

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Netflix Takes On Theaters With Four New Adam Sandler Films

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(New York Times) -- Netflix plans to announce on Thursday that it has struck a deal with the comedian Adam Sandler to produce and star in four new feature films that will appear exclusively on the streaming service.

Mr. Sandler ranks as one of the most popular movie stars on Netflix, with his films consistently among the most viewed on the service both in the United States and around the world, said Ted Sarandos, chief content officer at Netflix.

Through the agreement, Netflix will solely finance the films and will work with Happy Madison Productions, which was founded by Mr. Sandler, on them. Netflix declined to

comment on specific terms of the deal, but said the films would have the characteristics of theatrical releases, with similar-size budgets. (The production budgets for Mr. Sandler's recent films have ranged from about \$40 million to \$80 million.)

Production meetings with Mr. Sandler are just starting, and the first film could appear on Netflix as soon as 2015, Mr. Sarandos said. Continue reading the main story [Related Coverage](#)

Reed Hastings, the chief executive of Netflix, said regarding the debate of net neutrality that no company should be "held hostage" by an Internet service provider.

"When these fine people came to me with an offer to make four movies for them, I immediately said yes for one reason and one reason only ... Netflix rhymes with Wet Chicks," Mr. Sandler said in a statement. "Let the streaming begin!"

The partnership with Mr. Sandler, the first of its kind for Netflix, is the second deal announced in recent days in which the company has upset the traditional model for releasing movies, in which films are made available first in theaters and then for streaming several months later. On Monday, Netflix announced that it would release next year's sequel to "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" simultaneously on Netflix and in select Imax theaters.

Netflix is home to six movies starring Mr. Sandler, including the 1996 golf comedy "Happy Gilmore" and the 2002 romantic comedy "Punch-Drunk Love." Mr. Sarandos said that he approached Mr. Sandler's agent about making a deal after noticing viewer data that pointed to the star's global appeal.

Mr. Sandler's recent studio movies have bombed at the box office. This year's "Blended," a romantic comedy starring Mr. Sandler and Drew Barrymore, took in a dismal \$14.2 million during its opening weekend.

Netflix has said that it will spend \$3 billion on content in the next year. After initially focusing on original television series, the company has recently set its sights on film, too. About a third of all viewing on Netflix is movies, Mr. Sarandos said.