

Federgreen Entertainment Inc.

The Green Story of Score: A Hockey Musical

Planet in Focus / Green Screen Award 2011

Planet in Focus / Green Screen Award Application

THE GREEN STORY OF “SCORE: A HOCKEY MUSICAL”

A few years ago film producer Avi Federgreen was on location, making the rounds, ensuring all was right on the set. He spotted a parked vehicle, driver inside reading the newspaper. Avi walked over to the car and tapped on the window. The driver rolled it down and Avi reached in and turned off the ignition. “No idling, please,” he said by way of explanation. The driver raised an eyebrow, but left the engine off.

Unfortunately this was a scene that, in his opinion, has played far too often in Avi’s professional life. He considers the film/TV production industry one of the worst culprits in creating waste and having a negative impact on the environment. Until now he felt that the way waste was managed – or, more accurately, not managed - was “offensive”. In more than 17 years in the business, Avi has witnessed too much waste and too much disrespect for the environment simply because no effort was made to be eco-friendly in a meaningful way.

Avi remembers seeing a crew member toss an empty pop can into a garbage bin when the proper recycling bin was right next to it. He made a point of showing that crew member how, just by aiming a bit more to the right, he could easily make a noble effort to help preserve the environment. Cigarette butts on the ground, right next to the butt can, would make Avi crazy. Some crew members would, instead of taking a plate and stainless steel fork for their meal, use a take-out container and plastic cutlery. “If you’re using a take-away container, then go away,” Avi would say to them. “If you are eating in the lunchroom, then don’t use take-out containers.” His examples seem endless, and senseless. “Many people would take a plastic bottle of water out of a cooler, take a swig, put it down, and then walk away. Finding later that they don’t know what they did with their bottle, they would just take another one, obviously adding needlessly to the waste.”

He describes a time that one production used brand new Christmas decorations for a street scene. When they finished shooting, the decorations went into a bin, destined for landfill. Those decorations, still in good condition, could have been donated. When Avi asked about it, he found that no one could be bothered with the effort to deal with it in a responsible way.

Avi believes that he has too many such stories to tell, and with that experience he wanted to put an end to needless waste and to create awareness among individual crew members of how they can contribute, in small, easy ways, to saving the planet. He knows he is not alone, and is very happy about that. As stated in the 2008 Environmental Assessment of Film-Based Industries report (Melissa Felder and Associates), “Industry workers ranging from shop union workers to star talent have expressed increasing concern over what they see as an area requiring attention and improvement.” Avi knew how easily conservation and waste management could be incorporated into the daily life of a film production, from start to finish. So in this age when waste has become more of a focus for everyone in all walks of life, he jumped in with both feet to explore and implement various ways in which waste could be managed and reduced, and every production could become green.

Before production on **SCORE** began, Avi met with Melissa Felder, a consultant for Planet in Focus/Green Screen Toronto, to explore how the cast and crew could best manage and reduce the waste that would be inherent with this production. “Cheat sheets” were developed, reminding the crew of the production’s green plan objectives, and providing green tips to help them comply wherever possible. Forms were used to track flights and gas mileage in order to measure the carbon footprint of the film.

In a meeting with the department heads of **SCORE**, Avi told them that they each have the ability to make change, that they need to take action, that they could be part of starting something important then and there, and to set an example for other productions. “We can show them how easy it is to make change and empower them to make change themselves,” Avi said. Here was a chance for cast and crew to do their part in preventing the planet from becoming a dangerous place for following generations. His message hit home. “Avi Federgreen was the inspirational force behind the green initiative on the set of Score,” said Alison Waxman, Production Coordinator. “Through his passion for the cause, he showed us that we all have the ability to reduce our carbon footprint, and leading by example made us all believe that it really can be done - even on a movie set!”



Starting with one of a movie set’s fundamentals - the camera - a RED digital camera was used in order to spare the planet from what would have been an eventual deposit of 200,000 feet of film into landfill.

Aluminum water bottles were provided to the crew and were a big hit since it encouraged them to use the water coolers for refills on location, and they were cool, useful mementos of the filming experience.



This particular effort resulted in an estimated **saving** of 9,702 half-litre plastic water bottles.

The production office, Avi’s home away from home, was naturally right on top of the three Rs, reducing, reusing, and recycling left, right, and centre. The lights were kept off as much as reasonably possible, and CFL light bulbs were used in all office fixtures. Only recyclable paper was used, and printer defaults were set to print on both sides of every sheet. Printer cartridges were recycled, as were batteries. There was a conscious effort to avoid using plastic bags for anything. Water coolers were installed encouraging everyone to refill their own aluminum bottles from that supply. In the office mugs and glasses were used for all beverages. An FTP site was created where relevant documents could be easily accessed in order to avoid printing. USB keys provided the same portable, instant, paper-free access, and were also used for storing and viewing the dailies. Waste separation bins were used in the production office, on every set, and at every location, accommodating the recycling of all types of waste, including organic.



The estimated carbon footprint of the production office came in at 110,549 sheets of paper (about 14 trees), 0.4 tonnes of CO₂ and 1,890 kWh of electricity.

SCORE’s production designer, Tamara Deverell, explains how the green plan was implemented in the Art Department. “Many of our materials (lumber, etc.) were previously used and all building materials and leftover paint were donated for re-use after the show. Most of our dressing was from many second-hand outlets and rental houses, cutting down on new purchases. Most of the shoot was done on location, a greener move than shooting in studio where sets are often waste material once the filming is finished.”



As this was the case, the production **saved** an estimated 182 tonnes of construction material waste, as well as approximately 233 m³ of natural gas that would have been consumed with the operation of a studio’s HVAC system.



Since every set used had already existed, not only was **SCORE** able to avoid producing additional waste material, the fact that no building was required meant no construction materials, such as wood, had to be used or abused for the production.

Tamara continued, “All the leftover goods and materials were donated to organizations such as Habitat for Humanity, local public schools, and Goodwill centres.” Some props and wardrobe items were also used as promotional prizes during TIFF, where **SCORE** was the opening film. Thirty hockey bags full of hockey equipment were donated to the Wayne Gretzky Foundation, which provides equipment to kids who can’t afford their own.

When shooting at the hockey arena and the Art Gallery of Ontario, the crew ran off of house power which averted the use of their own generators, ensuring there was no truck running and no emissions polluting the air.



The footprint of generator use was approximately 12,200 litres of diesel fuel, equalling 32.5 tonnes CO₂.



Overall, the production **saved** an estimated 2,620 kWh grid of electricity.



And speaking of emissions, because the film’s locations were all central to the GTA, local transportation was limited, resulting in an estimated **saving** of 17,000 litres of gasoline.



The environmental impact of the film’s transportation requirements is estimated at 17,408 litres of gas and 10,523 km flown, for a total of 45.89 tonnes CO₂.

Remember Avi’s past frustration with the irresponsible use of take away containers? Well, this time he ensured that craft and catering would have as little adverse effect on the environment as possible.



By using craft utensils (plates, cups, bowls, forks, spoons, etc.) made from potato starch, and therefore were biodegradable, that department’s environmental impact was reduced to just 0.5 tonnes of packaging waste. Organic food waste totalled approximately 2.5 tonnes.

SCORE is the first Canadian feature film to have taken full advantage of proper green practices, and to track the results using the checklists that Melissa, her team, and Avi developed specifically for this purpose. Avi felt that embracing a green plan such as theirs was particularly challenging on a low-budget film production. However, all decision makers felt that it was worth the cost. Renting waste separation bins and having them collected, the aluminum water bottles, biodegradable utensils and plates, and the eco-friendly LED set lights were all extra costs incurred specifically in order to comply with the green plan. But, Avi says, “We felt it was worth it, and as producer, I promised that if we incurred these costs it would not affect our bottom line.” And it didn’t. The production came in on budget and successfully achieved all of its green goals.



Overall, **SCORE: A Hockey Musical** emitted approximately 20 tonnes CO₂ **less** than the working baseline standard for a small, feature-film production.



The estimated emissions were 79 tonnes CO₂ or 0.6 tonnes CO₂ per minute of runtime.

Although **SCORE's** success certainly stands up as a great example of an eco-friendly production, this is not a case where other producers should just settle for being green with envy. One of the film's objectives was to share what they learned with other productions, and this has already begun through the efforts of Planet in Focus/Green Screen Toronto, who is using **SCORE's** results as an example for others to learn from. Avi and a colleague are looking into other appropriate outlets where the SCORE story can be told to inspire others. The objective of empowering the crew was easily and enthusiastically met. "Going green was a very positive experience, which promoted community awareness and made all of us, as crew members, feel better about the work we were doing," Tamara said.

As **SCORE's** director, Michael McGowan, said, "Avi Federgreen spearheaded the green initiative that all of us who worked on Score are enormously proud of. He not only understood the vital importance of protecting our scarce resources, he did it with a passion and intelligence that made us all advocates for the program." Going forward, each member of **SCORE's** cast and crew can share their experience and know-how with everyone they work with. No doubt they will use their eco-radar to stay on the lookout for ways to use and improve upon the tactics they learned in this production (and remember to keep the water coolers inside in the winter!).