

The Film Connection - Chapter 8

- 1.) In your own words, what are the six stages of filmmaking, and what is each stage's role in the process?

The six stages of filmmaking are as follows—development, financing, pre-production, production, post-production, and marketing and distribution. The development stage establishes the idea and puts it into a cogent screenplay. Financing raises the funds needed for the production, which can be done independently or through studio. Pre-production involves careful planning of schedules, props, crew, and casting according to budget and the script. Production is the actual action on the set during filming, in which all of the careful planning gets put to effect. Post-production is the process of taking all of your footage and editing it into an actual film, including music, special effects, color correction, etc. Lastly, marketing and distribution involves selling your production to a distributor who will market it for you, for marketing can cost millions of dollars which is usually beyond a production's budget.

- 2.) How many phases can development be broken into? What are those phases and what is their significance?

The three phases of development are the idea, writing, re-writing phases. The idea phase allows one to create the characters and plot, for a screenplay cannot exist without them. The writing phase leads to the creation of the first draft of the screenplay, which will be the screenwriter's first attempt to tell the story. Finally the rewriting phase, which may take the longest, allows the screenwriters to analyze and fix the weaknesses of the script and finalize the screenplay that will be utilized for the overall film.

- 3.) What causes a script to get caught in "development hell?"

A script gets stuck in "development hell" if the writers are too indecisive and the finances are being wasted on an overkill of tactics to jumpstart the production. When one notices that a production is getting stuck in "development hell," it is often best that he/she remove him/herself from the situation, for it will most likely go nowhere.

- 4.) What is the difference between a "producer" and an "executive producer"?

A producer finds a story to put to film by finding a screenplay or hiring a writer. He/she will either pay the writer or buy the finished script, and in some cases allow the writer to contribute to the creative process of the film. An executive producer, on the other hand, is hired by the producer and he/she finds the investors for the film.

5.) What positions make up a producer's original staff? What does each position do?

The producer's original staff is comprised of a unit production manager or line producer, associate producers, co-producers, co-executive producers, and a production accountant. Their responsibilities are the following:

Unit production manager – He or she keeps the project on schedule and budget, and is in some ways the producer's right hand man. He or she prepares shooting schedule and budget for those below-the-line, works with the location manager to secure all shooting locations, assists in hiring below-the-line crew and arranging for housing and transportation if any, renting equipment, and approves the salary and time sheets for the crew. He or she even has the authority to fire the crew and advise the director on options to keep the project on budget and schedule.

Line producer – He or she is also in charge of the film's schedule and budget. He or she starts by making an estimate of the required budget by going over all the necessities determined by the script, director, and production manager, which is given to the producers to raise funds for the project. He or she can also create shooting schedules, hire below-the-line crew, and make all decisions relating to schedule and budget.

Associate producers – Their responsibilities may vary from project to project. They may assist the producer, executive, or co-producer with writing, editing, organizing scripts, or supervising production design or post production. They take on the jobs delegated to them by the producers during the production.

Co-producers – Their responsibilities may also vary from project to project. They may help to develop and finance films, assist in hiring cast, director, and other key members of production, or manage various business or logistics related issues during production.

Co-executive producers – He or she reports directly to the executive producer regarding to above-the-line and below-the-line issues, and is usually employed only for television.

Production accountant – He or she manages the finances, funding, and spending of a production. He or she also makes sure that the production meets all legal requirements, sees that payments are made on time, oversees payroll, and keeps accurate financial records.

6.) Explain the difference between "linear" editing and "non-linear" editing.

Linear editing is the tape-to-tape editing that was applied before computers were used to edit films. This required the use of two machines, one to play raw footage and one to copy the desired footage onto another tape, and all the shots had to be laid out in perfect sequence. Non-linear editing is what most professional editors use today, which allows for the flexibility of the order of shots. This allows specific clips and frames to be accessed at any time and be altered to the editor's best interest.