

COMMON GROUND FILM FESTIVAL, SCREENING CAPTAIN & THEATER MANAGER HANDBOOK

Dear Screening Captain and/or Theater Manager,

First, we want to thank you for hosting Common Ground at your theater and in your city! Our goal is to empower viewers to heal the soil, get healthy food for their families, help our nation's farmers become debt-free and profitable, and balance the climate.

We've spent a decade of our lives and a tremendous quantity of resources to make Common Ground (www.CommonGroundFilm.org) and the Common Ground movement (including the 100 Million Acres Initiative at www.100millionacres.org) serve the above goals. We're excited that you're joining us in making this vision come to life.

We want you to benefit too – by showcasing your theater, your nonprofit work and the good people who are working for regeneration in your community. But we have also had some unfortunate experiences where people have used the movie to promote brands and ideas that are not aligned with the Common Ground ethos.

This document gives you a set of best practices and serves as our agreement that you're going to help us to ensure the viewer experience is as impactful as possible.

We are so grateful to you and can't wait for the information, tools and message of Common Ground to become part of your community.

Let's Regenerate!

Josh and Rebecca Tickell
Filmmakers, Common Ground (and Kiss the Ground)

I. BUILDING THE EXPERIENCE

- TABLES – We LOVE it when nonprofits table at the theater. Please check with our distributor, Kirt Eftekhari at Area 23A, or with your contact person at 360 Degree Communications to see if tabling is allowed at your venue. If yes, we encourage you to find local, nonprofit and/or farm partners that advocate for organic, regenerative food including seeds, food products (honey, etc), and education. (Remember, tables must be set at least 45 minutes prior to the screening). **Note – if a for-profit entity or a political entity that is specifically not a farming or ranching operation or Nonprofit organization wishes to table, it must be pre-approved in writing by the filmmakers.** This is important as we all need to be careful about “regen-washing.”
- STEP AND REPEAT – We love it when you have a step and repeat photo wall at your venue. If this is something you want to do, please check with the Kirt/360 to see if this is allowed at your venue. Ideally, the photo wall should be out in front of the theater venue (sidewalk) or just inside the main door in the lobby HOWEVER, please adhere to the venue's wishes as to placement as they have the final say. (Sidewalks usually require permits from your city, and that is your responsibility). We can sometimes ship you a

step and repeat kit please check with 360 Degree Communications and/or Kirt on availability. **Note – if you make your own step and repeat, any modification to the logo format or additional logos must be approved in writing by the filmmakers.** (Again, this is to avoid “regen-washing.”)

- CHECK IN TABLE – Most theaters (except for some of the bigger commercial chains – pls check with Kirt/360), will allow you to bring in a folding table as a check in station and we encourage you to do so. This is where you will put sample Common Ground merchandise, Common Ground Magnets, and Common Ground merch order cards that we will provide for you for free. Ideally use a simple, single color, nice-looking tablecloth to make this feel a little nicer.
- PANEL – we encourage you to build a lively panel for the Q&A after the film. Some notes on the panel:
 - Maximum panel size is 4 to 7 speakers. More is not necessary and will detract from the experience.
 - Please balance male/female ratio and just like nature needs biodiversity, your panel should ideally reflect that by also being diverse.
 - If Josh and/or Rebecca (the filmmakers) come they will moderate the panel. In this case no other moderator is needed, nor will this help.
 - Please the panel question format below – and keep in mind – the purpose of the panel is to facilitate the audience questions. Panelists that promote their products or services above empowering the audience are not a good choice. Please keep this in mind as you select your panel.
 - Please let your panelists know ahead of time that they are there to facilitate and to empower the audience.
 - Please make a “panel cheat sheet” with the name of each panelist and their job or role in the community and print it out and put it in your pocket to introduce each person as they come up to the stage (note – if Josh and/or Rebecca are present they will introduce the panel, but they will still need a panel “cheat sheet”).
- PRE-SCREENING CHECK LIST – before the day of the screening:
 - Please make sure the theater has received the DCP (the special file) of film.
 - Double check the venue knows what time you will arrive, and what time you will bring things like tables, step and repeat etc.
 - Double check your tabling partners know when to arrive.
 - Double check your panelists know to arrive before the screening.
 - Double check the poster is prominently displayed somewhere at the theater ideally close to the screening room.
 - Double check you received your screening captain kit with magnets, merch order cards, mech samples to show, your hats, and your shirts for you and your team to wear on the day of the screening and to keep as a thank-you for your hard work!
 - Ensure you have 2 volunteers to hand out magnets and merch cards before and after the screening.

II. THE DAY OF

THEATER MANAGER / PROJECTIONIST CHECK-IN

- Conduct a “technical check” with the projectionist to ensure that mics work, that the film plays, you can hear it clearly and that you can see it.
- Talk to the projectionist and let them know you will end the film right after Josh and Rebecca stop speaking (during the credits) – they don’t have to roll the entire credit roll but they do have to play through Josh and Rebecca’s on-screen call to action.
- After the Josh and Rebecca’s on-screen call to action, it is time for the projectionist to bring up the CALL TO ACTION SLIDE provided by the distributor.
- Explain the run of show to the projectionist and/or theater manager:
 - there will be an intro to the film to thank the audience and let them know to stay for the Q&A,
 - then the film plays,
 - then the CALL TO ACTION SLIDE should be displayed and kept onscreen
 - then the Q&A will happen.
 - Confirm the time you need to be done with the Q&A and confirm the time that the audience must be out of the theater so they can clean it and prepare for the next screening.
 - Make sure to be thankful and nice to the projectionist and theater staff – you are their guest and this is their facility.

GET SET UP AND GREET GUESTS

- Arrive about an hour ahead to set up, bring the folding table and a chair to the screening and to greet audience members at the entrance.
- Put magnets, extra hats, and merch on the table. Arrange it nicely.
- When audience members begin to arrive, welcome them to the screening with a smile, and as they walk in hand them a magnet and say “here’s a complimentary fridge magnet from the filmmakers.”
- Let them know there will be a Q&A afterwards and they should plan to stay after the credits are done.
- We want the screening to be as memorable as possible, so we’d like you to act as hosts and answer any questions related to the film, the movement, and 100 Million Acres (please familiarize yourself with the film’s websites at www.CommonGroundFilm.org and www.100MillionAcres.org)

INTRO

- The two things that are important in the intro are 1) to thank the audience for coming (“Thank you for coming to this screening – it shows you have a real commitment to the issues in this film.”)
- And 2) let the audience know that we plan on having a Q&A after the screening so they should stay to ask their questions. (“Please plan to stay after the screening for an amazing panel discussion and Q&A”) It’s ok if you’ve already told them this on the way in – repetition creates retention!
- The way to end the intro is simple “Please enjoy the show.”
- Keep the intro short.
- If Josh and/or Rebecca Tickell are there they will do the intro.

PRE-MOVIE MEDIA

- Only regular in-theater trailers and advertisements are permitted. Any additional media (musical act, ad, short film, etc.) must be pre-approved ahead of time in writing.

Q&A

- As soon as the onscreen version of Josh and Rebecca are done with their call to action, the projectionist may turn up the lights and turn down the music.
- At this point the CALL TO ACTION SLIDE should come up on the screen and stay there for the duration of the Q&A.
- Make sure to be standing up next to the stage – as soon as the lights come up walk to the middle of the stage with the microphone.
- You're first line should be "We have an incredible panel tonight, but before we invite the panelists and begin the Q&A, I would like to ask you a question. In one word, put your hand up and I will call on you and say what YOU got out of the film."
- You may have to say "just shout it out" so it's loud enough for the audience to hear. People may just shout it out anyway – that's fine, just roll with it.
- People will say "hope," "soil," "farmers" etc. – this will bring up the energy of the crowd as they get present to the power of the communal experience.
- Usually this evolves into somebody making a comment or asking a question – at that point, stop the action and say "that is a perfect segway to our panel and our question-and-answer session. I would like to invite our panelists to the stage."
- As the panelists make their way to the stage, take out your "panel cheat sheet" from your pocket (you will be glad this is printed out and not on your phone) and introduce your panel by saying each person's name and what they do.
- If there are microphones in the audience for the Q&A, encourage people to go to the microphone(s) for questions - or - raise their hands and somebody will bring them a microphone – or – speak loudly. (Note – it's a bad idea to give away **your** microphone as you need to maintain calm, positive vibes over the Q&A and sometimes people need a gentle reminder to keep it positive).
- If the audience doesn't ask questions at first (because they are shy and/or processing the film), start by asking the panelists: "While people get ready to ask their questions – let's start with each of you – can each of you tell us how this film relates to the work you do in our community?" This is the chance for the panelists to talk a bit about themselves and their work.
- By the time your panelists are done with your question – the audience will likely be ready to ask their own questions – have the audience line up at the microphone or raise their hands to be called on to ask their questions.
- Encourage the audience to keep their questions short – "Please try to keep your questions short."
- If the audience does not have a mic, repeat each question that is asked so the audience can hear it, and then channel the question to one or more of the panelists.
- Keep an eye on the time. You want the Q&A to last no more than 30 minutes.
- When you begin to run out of time, look at the audience and say "The theater manager gave me the heads up we are almost out of time. We can do ONE more question – but let's make sure it's a really good one!"
- *Note – you want to avoid the question that often comes after the last question – this "last-last question" is often energetically not a good thing – for some reason*

people who have a very long story to tell tend to wait until the very last moment to come to the microphone.

- Once the last question is over – say “I’m so sorry we are out of time – let’s move the conversation to the lobby.”
- Then show the audience the magnet and merch card.
- “Before you go – make sure to get your free fridge magnet – and get a merch order card to get a Common Ground shirt. Thank you for being here – together let’s make this movement happen!”
- Help the audience get out of the theater so the theater staff can reset the space for the next audience.

III. POST SCREENING TAKEAWAYS

- Make sure to have two volunteers – one outside each exit to the theater – or two standing outside the theater – handing audience members the magnets and merch order cards as they leave.
- Make sure the volunteers are smiling and saying “Thank you for coming – please spread the word.”