



Soho Media Club

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WORKING OUT THE NEW NORMAL, TOGETHER

ABOUT SOHO MEDIA CLUB



Soho Media Club is a member network, designed to advocate collaboration, inclusion and diversity across media production, post-production and distribution.

Anyone can join the network, regardless of their seniority, position or status. The only criteria is that you have to be an active media professional, whether that is in film, tv, digital or music.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR



PIPPA CONSIDINE

Pippa has worked in business and consumer communications across 25 + years.

She's an experienced writer, events organiser and moderator, currently producing IBC's 4 day Big Screen programme, showcasing the most exciting technology behind high-end TV and movies at 'the world's most influential media entertainment and technology show.' Since 2011 she's produced the two-day Factual Festival event at BAFTA with over 50 speakers.

She has considerable experience in writing and copywriting, as an editor and as a writer. She is contributing editor for Televisual Media and regularly writes profiles of high profile alumni of Girton College Cambridge for its Development Newsletter.

IN THIS ISSUE

A conversation with:

Cara Kotschy, MD, Fifty Fifty Post Production, UK;
Vijay Venkataraman, Director, Post Production,

Netflix India

Carey Duffy, European Sales Director, Cooke Optics

Renard T. Jenkins, Vice President, Content Transmission, WarnerMedia

THE FIRST MONTH OF LOCKDOWN

Our resident host Muki Kulhan, CEO, Muki International talked to our line-up of four industry leaders from different corners of the globe about their experiences of managing content during the first month of lockdown.

WE'RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER

The panelists all agreed that sharing and staying solid with everyone in the production community is essential, as is not joining any haggling for Covid discounts.

THE CURRENT SENTIMENT

Vijay summed up the situation with one word: 'Uncertainty'.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Will production practices change forever after this? "We've been live testing for the last six weeks" says Cara at Fifty Fifty. "It's given us an opportunity to live test a different way of working which could turn our industry on its head."

APRIL'S VIRTUAL MEET-UP

SOHO MEDIA CLUB MEMBERS FROM AROUND THE WORLD TUNED IN FOR A LIVE ONLINE SESSION.

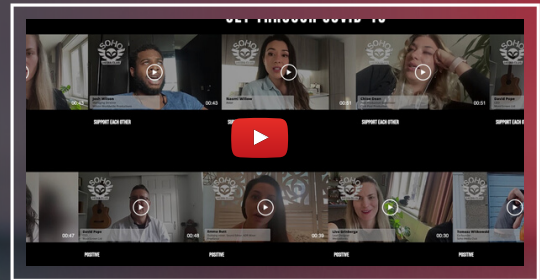
In month two of lockdown, the discussion included panellists from India, the US, the UK and working across Europe, to compare notes.

SOHO MEDIA CLUB'S SUPPORT EACH OTHER CAMPAIGN,

The session opened with films from Soho Media Club's 'Support Each Other' campaign, where members recorded positive messages from their homes, to shout out about how to stay creative and keep sane during lockdown.

Our resident host Muki Kulhan, CEO of Muki International spoke to our line-up of four industry leaders from different corners of the globe. Cara Kotschy, MD of Fifty Fifty Post Production, UK; Vijay Venkataramanan, Director, Post Production, Netflix India; Carey Duffy, European Sales Director, Cooke Optics and Renard. T. Jenkins, Vice President Content Transmission, WarnerMedia

A REVIEW OF THE FIRST MONTH OF LOCKDOWN



MUKI KULHAN
CEO,
MUKI INTERNATIONAL

WATCH NOW: SOHO MEDIA CLUB

SEASON 2 EPISODE 4

see full meetup



THANK YOU TO THIS MONTH'S PARTNERS



"IT WAS AN EXHILARATING CHALLENGE"

CARA IN ENGLAND ...

In England, Cara Kotschy, as MD of boutique post production facility Fifty Fifty Post Production, had been gearing the company up for the move to remote working with the threat of lockdown looming. As soon as the UK's nationwide lockdown was announced on 23rd March, it took just four days to move the entire facility to work from home.

"It was an exhilarating challenge, but a long slog to get it done," says Cara. "We were moving from a professional environment into a residential environment which is set up to watch Netflix, not to work with content that goes on the channel."

CARA KOTSCHY

MD, FIFTY FIFTY
POST PRODUCTION, UK



VIJAY VENKATARAMANAN

DIRECTOR, POST PRODUCTION
NETFLIX INDIA

"WE DIDN'T HAVE MUCH TIME TO PREPARE."

VIJAY IN INDIA ...

"In India, things were a bit different," says Vijay who is based in Mumbai. "We didn't have much time to prepare." The situation in India changed rapidly and the country was given just a few hours notice of lockdown, on 24 March. Before then, Vijay and his Netflix team were already working from home to be safe.

After the lockdown, they redeployed, setting up editors to work remotely. "There were multiple challenges. In Mumbai: it's crowded, people in general live in tight spaces, often with family. So in many cases there was no real space to go into an editor's home and set up a station." It required creative solutions with furniture, as well as with internet speeds and camera files stranded in empty facilities needed to be safely moved from facilities to homes.

After the reorganisation, Netflix's vfx, sound and picture editing functions in India are now back at the right level to cope with demand.



RENARD. T. JENKINS

VICE PRESIDENT
CONTENT TRANSMISSION
WARNERMEDIA USA



“A SHOUT OUT TO MY TEAM”

RENARD IN THE US...

Over in the US, Renard had joined WarnerMedia, just as the crisis was ramping up. As Vice President Content Transmission, his first assignment was to think about migrating teams from purpose built facilities to home working. Renard immediately found that his engineering team was ready for the challenge. “A shout out to my team. The managers came with a plan in three days. By the end of two weeks, we were 99 per cent out and with capabilities that we’d never dreamed of.”

The CNN News room was a case in point. Normally reliant on instant communications, with producers yelling across the room, the way of working has been transformed. The news anchors had already been set up at home with the right capabilities before lockdown and now the operation is almost entirely remote. “This is a huge opportunity for us to see how we react to a crisis and so far it’s been amazing,” says Renard. “There’s been no degradation in service.”

“YOU CAN’T REMOTE A CAMERA CREW”

CAREY WORKING ACROSS EUROPE...

European Sales Director at Cooke Optics, Carey Duffy has been observing the reaction to Covid-19 across the continent. Cooke Optics has had to reduce its factory operation to a minimum. His customers across Europe are waiting and watching.

Earlier in the day of the meetup, Carey had attended the AGM for the Guild of British Camera Technicians. “You can’t remote a camera crew. Your locations are not on lockdown, but you won’t get permission to shoot on the street and no one will let you in their house and you can’t get any actors in.”

With Cooke Optics customers unable to work, Carey decided to send them the latest Cooke Optics anamorphic/full frame lenses, so that they could take a look. “I’ve been sending them out to cinematographers every week, so they can have a play. So they can get cogs turning for their next project. “And Cooke Optics has a series of online tutorials for anyone who wants to learn more from home.

CAREY DUFFY

SALES DIRECTOR
COOKE OPTICS UK



SOHO MEDIA CLUB MEMBERSHIP IS FREE

Apply to qualify for membership*

APPLY

* All final decisions regarding membership of the club and attendance to our events are at discretion of the Soho Media Club team.

WWW.SOHOMEDIACLUB.COM

"WE'RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER"

The panellists all agreed that sharing and staying solid with everyone in the production community is essential and not joining any haggling for Covid discounts.

THINGS ARE TOUGH...

"The first step is to watch out for each other," says Vijay.

"Things are tough for everybody.

The post production industry works under tight margins. So, as a producer, or a studio, don't negotiate, pay fairly and on time. That's what's going to keep people going. It's as simple as that. Don't ask for a Covid discount."

IT'S NOT GOING TO BE EASY

"It's not going to be easy," adds Carey, "but it's not going to work if we start undercutting each other. I worry about the phrase 'good enough'. Our lenses are designed to reach to the zenith."

"With so much innovation happening, Renard was keen to encourage people to share what we are learning."

"It's very important, for us to share best practices to continue to drive forward as an industry." "We're all in this together, the phrase has really rung true," says Cara.

NEXT STEPS...

At this stage, at the end of the first month of lockdown, Vijay summed up with one word: 'Uncertainty'. First and foremost, uncertainty about when we can legally and safely resume production. In India, there's the added complication of the monsoon, which starts in June.

"Is it really going to be possible to move indoors or to other parts of the country? Will travel restrictions ease to shoot overseas?"

And on everyone's mind is whether we will see a second wave of the infection.

Asked if he thinks that there will be a shift in production between Indian states as they open up at different times, Vijay says it's unlikely. "There might be a shift depending on whose available first, but that will eventually go back." Post production is in a stronger place than much of the industry.

AN OPPORTUNITY TO WORK DIFFERENTLY

I do foresee that Indian post production will be the first discipline that gets back to business," says Vijay. "It's so much easier to work with social distancing."

"Renard says, "I try to be optimistic and look at how this gives an opportunity to look at different ways to produce live and episodic content. What does a safe environment look like? That's where the thinking is going to start to over, after this initial shock."

PUB BANTER IS MISSED

In Soho, since many post production facilities are in oddly shaped town houses, it will be quite hard to maintain social-distancing, so there will definitely be a requirement for some sort of work shifting. Though, Cara admitted, she's missing her teams and office banter, as well as meeting in the pub after work.

HOW TO COME OUT OF LOCKDOWN

"It's fluid," notes Carey. "There are lots of things we will have to consider about how we produce content going forward." Whilst Spain is opening up tentatively, many other locations are firmly closed and, of course, the question of travel is at the heart of many production plans. "It's about gauging how they will come out of lockdown."

WILL PRODUCTION PRACTICES CHANGE FOREVER AFTER THIS?

29 APRIL 2020 SOHO MEDIA CLUB

"We've been live testing for the last six weeks" says Cara at Fifty Fifty. "It's given us an opportunity to live test a different way of working which could turn our industry on its head. There have been bumps in the road, but in amongst the dismal finance planning, I can see there's some really exciting possibilities that we can drip feed back into our industry. It gives us an opportunity to expand beyond massive rates and rents and huge staffing costs."

At WarnerMedia, Renard says that they've been fast tracking some of the kit that they'd been experimenting with before the crisis. "The Harmonic system and ability to stream to producers and directors has been a huge, huge help."

Not to mention the significant adoption of Slack, Zoom, Webex, now part of most working daily lives. Since he's just two months into the job, Renard's used video meetings to get to know his new team and talk about the way forward.

"THINGS ARE GOING TO LOOK VERY DIFFERENT IN THE FUTURE. WE WILL ALL BE WORKING OUT WHAT THE NEW NORMAL IS."



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WEDNESDAY 29 APRIL 2020 SOHO MEDIA CLUB



Soho Media Club inspires collaboration in the media production, post-production and distribution community. Our meetups bring together passionate people with stories to share.

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