initiated symposium in October, 1995. Together, they identified the industry's contributions to accurate depiction over the last five years, in the areas of television, motion pictures and home video, music and music video. Adding celebrity involvement as one of the primary vehicles for reaching out to youth, the leaders developed new approaches and recommendations for achieving accurate depiction of substance abuse in the new millenium. A team of Los Angeles County high school youth also participated in the symposium.

This talented and diverse group of professionals and youth formed four work groups to generate ideas about how to achieve accurate depiction, utilizing each of the four entertainment media identified. While each work group came up with distinct recommendations, some common threads emerged:

- taking ownership for our individual respective roles as potential partners in helping to implement these recommendations;
- acknowledging the need for long-term, ongoing efforts;
- building on EIC programs such as the PRISM Awards, First Draft technical assistance depiction briefings, *Spotlight on Depiction* resource books, *Program Talk* newsbriefs, www.eiconline.org resource website, and future Drugs and Youth symposia; and
- involving creative guilds, trade associations and professional organizations, as well as individual creators and executives.

The 18 co-sponsors of this symposium have already committed to working with EIC on an ongoing basis. An agreed upon premise was established that the entertainment industry can only achieve accurate depiction by setting the social agenda from within. These leaders have agreed to further the progress made to date and to encourage the involvement of their respective members.

The spectrum of industry and EIC accomplishments were reviewed by EIC staff, including Brian L. Dyak, President and CEO; Jhamal Robinson, Program Coordinator; Kirwan Rockefeller, Ph.D., Director of Education; and Larry Deutchman, Senior Vice President of Production and Marketing. Dr. Tim Condon, Associate Director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), updated participants on the latest developments in the science of addiction. NIDA supports more than 85% of the world's research on the health aspects of drug abuse and addiction.



From Left: **Don Mankiewicz**, Screenwriter, Writers Guild of America, West; **Brian Dyak**, President and CEO, Entertainment Industries Council, Inc.; **Kathy Morgan**, Chairman, American Film Marketing Association; **Linda Loe**, Director

Participating Co-Sponsors

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Brainstorming Session Recommendations

Television

- The industry can be effective through national, regional, and local on-air campaigns and related activities addressing substance abuse and addiction. These efforts can be synchronized with news programming, scientific discoveries and individuals in recovery that reinforce these issues.
- Encourage producers, writers, directors, and studio/network executives to demonstrate their commitment to making a difference by addressing these health issues in all areas of programming, while maintaining their inherent entertainment value.
- Support entertainment storylines as educational/positive public relations opportunities by use of internet chat sessions, discussion guides, and celebrity media events.
- Encourage local news shows to produce regular features that focus on successes and upbeat human interest aspects of local drug, alcohol and tobacco efforts. Attempt to tie in these stories, where appropriate, to upcoming or just-aired entertainment programs addressing similar themes or issues.
- Educate promotions and marketing teams about taking context and visual triggers into account when selecting footage for on-air promotions.
- Use on-air messages to encourage parents to help their children become more media aware and monitor their television consumption.
- Produce special event programming that focuses on these issues, which can be simulcast on a number of television outlets simultaneously as “roadblock” airings.
- Offer parents more information on programming, tied to the television content ratings, by posting such information on network or other websites.
- Involve advertisers in these efforts through cause-related marketing and communications programs.

Feature Films / Home Movies

- Support the creation of a voluntary identifying brand for PRISM recipient productions as a marketing tool that would designate a movie or home video as being commended for its accurate depictions.
- Encourage media awareness and individual responsibility, educating youth on what is fantasy/make-believe in the movies, and what is real on the streets, through “media minutes” for use in theaters and on home videos.
- Produce Public Service Announcements (PSAs) and encourage distribution on home videos, non-theatrical film prints, and with movie trailers, or participate/assist in testing of PSAs and messages on consumers through up-coming market research efforts.

- Continue ongoing outreach to film schools to introduce the importance of accurate depiction.
- Publicize the industry’s improved record on reducing excessive portrayals of the use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco, using EIC as the industry’s representative organization.
- Encourage trade groups and unions to enroll and reach out to members, promoting involvement in or awareness about these issues.

Music / Music Video

- Encourage stronger music industry involvement on an ongoing basis in media accuracy and accurate depiction efforts, and increase music industry outreach, marketing, and networking opportunities.
- Create a PRISM Award for students who produce their own PSAs or positive music videos through school programs.
- Pool resources by encouraging communication between organizations on a regular basis, especially between trade groups and record companies.
- Encourage more production of radio PSAs for use on music stations.
- Increase links from popular youth websites to sites specifically designed to address substance abuse.

Celebrity Involvement

- Enroll a celebrity involvement coordinator to create a committee with representatives from all major segments of the industry and prepare a celebrity outreach action plan.
- Recruit celebrities including actors, sports figures, models, authors, and costumed “characters” from various media and provide them with a variety of involvement options such as educating youth at in-school presentations and industry events, and through PSAs, talk shows, and media interviews; lending their names to publications; donating a portion of proceeds from their entertainment products or auction items; linking their fan club website to EIC’s resource website; or chairing events.
- Create and distribute briefing packets and specially designed lapel pins for celebrities to wear at major awards events.
- Create PRISM Award recipient promotional packets to suggest ways to help maximize their publicity.
- Create celebrity PSAs designed for airline audiences.
- Create a celebrity-hosted abridged, educational version of the PRISM Awards presentation on video, for use at school assemblies and in classrooms.
- Involve celebrities with a track record of intimate experience with the consequences of substance abuse, as well as those who have a history of staying clean and sober.

Save the date:
March 21, 2000

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Please feel free to duplicate and distribute this publication.

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