

CanFilmDay Host Suggestions and Tips



HOW TO LEAD A POST FILM DISCUSSION

The goal of this document is to give you some advice and guidance for facilitating a CanFilmDay event. Whether it's a Q&A with a guest or a discussion/talk back with your audiences and community.

REEL CANADA's mission is to introduce everyone to the power and diversity of Canadian film and engage them in a conversation about what it means to be Canadian.

THE ROLE OF THE HOST

A host does much more than just stand in front of an audience and introduce films. If a post-screening discussion or Q&A is planned, then the host's role is to present the audience with an opportunity to think and talk about Canada and what it means to live here, be here, be Canadian. Hosts make that experience real. Their primary role is to get the audience talking.

Your role is to find a way to succinctly and effectively hook the audience, get to the essence of issues and ideas brought up in the film or connect the audience to the film (or special guests) and respond attentively. You must connect with special guests and make them feel appreciated and heard. And, you must understand the vulnerabilities of speaking in front of a group, and encourage audiences to participate anyway.

PRE-EVENT PREPARATION

Feel free to do your own research about the film, the issues brought up in it, or any related subjects. The better prepared you are – and the more interesting facts or questions you come with – the more confident you will feel during the Q&A/discussion time. It is always best to have a few questions or discussion topics in your back pocket to get things started.

MICROPHONES

If there is a microphone available, please use it. It gives you more authority, and it is your tool to use. Even if you feel that the room is too small to warrant a mic, strongly encourage you to use one. Microphones also empower audiences and give them a “voice”. If for any reason it is impossible to get a mic to an audience member, then repeat their questions or comments into your mic before moving forward. It’s up to you to ensure that everyone is heard, loud and clear!

DISCUSSION OR Q&A

Pick up on anything the audience brings up and try to expand on it. Feel free to come up with your own analogies that get to the heart of why it might be important to also be aware of what’s being produced in your own backyard.

IF YOU HAVE A GUEST

You are responsible for making your guest feel special. You should make them feel like a star with your introduction. Make them feel important, and pump the audience up with what a big deal it is that this person has taken the time to come and speak to them. The audience will be more respectful and attentive, and the guest will feel more appreciated. During the Q&As, you have to balance the needs of the guest with the needs of the audience. We want the guests to feel valued and feel like their time at your event was well spent.

If the guest says something interesting or meaningful, repeat it for the audience to increase the impact. Depending on the question and the answer, you can ask the filmmaker to elaborate or ask the audience to respond.

Here are some ideas of what we think are the key to being a successful host:

- Give the audience time and space to think about their responses, and encourage them to participate
- Be an active listener and use what you hear to further the discussion
- Use the microphone as a tool and encourage the audience to use the microphone
- Bridge and clarify statements between guest and audience
- Prep your guests on the purpose of the Q&A and be unified in your efforts to draw the audience out
- Be generous, be the connector
- Support and encourage critical thinking

- Establish interactivity in the opening
- And, of course, have fun!

SOME EXAMPLE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What were your initial thoughts on the film?
- What did you like about the film?
- If the filmmaker were here, what would you want to say to them or ask them?
- Why does it matter that we watch Canadian movies?
- If the film is set/takes place outside of Canada, what about this film makes it Canadian to you? Where do we see the Canadian point of view?
- If the film takes place in Canada, how does this film speak to your experiences of Canada & Canadian culture?
- Is there a scene/moment in this film that stood out to you and why?
- What ideas/themes stood out to you in this film?