

Ron Resnick

IN CHARGE: Rex Hescoek, a 19-year veteran of GCC, currently manages Hollywood's Galaxy Cinema. Above left, Hescoek plans with projectionist Paul Rayton.

A BUSY DAY IN THE LIFE OF EXHIBITION

By PAT KRAMER

HOLLYWOOD In any large cinema chain, the head office sets the tone for what distinguishes the theaters from the competition. They build or renovate, shut down moribund sites or reinvigorate them through national promotion programs. But patrons don't know what goes on at the corporate office. They want to

know if the bathtubs are always clean, if they can catch the "Rocky Horror Picture Show" at midnight, and whether the pre-"Titanic" crowd risks approaching critical mass at the popcorn counter just as the "Tomorrow Never Dies" crowd floods into the lobby.

The ambiance of a complex is largely set by the onsite general manager. "Everything that happens in the theater really emanates from the general man-

ager's leadership, communication and management skills; from the parking lot to the concessions stand to the rest rooms to the theater audience environments," GCT senior VP of operations Frank Stryjewski says. "All those things are created by theater managers. That's really where the rubber meets the road."

At Hollywood's Galaxy Cinema, an eightplex right on famous Hollywood

Boulevard, the man in charge is Rex Hescoek. At 37, Hescoek is a 19-year veteran of the company, having served as a C.M. at 14 GCT locations over the past 17 years. "Rex is someone who represents, at its highest level, the type of individual and entrepreneurial ownership that we'd like to see in all our managers; someone who takes a deep and abiding care in serving and entertaining the cus-

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tomer and providing a memorable moviegoing experience," Stryjewski says.

Hescock starts his 10-12 hour days at 8:30 a.m. with a

routine check of communications from the previous day: tickets sold, payroll amounts, concession shortages and overages, and any issues involving the work performance of his

35-member staff. From there it's on to a thorough inspection of the entire facility to spot any maintenance problems that have arisen and to initiate necessary repairs. As his staff be-

gins to arrive, usually around 10 a.m., Hescock assigns each specific duties. On this particular Monday, he has Caesar doing the concessions inventory while Edgar is training him on setting up show schedules.

Caesar, he explains, recently was promoted to hourly manager, his second promotion in 11 months. With each promotion comes new responsibilities. "I see my job as general manager as a teacher as much as anything else. I'm trying to promote the advancement of my staff into managers, and managers into general managers," Hescock says.

As he rounds the bend into the lobby, the G.M. comes face-to-face with the first potential problem of the day. A delivery man has three life-

size cardboard standees for the theater lobby, but one is for the wrong film. At this point, his theater isn't scheduled to show "Godzilla," however "Spice World" and "Tomorrow

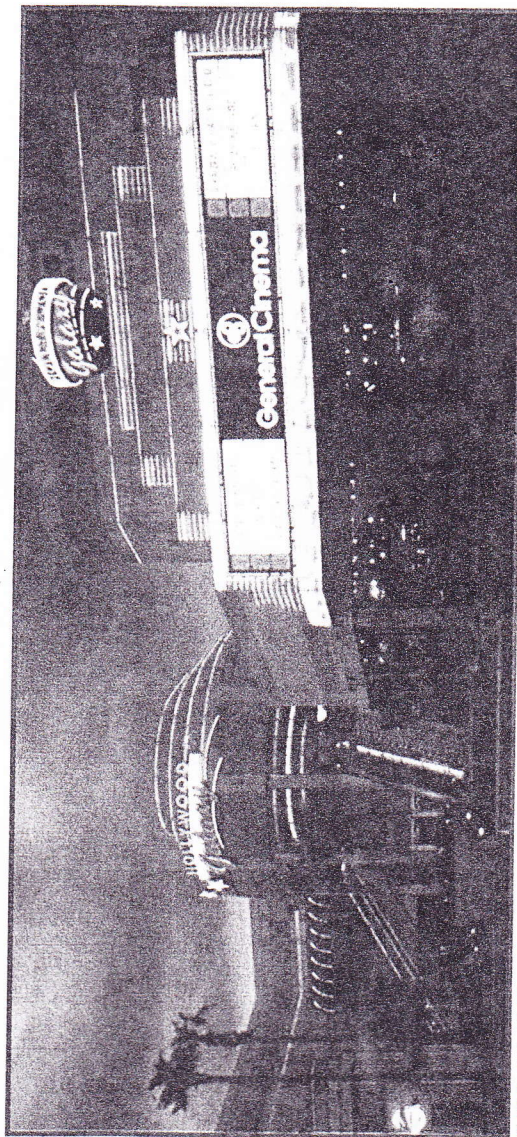
the next couple of hours, he'll cross-check inventory reports against cash register sales. He'll also create purchase orders for all his stock.

There's a knock on the door: Edgar has a question about setting up the show schedule. A seemingly complicated process, the show schedule is nothing short of a work of art: It involves coordinating show times for the six screens for every day of the week. When well-planned, the schedule allows for peak efficiency in all the theater's operations. When it's not, it can create traffic snarls in the lobby, restroom, concession stands, ticket windows and the parking garage, raising the stress level of guests and employees.

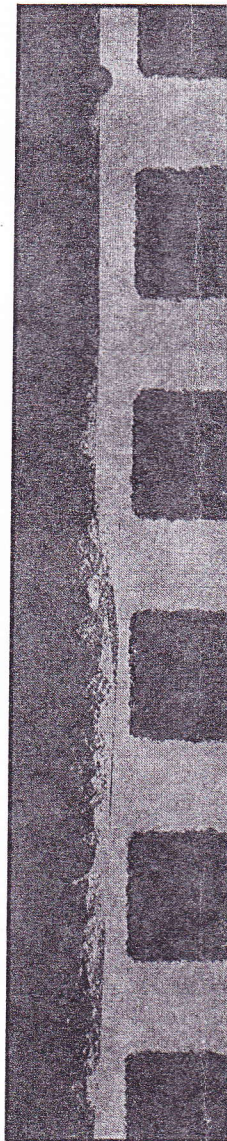
Unfazed, Hescock whips through this process in a matter of minutes, charting it out on paper. Later, he'll submit it to the office so they can set up the appropriate advertising. Although he can

'If you're micro-managing, it doesn't allow people to grow.'

**Rex Hescock, general manager
Hollywood Galaxy**



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never Dies" are set to run. He then returns to his office to inform GCT's film booking office of the snafu.

That done, he begins taking stock of the two concessions rooms as he prepares his bi-monthly inventory report. To do this, he double-checks his managers' reports from the previous night taking note of soda syrup, butter, bulk candy, boxed candy and the remaining 125 or so items. Next door, he stops to check on Mario, the popcorn-popper, who is making the day's supply of fresh popcorn. Following that, he circles the concessions counter to make sure the Acorto coffee/cappuccino maker is properly stocked with Starbucks coffee.

CD sales

Last on his list, he counts CDs at the theater's "listening station," where guests have a choice of 24 CDs to listen to or purchase while waiting for their film to begin. Installed just two months ago, the listening station is being test-marketed at the Galaxy. If all goes well, other theaters may install them as well. For his report, Hesco notes which CDs have sold. Later, he'll fax an order to Global Cinema Network, which orders the CDs.

In addition to ordering CDs, the office chooses and books the films for the theater, providing Hesco with advance notice so he can plan his promotions. Returning to his office, he begins work on the concessions inventory report. Over

self, he lets his manager try to do it as well. "I like to work with people, hands-on, to make sure that everything is being done properly but I also allow them to do things themselves. If you're micromanaging, it doesn't allow people to grow."

As the guests start arriving, the managers return to the lobby to supervise the work flow while Hesco invests his time planning promotional campaigns, merchant tie-ins, and special contests to create excitement around the features. At any given time, Hesco says, the complex has at least two promotions running.

To date, his most memorable campaign for the Galaxy was May's "The Lost World Marathon" or "97 hours in '97." Created to "put the showmanship back into the business," Hesco says it was a lot of work but it paid off: For 97 hours, the theater ran continual showings of the action film in four of its theaters, generating huge crowds and tons of publicity. Coordinating staffing for this event was a task in itself, but Hesco recalls it also stimulated a sense of teamwork among his staff, which was a rewarding experience. "Given the right film, I wouldn't hesitate to do it again," he says.

Hesco says GCT's emphasis is always on providing the utmost in customer service. "People are here to have a good time. We want our people to be friendly and we want our workers to have a good time as well while they're working here."