

Top Three Filmmaker Mistakes



From the first screenplay to final edits, your film project has been your "baby." You have nurtured and loved your project from its infant stages, through casting calls and retakes, right up to the celebratory wrap party.

You breathe a sigh of relief when post-production is over and your film is finally "in the can." But is this enough to take your film to the big-time? Don't hold your breath.

Listen to what some top film festival organizers say are the top three mistakes filmmakers make after the film is "*in the can*".

The number one mistake is not reading all the entry requirements and guidelines.

Then, because they didn't read, they send to a festival that's not appropriate for their film.

And, as crazy as it sounds, some filmmakers don't proof the actual entry. I've gotten entries that were missing video!

Lucy Griggs

Program Director, The Education Channel and Organizer of the Independents' Film Festival.

<http://www.independentsfilmfest.com/>

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Preparedness: Often, quite a few filmmakers, even the majors, lack in preparedness. Many don't have the business elements needed to crossover for greater access to opportunity, whether marketing, publicity or otherwise. Barely a web site, company e-mail or even the same consistent phone number is found, causing the filmmaker and/or production company to lose out. They're just not prepared to go further.

The Follow-through: In my own experiences, many filmmakers are hard to find and when they are found, the communication falters because they take their time in responding. Using every excuse in the book to explain their tardiness leaves a bad taste in most mouths (if not all). In contacting someone, you appear to want to do business. The response indicates an interest. But interests can fade quickly if no one follows through. Not returning a call, e-mail or inquiry can mean lost wages and opportunities.

Lack of Progression: Finally, I find filmmakers lack most in progression. It's not enough to just have completed the project. Now, you have to move forward in placing that project in the right hands (the right viewing audience), in order to gain the notoriety your organization - or you as the filmmaker - needs. It's imperative you work even harder than you did when you were writing the script, developing characters and setting the scenes. You must work harder than casting, motivating and the production itself. Even in its smallest measurement, one accomplishment should never satisfy. However, it should signify a continuance of hard work that will lead to the road of progression.

Tonisha Johnson
CEO, TOMI Film Festival

<http://www.tomifilmfestival.com/>

As executive producer on three great 2009 festival circuit films with more than 40 festivals among them, all of which are categorized as "on the job" training (!), I feel like I have seen it all. I am sure that's not true, but here are my top three problems:

First, getting the film finished is a total crunch right up to the minute the house lights go down on your premiere. But did you remember that you're going to get all those great invitations? Do you have money to do that? And while you are in

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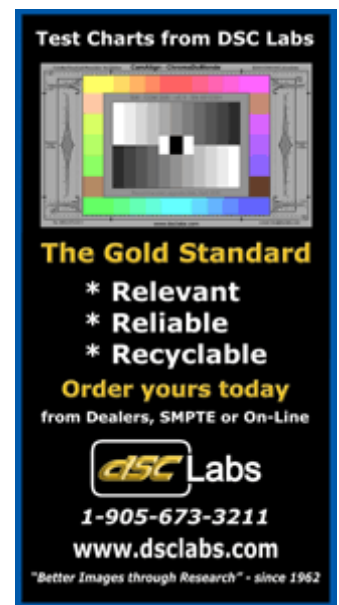
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the festival circuit, somebody comes up with a great new tag line and you want to revise your poster. Do you have money to do that? Production is not over when the film is premiered. There's got to be a way to plan for that!

Second, you are surrounded by agents and flattered by their attention and High Score Film Sales says they will land "the big one" for you. It's so hard to resist, but you have to think about the numbers and their motivations. They are really expensive. Do not get rushed into a representation agreement. If you have had time to work one out before the premiere, that's great. If not, take all the time you need afterward. Make sure the agreement is limited to one year and renewable at your choice (not theirs).

Third, to save money in the long run, before you leave the post-production edit room, make sure you have:

- an uncompressed, .MOV format, external hard disc copy of the final edit
- separate M&E tracks
- subtitles on a separate track as well

It's easy to do it right now, and you're going to need it later (awkward). And if you don't have it when you need it, it will cost you money!

Bob Alexander

President, IndiePix

www.indiepixfilms.com

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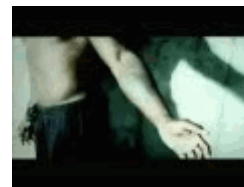
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