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Independent Study & Mentorship

Mr. Speice 4A

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MLA Citations:

Brubaker, Jason. "Three Simple Steps For Filmmaking Success." *Filmmaking Stuff*. N.p., 17 June 2016. Web. 27 Jan. 2017.

Cumbers, Mikaela. "Top Five Pieces of Equipment Every Independent Filmmaker

Needs." *Raindance*. N.p., 06 Aug. 2015. Web. 27 Jan. 2017.

"Starting Small: How To Make A Short Film." *Student Resources*. New York Film Academy, 18 Sept. 2014. Web. 27 Jan. 2017.

Assessment:

For my original work in ISM, I created a screenplay, shot list, and character breakdowns. This encompasses many aspects of pre-production for a film. One of my ideas for my final product is to turn my original work into an actual short film. However, this will require a lot of time, money, resources, and more. While the idea itself is very ambitious, I need to make sure this project is doable before the ISM Final Presentation. In order to make a well-thought out decision on what I should do for my final product, I need to plan for potential problems I could face and how I should solve them. I also need to brainstorm what equipment I would need and how I would get them.

The first article I read, "Starting Small: How To Make A Short Film", talked about the basic and necessary steps to make a film. One of these steps was scouting a location. Although this may seem fairly easy, it actually turns out to be a strenuous task. By filming in unique locations, it requires permission from the owners and sometimes a fee. The other route to go would be just try to make it as realistic as possible in a house, yet more times than not it does not look realistic. This will certainly be a problem for me in shooting my film. I may have to alter the location of some of the scenes of my script to accommodate to these issues. It has also made me well aware to plan out the locations ahead of time to make sure it is doable.

Another problem I am sure to face in the world of filmmaking is getting the right equipment. Even though it is true that you do not have to use special film equipment to create an excellent film, I want to make sure my film looks polished. I spoke to my mentor about this issue and he suggested renting gear. However, I need to know which camera, lights, tripod, microphones, and so on are the highest-quality and most affordable to me. After reading "Top Five Pieces of Equipment Every Independent Filmmaker Needs.", I got a sense of which type of equipment is of top priority to have in the production of the film. This includes a movie camera, sound recorder, glidecam equipment, crane, and a crew. I figured out there are many different options for camera and sound recorder, but I will need to raise money in order to get the one I would like. While glidecam and crane gear is not absolutely necessary to a film, it will improve the quality of the film drastically. If I want to have these pieces of equipment on my set, I will have to either raise enough funds for that also or figure out a way to build it myself. Probably the most important thing I would need is a crew. It is almost extremely grueling to creating a film yourself with no other people of expertise and trying to fulfill all the roles yourself. I will need to lead a crew who is as dedicated about this project as me. Even if it is only a few people, it will make all the difference of the success of the film. In broadcast journalism, I usually work on projects alone because it seems more efficient, yet making a film without any other objective people will overall lower the success of my film. Personally, I feel obtaining the equipment and crew will most likely be the hardest part of making this film, however these two items will lead to a rewarding outcome in the end.

The last article I read, "Three Simple Steps For Filmmaking Success", gave me some important tips of how to market and fund my film. Many directors are well-known because they have built a platform and fan base of loyal supporters who get the word out about their films. This word-to-mouth strategy is one of the most successful ways of marketing because it has more of an impact talking to a person who has seen the film and loved it. Another piece of advice the article suggests is to become an internet marketer, meaning that by putting your films out on the internet, it is more likely to get noticed by internet traffic. If filmmakers are producing for a profit, they can publicizing on the internet which would persuade viewers to pay and go into a movie theater to watch it. In the article, I found that the most important step was crowdfunding. Finding a film is extremely expensive. In order to have a budget that fits the specifications of the film, strategies such as crowdfunding need to be utilized. As the article states, "Running a successful crowdfunding campaign requires social networking, real-world networking and Internet marketing", meaning reaching out to all of your contacts and enlisting people to campaign for you will help fund your film. In my specific case, I will need to run a crowdfunding campaign directed towards my school and community. During post-production, I will also need to market towards my target audience, meaning marketing mostly on social media.

There are harsh realities to producing a film that many have yet to realize. Components such as, location, budget, equipment, and publicity all need to be carefully considered before creating a film. I will consider this information myself when speaking to my mentor about Final Product ideas for ISM. No matter what I decide exactly to do for my final product, I know that I will have to take into account these obstacles because they are some of the most common hurdles in producing film and video content.

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TOP FIVE PIECES OF EQUIPMENT EVERY INDEPENDENT FILMMAKER NEEDS

Posted on August 16, 2015 by Mikalea Cumbers

Recently, I was talking with a friend about what I'd need to make a short film. I was whining that I didn't have enough time or money to make any of the short films I had in mind.

To cut it short- I was making excuses.

After discussing this, and promptly being told to get my butt into gear, I realised that to make a short film, or any film at all, the first thing you need is the drive to do it, and once you have that, you need the equipment to help you materialise your imagination.

1. A Movie Camera

The key here is: Basic. Basic. Basic.

Forget about the RED ONE or BLACK MAGIC (unless your budget is £25,000 upwards)

Indie filmmakers sometimes forget that the whole point of making a film isn't about spending top dollar on equipment, or necessarily making the film look expensive (but this is a very easy thing to do). It's just about telling the story, and especially for first-timers, the last thing you should be worrying about is the way it looks compared to the latest flick at the cinema.

Cameras to consider in order of budget, low to high:

1. The Canon Powershot Series

Simple point and shoot cameras with great recording capability. In fact, the 2010 documentary CATFISH was partly filmed using the Canon PowerShot TX1 which you can pick up for around £250 - £300 maximum.

2. DSLRs: NikonD90 or Canon 550/600D

A little more on the pricey side, but fantastic and versatile cameras that have the wide range of capabilities, and potential for real cinematic looking stuff.

You can pick up a new NikonD90 kit, the Canon 550D and Canon 600D all for under £500, and here are some examples of how beautiful (and professional) they can make things look:

Nikon D90 Video Test - YouTube

Canon 550D Video Test - YouTube

Canon 600D Video Test - YouTube

3. Panasonic HVX200

The most expensive one I'd ever consider at around £1,200, and looks the most professional. Ideal for low-budget filming as its relatively small and lightweight and records great HD footage.

Test footage 1

Test footage 2

2. A Sound Recorder/Microphone

Often cameras will have their own in-built sound recorder, and while a lot of the time this will suffice, sometimes a separate recorder is what will really polish the overall production of your film. There are two affordable sound recorders out on the market which I have tried and tested and would recommend for any filmmaker on a budget:

Zoom H1 Recorder and the more expensive Zoom H4N.

With particular mention to the H1, Zoom's smallest recorder, ever, this makes for super handy film equipment. It gives great quality sound, stereo recording and really really easy-to-use functions. You can't really go wrong with one of these.

Zoom H1 Test and Review

Zoom H4N Test

And for reliable microphones with a range of difference prices to fit your budget, check out the Sennheiser G3 series.

3. Slider/Glidecam Equipment

The biggest giveaway of an low-budget film often are the little shakes and 'guerrilla' style movements, and unless this is the look you are going for, investing in a slider or glidecam will eliminate this and give your film a professional, neat and expensive look.

Comment [1]: One pet peeve I have with filming is not having smooth camerawork. If I cannot afford one, I may have to construct it myself.

A slider and glidecam are very similar, so it wouldn't be necessary to get both. The glidecam can do everything the slider can and then some, however the slider is appealing for its ability to go smoothly back on forth on the same track.

The choice is yours friends - the handymen and women of you all could have both for a minimal budget by making your own, following this video or these instructions!

Purchasing a used/new slider or glidecam would cost anywhere between £150 - £300.

Glidecam HD2000 - Video Test - YouTube

Konova Slider Dolly K2 100cm - Video Test - YouTube

4. Jib/Crane

This nifty piece of equipment will not only make your film look professional, but it will also make you look somewhat professional while you use it. It's not a necessity with every film of course, however it is good practice in terms of expanding your cinematic technique and artistry.

You can pick up a ProAM DVC crane for £30 - £100 depending on the size of the extension you go for and whether you go for a used or a brand new one. Alternatively you could again, BUILD YOUR OWN!

5. Willing and supportive friends and family

In other words, your crew.

Comment [2]: I don't necessarily consider this the most important, but I may need to build my own if I want to have some of the shots described in my film.

Comment [3]: It is nearly impossible to create a film without the support and help of a crew. By having a production crew, they can help take care of the technical stuff while the director focuses on the vision.

It is possible to make a film on your own, but it will take double the time, and cause double the stress, potentially leaving you with an unfinished film and a disheartened ego. Gather your friends, pull in your family, and get together and make a movie!

Likelihood is, you'll have a group of friends interested in films and film making who are wanting to start making awesome movies, just like you are. Collaborate!

So that's it, the only five things you need to make your first movie.

But just remember, at the end of it all, to quote a friend of mine..."We're FILMMAKERS DARLING."

All we really need when it comes down to it, is a camera, a plan of action.

Check out Stebs Schinnerer's (of Paper Fortress Films) essentials.

Starting Small: How To Make A Short Film

Posted on June 11, 2014 by New York Film Academy

Although filmmaking is a highly technical discipline involving a variety of skills, making a short film is a good hands-on way to learn about filmmaking. The entry barrier to making a short film is lower than it has ever been due to advances in technology. Digital cameras require no film and allow for post-processing on standard personal computers. Here are some steps to follow when making a short film.

Choose A Short Script

Although a filmmaker might be tempted to grab a camera and begin shooting impromptu scenes, a

good film tells a story with a beginning, a middle, and an end. A script ensures that a film tells such a story.

Short Script

One can always write a script, but an alternative which will get you to the filmmaking practice faster is to download a script from the Internet. For example, several sites offer duet acting scripts.

A duet acting script depicts a single ten-minute scene between two actors and often involves nothing but dialogue. Ideal for those just starting out, such scripts offer a great opportunity to dive straight into the process of familiarizing yourself with shooting.

Create A Storyboard

Once a script is secured, one can make a storyboard, that is, a panel-by-panel outline of each shot. A storyboard resembles a comic book and determines the flow of the film and the sequence of its scenes. Much of the work in making a film is in setting up a storyboard, especially given that it saves a lot of time and organization work in the long run.

The advantage of this work is that it is less expensive and time-consuming than figuring out the flow of a film while actually filming. A good storyboard needn't be an artistic masterpiece; as long as it allows a filmmaker to focus on camera work when it comes time to shoot the film, it's a good storyboard.

Storyboard

Scout For A Location

Comment [4]: This is actually very useful in that it can show my artistic vision by illustrating camera angles, shot types, and details that can only be described in pictures.

Although a film's locale will be determined by the script, it is important to find a suitable location to begin filming.

For example, if a film takes place in a coffee shop, one has to decide whether to film in an actual coffee shop, which would require permission from the owners, or to mimic a coffee shop environment. If the film takes place outdoors, one needs to find a safe, legal location to film. If it takes place indoors, one needs to find an indoor spot where filming will not be interrupted. If the film relies on props, those, too, have to be taken into account when scouting a location.

Comment [5]: These are actually very important factors as some storefronts do not allow you to film at all. Also by filming at a significant location, such as a school, without telling the owner or administrator, it could lead to misunderstanding, confusion, and even bring on legal action.

Be mindful that it's not easy to find locations on the cheap, so unless you've got a sizeable budget for this, try to craft your script around locations that you'll actually have access to rather than places such as banks or supermarkets.

Comment [6]: I may have to edit my screenplay to make sure it fits within these specifications. It also reminds me that I'll need to call ahead when I want a shoot to take place at a location to get permission.

Select A Camera

Traditional motion picture cameras are expensive, but digital cameras provide a far less expensive option for budding filmmakers. In fact, it is possible to use an iOS or Android device to make a short film and even a few successful feature films have been shot using only a smart phone.

The main disadvantage of these devices is storage space, so a prospective filmmaker may want to purchase a dedicated digital movie camera. Although high end digital movie cameras are expensive, there is a market for less expensive consumer cameras. Such cameras are capable of recording high definition film and are highly portable. Moreover, they allow footage to be transferred to a computer easily for editing and post-processing.

Comment [7]: If worse comes to worse, I may have to film with an iPhone as a back up plan. I could get access to lens attachments to put on my phone for better quality.

Edit The Film

Raw footage does not tell a story and often contains extraneous material not relevant to the script. A movie is made when raw footage is crafted into a narrative with a distinct beginning, middle, and end.

Fortunately, editing has been made easier with the current generation of editing suites. Although some can cost multiple thousands of dollars, for short films many of the free software packages usually suffice. Windows, for example, comes with Windows Live Movie Maker, which has stood the test of time for years.

Most Apple Macs come with iMovie, a movie maker designed for newcomers which is actually fairly powerful. If you're a Mac user looking for a superbly intuitive mid-range option that won't cost the bank, look no further than ScreenFlow (which is priced around \$100):

Following these steps provides a hands-on experience with filmmaking and will give prospective film students a rough idea of how movies are.

Three Simple Steps For Filmmaking Success

JUNE 17, 2016 BY JASON BRUBAKER

If I could go back and talk to myself ten years ago and share only one filmmaking success tip, what would I say? In two words: Cold Calling. I know this may sound unrelated to filmmaking.

But I can tell you that filmmaking success is not created in a vacuum. It is created with the help and support of other people, including mentors and customers (AKA, your audience.)

And while it is true that some people stumble upon contacts and get lucky, I would venture to say that over 90 percent of self-made successful people got what they wanted in life by utilizing some variation of the following three success tips:

First: Successful people know what they want.

Second: Successful people make a plan to get what they want.

Third: Successful people pick up the phone and cold call people who could help make their plan a reality.

Think about it. Could you go to “networking events” and try to find folks to help introduce you to appropriate contacts? Of course you can. And I recommend you do this.

But let’s be honest. Most times the people you NEED to meet (to become a filmmaking success)

don't need networking events. In other words, they aren't there. So what do you do? Easy. You pick up the phone, call your prospective contact's place of business and try to get him or her on the phone to make your pitch.

Will you get through? Maybe. Maybe not.

But if you had a list of 100 prospects and you called all the people on that list, odds are good you would find someone willing to sit down with you. Why is this important to your filmmaking success? Because unless you ASK for what you want, how is anybody in life going to know how to help you?

filmmaking-success

How To Become a Filmmaking Success

Aside from knowing the right people, to become a filmmaking success, you actually have to get a movie made, seen and sold.

The good news is, advances in technology makes this much easier than years ago. These days filmmakers can utilize crowdfunding, find inexpensive cameras and distribute movies globally through one of the many VOD platforms. This means you can wake up every day imagining all the wonderful movies you plan to make.

You can create your own mini-movie-studio and distribute your films anywhere in the world. You don't need Hollywood to give you permission. And if your vision and passion is strong enough, you will take steps towards the achievement of this dream.

But let's make one thing clear. You are not entitled to filmmaking success. You still have to do the

work.

You will have to write or option and refine a screenplay. You will have to find actors and collaborators with gear who want to work with you. You will have to raise money to pay these people. And you will have to firm up a production date and go the distance to get your movie made, seen and sold.

If you are lucky, you might even get to make a living with your work.

But it won't be easy.

Filmmaking Success Jason Brubaker

Months and years will pass. Your friends will get married. They will have babies. They will have families. Their kids will grow up. And you may find yourself living alone in your mid-30s wondering if trying to achieve filmmaking success is worth it.

This will test your resolve.

What is filmmaking success?

While the vast majority of first time feature filmmakers dream of fame and fortune, your perspective may be a bit more pragmatic.

Maybe you just want to make a few movies a year and make a living making movies. Regardless of your end goal, there is a lot of competition out there.

While affordable production technology has made filmmaking accessible, you aren't the only filmmaker who knows this. Many people are making backyard indies. And as a result, the supply of cheaply produced movies has surpassed demand.

The days of HUGE minimum guarantees are over. So if you're going to become a filmmaking success, you need to do more than simply making movies. You will have to view yourself as an entrepreneur and you will have to view filmmaking as your business.

Three Steps For Filmmaking Success

To garner success, YOU are now responsible for sourcing an audience and building a platform for YOUR projects. And this reveals the next major challenge. How does a filmmaker succeed in this changing business?

1. **Become an Internet marketer: Or team up with someone who is. Movies are now accessible everywhere, including computer monitors and mobile devices. As a result, you will need to drive targeted Internet traffic to many different points of sale and convert these visitors into a paying audience.**

Comment [8]: This is extremely important. For amateur filmmakers: more people will be able to see your film on the internet if it is promoted and marketed correctly.

2. **Crowdfunding Is Essential: Running a successful crowdfunding campaign requires social networking, real-world networking and Internet marketing. Aside from raising money, crowdfunding allows you test your movie concept before you invest time and money into making your movie. When successful, you can add your supporters to your ever growing mailing list. Which brings me to my next filmmaking success tactic...**

Comment [9]: If I had a crowdfunding campaign, it would be directed towards friends, family, teachers, and peers. It's interesting how many ways a project could get funding using technology.

3. **Your Audience Is Your Business: Marketing nerds have a saying, "The money is in your list." And the same statement applies to you. Your ongoing goal is to create work that encourages people to**

sign up for your mailing list and become a fan of you and your movies, for life. Then with each project, your ongoing goal is to continually grow your list.

Filmmaking Success in 30 Minutes a Day

As you can imagine, becoming successful in any field is challenging. And if you're busy working a day job, finding time for your film project may seem impossible. But there are some strategies you can employ to get past this.

One of our readers reached out a while back asking for my best time management tips. She explained that she's getting distracted with her day job. So after some thought, I came up with the following filmmaking success challenge – which is the same strategy I utilize myself.

Make a list of all things filmmaking that you need to accomplish.

Break the list into micro-steps. For example if the task is to finish your screenplay, break it into "write one page per day."

Carve out at least one half-hour per day to get closer to your goals.

If you follow this formula, you can become a filmmaking success in 30 minutes or less, per day.

Think about it. One half-hour per day equates to 3.5 hours per week – or 182 hours a year, which is roughly 4 working weeks. What can you do with 4 weeks of solid work?

Probably a lot.

The best time to accomplish your filmmaking goals is early in the morning. Each night before bed, prep your work area and plan what you hope to accomplish. Then get up an hour early and get to work.

Comment [10]: I need to make sure there is not too much on my plate everyday when filming. This would entail creating a production schedule with doable tasks to accomplish. This way the work doesn't become overwhelming.

Filmmaker Action Pack

The secret to filmmaking success is to continually break your filmmaking in manageable chunks. If you consistently check things off the list, you will achieve filmmaking success faster than you imagined. And if you loved this tip, you will enjoy my filmmaker checklist.