

# Reasons people



## #1 Big Ads On The Big Screen

Spending on big-screen ads rose by 18% this year to \$400 million, according to Zenith Optimedia. That's a lot of ads—and there are a host of anecdotal stories indicating that theatergoers aren't too happy about them. But executives who sell ad time for theater chains, armed with research that says moviegoers would rather see something than nothing while they wait for the show, deny that ads keep people out of the multiplex.

## #2 Raised By Wolves

From cellphone talkers to BlackBerry® noodlers, theaters seem to be increasingly filled with people who don't understand or care that they're in public. Theater workers, charged with scanning the crowd for pirates with video cameras, couldn't even scratch the surface of the rude behavior if they tried. Increasing complaint: infants and toddlers dragged along to non-age-appropriate movies. No one's ever heard of a babysitter?

## #3 Rising Costs

A tub of popcorn and a Big Gulp-ish soda, the only size they come in, will set you back double digits. Never mind that you've already paid top dollar for gas to drive to the multiplex in the first place. Ticket prices have increased 48.6% over the past decade, which, theater owners are quick to point out, is less of an increase than concert tickets and pro sports. The average movie ticket cost \$6.21 (USD) in 2004, the latest figures available, up 3% from the prior year. In major metro areas, tickets long ago topped \$10 (USD).

Canadian information: Average ticket in 2003/04: \$7.45, up 2.5%  
Source:

The Daily, June 28, 2005; accessed January 4, 2006.  
[www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/050628/d050628b.htm](http://www.statcan.ca/Daily/English/050628/d050628b.htm)



## #4 Waiting For The DVD

Studios used to wait six months to put out the DVD, while now it might take just over three for a movie to get to Best Buy and Wal-Mart. Some mavericks like Mark Cuban and Todd Wagner are championing simultaneous releases for theaters, DVD and pay-per-view, and Disney chief Robert Iger has publicly broached the subject. Theater chains say it'll be the death of them. Meanwhile, many consumers prove that they'd rather watch the movie on their own schedule and don't mind that they're a few months behind the conversation.

## #5 The Wired Home

Consumer electronics have become more sophisticated and less expensive, with plasma screens and high-definition TVs becoming increasingly common. Add that to the vast array of entertainment choices, from video-on-demand and pay-per-view to digital cable with hundreds of channels, and that spells a lot of nights at home.

## #6 One Word: Netflix

The prescient rental service is booming, reporting a 61% increase in subscriptions this year and the lowest cancellation rate in the company's six years in business. It has 3.6 million subscribers who pay a flat monthly fee—and no late fees—for DVDs through the mail. Competitors, namely Blockbuster, have tried to crack into the market, with some small success. But the granddaddy of the genre is predicting 20 million subscribers by 2012, and industry analysts agree that it has tapped into a thriving market.

## #7 Tired. Oh, So Tired

Hollywood churned out a crop of sequels ("XXX: State of the Union"), remakes ("Bewitched," "Bad News Bears") and big-budget overhyped movies with slim, confusing or nonexistent plots ("Stealth," "The Island," "Derailed") that no one wanted to see. After much finger-pointing at other factors, some studio executives finally admitted that the lack of quality movies probably was to blame for the box office malaise. What they'll do about that is an open question.

## #8 Whither "Spider-man?"

Though there have been some certified blockbusters this year ("Star Wars: Episode III"), the box office has been devoid of the mega-hits like "Spider-Man 2" and "Shrek 2" that propelled the prior year's bottom line. Instead, there were must-miss pictures like "Must Love Dogs," "The Devil's Rejects" and "In the Mix."

## #9 WYSINWYG

What you see is not what you get—Hollywood studio marketers, realizing that films must leap out of the gate on their first weekend or die a quick and certain death, have begun touting every movie as an "event." Consumers who have been lured by this cacophony soon understand otherwise when they shell out \$10-plus for "Kingdom of Heaven."

## #10 Out Of Sight, Out Of Mind

The year 2005 began slowly and was a disappointment. Fewer people in the theatres = fewer eyeballs seeing upcoming fare. It was tougher, then, for studios to whip up excitement and drive traffic for subsequent releases. The ennui that swept over the box office early fed on itself and carried through much of the year. **CPM**

