

A Brief Overview of the Many Stages of Filmmaking

Stage 1 – The Idea • Someone has to first be inspired. **Inspiration** comes from everywhere. You can find inspiration in books, newspapers and other films. • Next the **producer** decides to make this 'idea' into reality. • A **director** then imagines the film. Directors also know how to put this idea on film. • Then a **writer** clarifies the idea, the **plot** and the **main characters**. After which they will write a **treatment**; a one page description of the main story and characters. • Finally the **pitch** contains all the information the producer needs in order to sell (pitch) the idea to people so they can commission the **script**.

Stage 2 – Script Development Finance • The producer then gets the treatment and pitch in order to go out and persuade people to give them money for developing *the script*.

Stage 3 - Scripting • First the producer and writer come up with the **synopsis**. They both agree on the key events and **scenes** in the film. • Once the producer and writer are happy, the draft is sent to the financiers, all of whom will have their own ideas. • When everyone is satisfied with the script it is locked off and becomes a final draft and the writer gets paid. • Then they create a **sales treatment**.

Stage 4 - Packaging • The producer and director must now package the script into a full **commercial proposition**. • They then attach movie stars (and the **composer** who will write the **film score**) to the script to make it more commercial. • Then they talk with the financiers. • To turn the film into a proper business proposition, the producer must know exactly how much it'll cost to produce the film. • Potential **investors** will want to know how the producer will raise the money and how they plan to pay them back. • The producer has now packaged the film into a commercial proposition.

Stage 5 – Financing • Financiers can be *anywhere in the world* and in order to get a good financier the producer normally has to travel. • Private individuals, production companies and public bodies all invest in films. The producer's **lawyer** draws up **contracts** to seal the deal. • The producer can also raise funds from something called '**pre-sales**'. It's when selling the **rights** of the film before it's even been produced. • Departments in **banks** that specialize in film finance also invest in commercial projects and may even offer loans. • Once all the essential funding and **insurance** is secured the film gets the 'green light'.

Stage 6 – Script Development • Once all the head of departments are hired the shooting script is circulated and the **pre-production** begins. • The **casting** of the actors is determined by the director and producer. • **Storyboards** are then made to plan in advance by the director and the **cinematographer**. • The **production designer** plans every aspect of how the film will look and hires to design and build each part. • Effects **shots** are planned in much more detail than normal

shots and can take months to design and to build. Then the **Production Unit** makes the key logistics (who will be where, what actors will be shooting at which time).

Stage 7 – The Shoot • The key moment in film production is when the shooting begins. The camera department get all the footage the director and **editor** need to make the film and to tell the story. When all the **lighting**, set-up, make-up and hair is all been checked, the shot can begin. Then the **special effects** are created in the movie with minimum damage to the cast or crew. *If by some reason the shooting becomes behind schedule the financiers and insurers will step in.*

Stage 8 – Post Production • As the footages comes in, the editor puts it into scenes and creates a **narrative sequence** for the film. Then the sound department works on the audio, creating and editing every **sound** (includes the performance and recording of the **film score**). Digital effects are then added by special effects artists. The final stage is to adjust the color and lock the image. After the **final cut** the film reaches **full lock**. It's now finished and ready for **duplication**.

Stage 9 - Sales • To help sell the film to **distributors** the producer insures the services of a **sales agent**. They're people who specialize in film sales. To help sell their film they make a **trailer** to show some of the best parts in the film. The producer and sales agent collect everything they need to sell the film. Then the producer goes to the **film market** (which is filled with new films). The producer has to go to great lengths to ensure they sell the film. Then the film is shown at a high-profile screening at one of the top **film festivals**. The producer (if distributors like their film) now has a hot product and negotiates with good deals with distributors *around the world*.

Stage 10 - Marketing • To help them sell the film to distributors, the producer secures the services of a sales agent. The audience is essential so the marketing team runs **test screenings** to see what public think of the film. The audience for the film is targeted with posters, cinema trailers, TV spots and other materials. Television, radio, newspapers and magazines can all help create a positive word about the film. The word spreads over the internet for the whole world to see.

Stage 11 - Exhibition • A high-profile, star-studded **premiere** is used to launch the film to the film to the public. Distributors supply the **exhibitors** with prints of the film. The more screens the film is shown on the more prints are needed. The exhibitors take their share of the **box office receipts**, after which the distributors recoup their marketing costs. Once the distributors have been paid, the financiers can recover their investments.

Stage 12 – Other sales windows • Games, hospitality sales, toys, memorabilia, etc. which can bring millions of extra dollars in revenue.

NOTE: This is a slightly modified version of a slide presentation available here:
<https://www.slideshare.net/Turner2c/12-stages-of-film-making-14781070>