

TFE THE FILM ENTREPRENEUR:

A Newsletter for Independent Filmmakers and Investors



LOUISE LEVISON, EDITOR AND PUBLISHER

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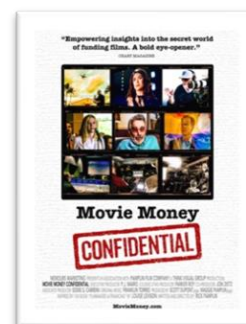
REASONS TO BE POSITIVE ABOUT INDIE FILM'S FUTURE

- ✓ **ALERT:** Documentaries still prime target for box-office and streaming sites
- ✓ "We actually had more film and a larger theatrical footprint than ever this past year." - Cara Cusumano, Director, SXSW Film Festival
- ✓ "Every time there's handwringing about the death of movies, great movies come out to prove that wrong ..." - Cameron Bailey, CEO, Toronto Intl. Film Festival
- ✓ "Time to raise money, produce your film for upcoming festivals." - Louise Levison

BREAKING: New feature documentary **Movie Money CONFIDENTIAL** - with Burt Reynolds and Salma Hayek - inspired by Louise Levison's **Filmmakers and Financing** acquired by Kaczmarek Digital Media Group (KDMG):

www.pbfilm.com/upload/newsletter/pdf/newsletter-February-2022.pdf

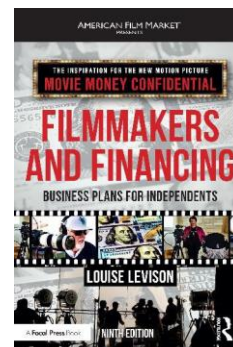
Releasing March 1, 2022.



BREAKING: New 9th edition of **Filmmakers and Financing: Business Plans for Independents**, Louise Levison's best-selling book, now available for discounted pre-orders at Routledge, a global publisher of academic books:

www.routledge.com/Filmmakers-and-Financing-Business-Plans-for-Independents/Levison/p/book/9780367763084#

Shipping March 24, 2022.



SUNDANCE FILM FESTIVAL

Buyers were busy at the 38th edition of the 2022 Film Festival which took place January 20th to 30th, although not to the extent that many analysts had expected. With a slow start, expect for the five films acquired after the films were announced but before day one of the fest, the second week was busy. By the end of the fest, 25 films - 17 narrative features and eight documentaries were acquired. Similar to 2020 and 2021 the ability to stream the films played a big part; however, at least half of the films are expected to have an initial theatrical release. Originally announced as an in-person event, the organizers changed it to virtual. “Once we had the data about the public health implications of the festival taking place in Park City....it would be irresponsible to continue in person,” explained Festival Director Tabitha Jackson. With a slow start perhaps due to the change, except for the five acquired after the films were announced but before day one of the fest, the second week was busy. While Sundance officially ended on Jan. 30, the market was still far from over for buyers and sellers. “We’re still in the middle of Sundance as far as I am concerned,” laughed ICM Partners’ Jessica Lacy in speaking to *The Hollywood Reporter*. [Ed Note: TFE always lists films acquired up to 4 days after a festival due to dealmaking]

The big streamers did not make the big appearance that sellers hoped. Netflix did acquire one film, the documentary *Descendant*, which the streamer will release with Barack and Michelle Obama’s Higher Ground. Amazon was absent altogether. Reports are that sellers held out for big streamers which slowed down the dealmaking. The winner of paying the biggest price announced is Apple Original Films which paid \$15 million Cooper Raiff’s comedy *Cha Cha Real Smooth*. Nevertheless, many of the films represented “peak pandemic politics,” as *indiewire.com* described them.

Due to the last two years, the discussion focuses on whether the massive change to streaming deals is permanent. Will it go back to 2019? “We were more curatorial and exacting in what we took to Sundance than we have ever been, said Submarine’s Josh Braun, who repped the documentary *Fire of Love*, which is due to get a significant theatrical release by National Geographic Documentary Films. “We turned down some films that we probably would have signed in previous years.” In speaking about what this year’s market could signify for following years, Eric Feig, whose Picturestart was behind *Cha Cha Real Smooth* (along with Endeavor Content) and *Am I Ok?*, said, “We didn’t spend all of this time in making this independent film to just say, ‘Goodbye and good luck.’” He also added, “How much of it do you grade it on a curve [because of] the last minute switch to virtual...?”

“The 2022 Sundance Film Festival once again met our audience wherever they happened to be,” added Sundance Film Festival Director Tabitha Jackson, “Whether you watched from home or one of our seven satellite screens, this year’s Festival expressed a powerful convergence; we were present, together, as a community connected through the work. And it is work that has already changed those who experienced it.” This year 84 feature-length films representing 28 countries screened and 59 short films were selected from 14,849 submissions. Seventy-eight, or 91%, of the festival’s feature films were world premieres.

“Today’s awards represent the determination of visionary individuals, whose dynamic work will continue to change the culture and create discourse throughout the year,” said Sundance Institute CEO Joana Vicente. Director of Programming, Kim Yutani, added, “This year’s entire program has proven that no matter the context, independent storytelling remains a pivotal tool in expanding critical dialogues, and these stories will and must be shared. We want films that entertain because it’s a *festival*,” she stressed. “I go to festivals to be entertained, but also to have those very significant, meaningful moments...where the conversations are inspired by the films that we are seeing, the filmmakers we are discovering, the work that is launched at Sundance that we will continue to talk about throughout the year-through, hopefully, awards season.”

SUNDANCE FILM SALES – 2022*

FEATURE FILMS ACQUIRED DECEMBER 16TH TO JANUARY 19TH

FILM	DISTRIBUTOR	TERRITORY	Estimated Purchase Price (Million \$)
<i>Alice</i>	Vertical Entertainment Roadside Attractions	U.S.	n.a.
<i>Calendar Girls</i>	Juno Films	North America	n.a.
<i>Fresh</i>	Searchlight	Streaming	n.a.
<i>Mars One</i>	Magnolia Pictures Intn.l.	World	n.a.
<i>Midwives</i>	Dogwoof	World	n.a.

*Does not include “buyer(s)” who financed the film or made purchase before acceptance by Sundance.

FEATURE FILMS ACQUIRED JANUARY 20TH TO 30TH **

FILM	DISTRIBUTOR	TERRITORY	Estimated Purchase Price (Million \$)
892	Bleecker Street	U.S.	n.a.
2nd Chance	Showtime Documentary Films	U.S.	n.a.
<i>Am I OK?</i>	Warner Bros./HBO	Streaming	7.0
<i>Brian and Charles</i>	Focus Features	World	n.a.
<i>Call Jane</i>	Roadside Attractions	U.S.	n.a.
<i>Cha Cha Real Smooth</i>	Apple Original Films	Streaming	15.0
<i>Descendant</i>	Netflix	World	n.a.
<i>Dual</i>	RLJE Films	U.S.	Low-mid 7 figures
<i>Emily the Criminal</i>	Vertical Entertainment Roadside Attractions Redbox	U.S. Theatrical Home Ent.	n.a.
<i>Fire of Love</i>	National Geographic	Theatrical & Streaming	mid-7 figures- plus
<i>Free Chol Soo Lee</i>	MUBI	U.S.	n.a.
<i>Good Luck to You, Leo Grande</i>	Searchlight Pictures	Hulu	7.5
<i>Living</i>	Sony Pictures Classics	N. America & other territories	5.0
<i>Love Song, A</i>	Bleecker Street Sony’s Stage 6	World	n.a.
<i>Midwives</i>	POV – PBS Showcase	Television / Cable	n.a.

<i>Neptune Frost</i>	Kino Lorber	U.S.	n.a
<i>Nothing Compares</i>	Showtime Documentary Films	World	n.a.
<i>Resurrection</i>	IFC Shudder	N. America Theater Streaming	n.a
<i>Speak No Evil</i>	Shudder	Streaming	n.a.
<i>Territory, The</i>	National Geographic	Theatrical & streaming	mid-7 figures
<i>Watcher</i>	IFC Shudder	N. America Theater Streaming	n.a

** Includes purchases made on or after January 20th due to negotiations and virtual screenings.

AND THE SUNDANCE PRIZES GO TO...

AWARDS / PRIZES	FILM	FILMMAKER
U. S. DRAMATIC		
Grand Jury Prize	<i>Nanny</i>	Nikyatu Jusu
Audience Award	<i>Cha Cha Real Smooth</i>	Cooper Raiff
Directing	<i>Palm Trees and Power Lines</i>	Jamie Dack
Waldo Salt Screenwriting	<i>Emergency</i>	K.D. Dávila
Special Jury / Uncompromising Artistic Vision	<i>blood</i>	Bradley Rust Gray
Special Jury / Ensemble Cast	<i>892</i>	—
U.S. DOCUMENTARY		
Grand Jury Prize	<i>The Exiles</i>	Ben Klein, Violet Columbus
Audience	<i>Navalny</i>	Daniel Roher
Directing	<i>I Didn't See You There</i>	Reid Davenport
Jonathan Oppenheim Editing	<i>Fire Of Love</i>	Erin Casper, Jocelyne Chaput
Special Jury / Impact for Change	<i>Aftershock</i>	Paula Eiselt, Tonya Lewis Lee
Special Jury / Creative Vision	<i>Descendant</i>	Margaret Brown
WORLD CINEMA: DRAMATIC		
Grand Jury	<i>Utama</i>	Alejandro Loayza Grisi
Audience	<i>Girl Picture</i>	Alli Haapasalo
Directing	<i>Klonkike</i>	Maryna Er Gorbach
Special Jury / Innovative Spirit	<i>Leonor Will Never Die</i>	Martika Ramirez Escobar

Special Jury / Acting	<i>Dos Estaciones</i>	Teresa Sánchez
WORLD CINEMA: DOCUMENTARY		
Grand Jury	<i>All That Breathes</i>	Shaunak Sen
Audience	<i>The Territory</i>	Alex Pritz
Directing	<i>A House Made of Splinters</i>	Simon Lereng Wilmont
Special Jury / Documentary Craft	<i>The Territory</i>	Alex Pritz
Special Jury Verité Filmmaking	<i>Midwives</i>	Snow Hnin Ei Hlaing
FESTIVAL FAVORITE	<i>Navalny</i>	Daniel Roher
NEXT		
Audience	<i>Framing Agnes</i>	Chase Joynt
Innovator	<i>Framing Agnes</i>	Chase Joynt
NHK	<i>The President's Cake</i>	Hasan H
Alfred P. Sloan Prize	<i>After Yang</i>	—
Amazon Studios Producers		
Narrative Features	<i>God's Country</i>	Amanda Marshall
Documentary Features	<i>Free Chol Soo Lee</i>	Su Kim
Adobe Mentorship Award		
Editing Fiction	—	Dody Dorn
Editing Nonfiction	—	Toby Shimin
SHORT FILM PRIZES		
Grand Jury	<i>The Headhunter's Daughter</i>	Don Josephus Raphael Eblahan
Jury U.S. Fiction	<i>If I Go Will They Miss Me</i>	Walter Thompson-Hernández
Jury International Fiction	<i>Warsha</i>	Dania Bdeir
Jury Non-fiction	<i>Displaced</i>	Samir Karahoda
Jury Animation	<i>Night Bus</i>	Joe Hsieh
Special Jury / Ensemble Cast	<i>A Wild Patience Has Taken Me Here</i>	—
Special Jury / Screenwriting	<i>Stranger Than Rotterdam</i>	Lewie Kloster, Noah Kloster

Note: For more details on these awards, go to: <https://deadline.com/2021/02/sundance-film-festival-awards-2021-winners-1234686070>; 📺

DIGITAL ENTERTAINMENT UP MORE THAN \$2 BILLION

Overall U.S. consumer spending across digital and physical home entertainment formats in 2021 was \$32.3 billion, an almost 8 percent increase from the \$30 billion consumers spent in 2020, reports The Digital Entertainment Group (The DEG). That was a record- breaking period for home viewing as consumers limited out-of-home activity in response to the spread of the novel coronavirus. In the fourth quarter, overall consumer spending rose more than 11 percent, to \$8.6 billion, representing the strongest growth quarter of the year. With more theatrical new releases, the 2021 fourth quarter posted the biggest gains, up 11% over the same period in 2020.

Consumers spent almost \$8 billion on digital entertainment purchases (EST), rentals (VOD) and subscriptions in the fourth quarter of 2021, an increase of 15 percent; and \$29.5 billion for the full year, a jump of nearly 12 percent over full year 2020. Spending on subscription streaming rose 19 percent for the fourth quarter and 20 percent for full year 2021. [Note: VOD and EST spending do not include Premium releases. Including Premium increases the total consumer spend on digital.]

Other highlights include:

- In physical formats, the return of theatrical releases helped stem declines in the fourth quarter to only 14 percent, and new formats remain a bright spot with consumer spending on 4K UHD Blu-ray discs rising more than 6 percent in the quarter.
- With pandemic conditions improving as 2021 progressed, box-office spending on the titles released to the home in the fourth quarter jumped more than 1,100 percent from the year earlier period, demonstrating consumers' continued voracious appetite for fresh feature films. The impact of new theatrical releases, which are historically a key driver of home entertainment spending, on DEG's transactional home entertainment tracking was muted, however, by the fact that many high-profile titles were released to the home in a Premium window.
- Digital rentals (VOD) experienced a decline of less than 7 percent in the fourth quarter, their strongest performance of the year, supported by an increase in theatrical new release activity. Rentals of theatrical new releases through internet retailers (iVOD) in the fourth quarter rose about 3 percent over the same period in 2020, and 29 percent over spending in the pre-pandemic fourth quarter of 2019.
- Premium releases - encompassing premium-priced rental or sales transactions in an early home entertainment window prior to, concurrent with, or very soon after theatrical release –currently are not included in industry reporting through DEG. However, DEG market analysis based on input from DEG members, tracking sources and retailers/platforms estimates 2021. Including Premium would increase the total consumer spend on digital formats to almost \$33 billion. ■

COMINGS AND GOINGS

Alamo Drafthouse plans to open four additional venues in new regions, including Chicago and Birmingham, as well as markets with existing Alamo Drafthouse locations, such as Grand Prairie, Texas and Glendale, Colo. The new theaters, along with previously announced in-the-works multiplexes, are expected to open in late 2022 through 2024. Prolonged theater closures and lack of new product forced Alamo Drafthouse during COVID-19 to file for Chapter-11 bankruptcy in early 2021. As part of its bankruptcy filing, Alamo Drafthouse had to close down several underperforming venues and currently maintains close to 40 locations. “We’re so thankful for the continued strength and recovery of the theater industry thanks to a packed slate of titles in 2022,” says Alamo Drafthouse CEO, Shelli Taylor. “And we’re very eager to bring the unique Alamo Drafthouse experience to Chicago, St. Louis, Birmingham, and beyond.” Alamo Drafthouse Founder and Executive Chairman Tim League added, “Curating a diverse mix of films and showcasing independent artists has always been a passion of ours. Expanding our reach into new cities allows us to celebrate these filmmakers with a wider audience.” Each new location will feature state-of-the-art laser projection, immersive surround sound and luxury recliners in auditoriums. The upcoming cinemas will continue Drafthouse’s commitment to preserving 35mm film, with venues in St. Louis and Staten Island among those offering celluloid projection.

Distributor, streamer and production company **Mubi** bought European sales indie The Match Factory. According to Mubi, The Match Factory’s current management team will remain in place and will continue to work out of Berlin in Cologne, while also expanding their presence via Mubi’s offices in London, New York and Los Angeles. We are gathering more intel about how the two teams will work together. “As long-time partners of The Match Factory we have gained tremendous admiration and respect for Michael and his team,” Efe Cakarel, Founder and CEO of MUBI said in a statement. “We could not be more excited for them to join us in pursuing the goal we clearly share: to bring beautiful cinema to film lovers around the world.” In the U.S., former Amazon Head of Motion Picture Jason Ropell has quietly been working as Mubi’s Chief Content Officer for the past two years, building a team that is geared towards producing in-house rather than simply licensing or buying territory deals. The move for The Match Factory’s whole business, including producing arm The Match Factory Productions, strengthens that drive, [deadline.com](#) reporter.

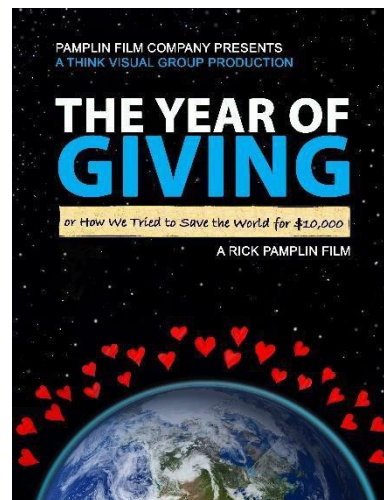
Germany’s **Studio Babelsberg** has been acquired by TPG Real Estate Partners. Studio Babelsberg now sits within TREP’s global studio platform, Cinespace Studios, which is the second largest sound stage operator in North America and, with Babelsberg in the fold, will now operate 90 stages. However, the German studio will continue to operate as an independent brand. Studio Babelsberg is Europe’s largest film studio and one of the oldest in the world, having been producing films since 1912. More recent productions hosted at the site include *Inglorious Basterds* and *The Matrix Resurrections*. 

THE YEAR OF GIVING **or How We Tried to Save the World for \$10,000**

Award-winning independent filmmakers **Rick and Maggie Pamplin** have begun production on their next feature film ***The Year of Giving or How We Tried to Save the World for \$10,000***. The documentary follows their efforts for one year as they give away \$25 a day in donations and micro-loans to make a better world.

“A few years ago, we began giving micro-loans to artists and small businesses throughout the world, helping people in desperate situations survive, become self-supporting and successful,” said producer Maggie Pamplin. “We then started developing a movie about how a single \$25 investment could literally change the world,” said writer-director Rick Pamplin. “In one year, we want to do as much good as possible, document it on film and inspire others to step forward and do the same,” he added.

Partnering with Pamplin Film Company is 10-time Telly Award-winning **Think Visual Group**. Production is currently underway, slated for 14 months, ending in February 2022. See more at twitter.com/PamplinFilmCo



MOVIE MONEY CONFIDENTIAL INSPIRED BY **FILMMAKERS & FINANCING BOOK**

Award-winning independent filmmaker Rick Pamplin has created, written and directed a new feature length documentary inspired by Louise Levison’s best-selling book ***Filmmakers & Financing: Business Plans for Independents***. Pamplin says, “We made a bold, truthful movie, which reveals many secrets about the often-mysterious world of film financing.” Pamplin, a Levison client, sees the film “as empowering a new generation of filmmakers” with insight, information and real-life advice from filmmakers, fundraisers, investors, lawyers, producers, movie stars and, of course, Louise Levison.

Pamplin and his crew shot 100 hours of footage and interviewed about 60 people including actress-producer **Salma Hayek** (*The Prophet*) and filmed one of the last interviews with the late screen legend **Burt Reynolds** at his acting school in North Palm Beach, Florida. The movie also filmed seminar-style panels with students at Saint Andrew’s School in Boca Raton and an open-to-the-public event with artists and writers at the legendary Harold’s Coffee Lounge in the Northwood Arts Village.

Pamplin’s storied career spans 18 years in Hollywood and 14 years at Universal Studios in Florida before he relocated to Palm Beach. He has written and directed several award-winning films including ***Hoover***, starring Academy Award winning actor **Ernest Borgnine**. ***Movie Money CONFIDENTIAL*** (1:40 minutes) is a Think Visual Group Production in Association with the Pamplin Film Company. Go to MovieMoney.com for upcoming screenings and release information.



Rick Pamplin on the set of *Movie Money CONFIDENTIAL*

MOVIE MONEY CONFIDENTIAL WINS DOVE AWARD, RECEIVES APPROVAL AND "FANTASTIC" REVIEW

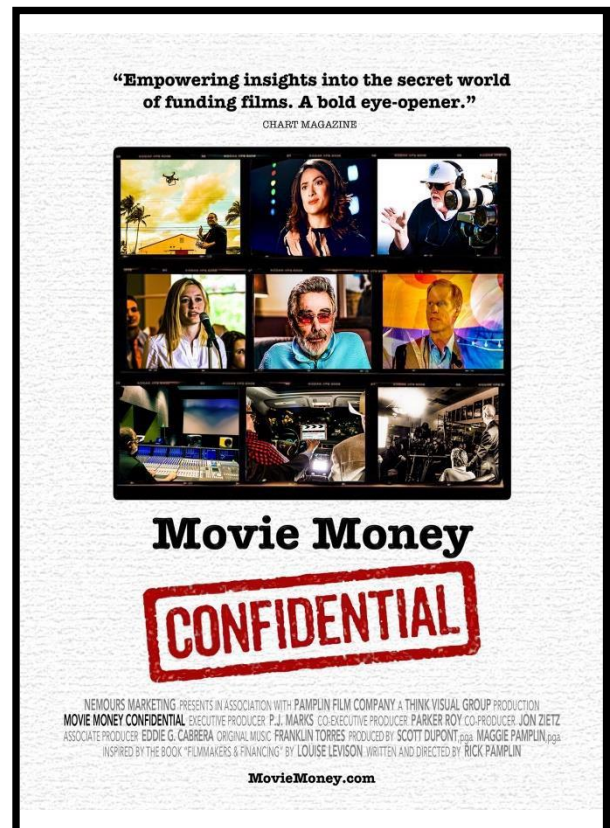
Movie Money CONFIDENTIAL, the feature length documentary film inspired by **Louise Levison's** best-selling book **Filmmakers & Financing**, has been awarded a prestigious Dove Foundation seal of approval, a "12+" rating and a "fantastic" review. The much-coveted Dove Awards are given "to encourage and promote wholesome family entertainment" and are used by schools, libraries, streaming services and churches for purchasing and licensing guidelines.

Producer **Scott duPont** was notified of the award in Hollywood and sent an advance copy of the review, now published online at **Dove.org**. "It is a great honor and achievement for our creative team and crew, and this award helps us reach an even wider audience," he said.

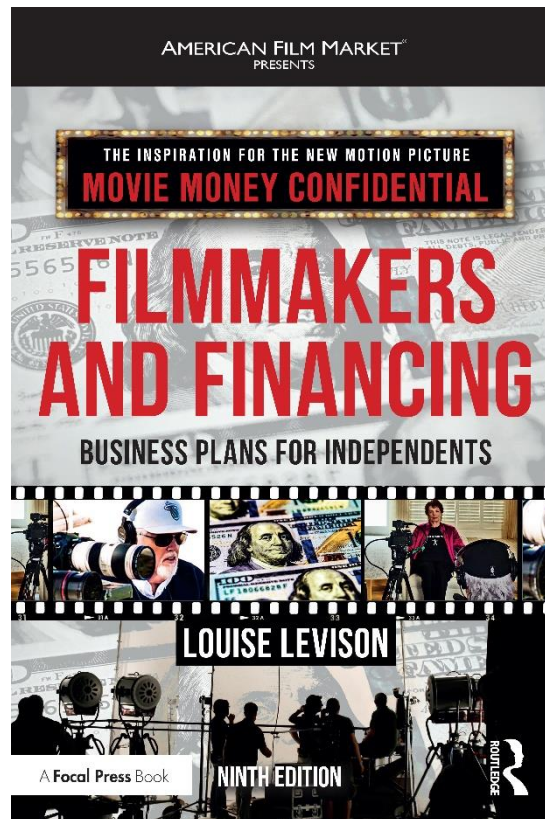
The review says, "With great advice from start to finish, *Movie Money Confidential* gives important details on how to create a film with little to no budget." It continues on, "This documentary is full of great information, including tips for people to start making their own films. It includes many one-on-one interviews and panels with questions asked by real actors and aspiring producers."

Producer-Production Designer **Maggie Pamplin** also noted the recognition for director **Rick Pamplin** and his collaborative partners at **Think Visual Group** in the review: "*Movie Money Confidential* is a fantastic documentary with great visuals and audio. The information is thorough about how a filmmaker should deal with investors - telling them facts instead of what they want to hear, asking for their advice and how to avoid promising what you might not be able to deliver."

In summary, the review says "*Movie Money Confidential* contains information that can be valuable in every aspect of life for any person - not just aspiring filmmakers and producers. Its well-thought-out scenes and interviews provide priceless information and answers to questions that people may not have thought to ask. It is great for anyone to watch and learn from."



The latest edition of *Filmmakers & Financing: Business Plans for Independents*



In this new and updated ultimate filmmaker's guide, Louise Levison gives you easy-to-use steps for writing an investor-winning business plan for a feature film, including:

- Comprehensive explanations for each of the eight sections of a plan
- Full financial section with text and tables
- A sample business plan
- A companion website with additional information for various chapters and detailed financial instructions - advanced math not needed
- An explanation on how feature documentary, animated and large-format films differ
- A guide to pitching to investors: who they are, what they want and what to tell them
- Words of advice: Filmmakers share their experiences raising money from equity investors

Ninth Edition available for pre-release purchase: <https://www.routledge.com/Filmmakers-and-Financing-Business-Plans-for-Independents/Levison/p/book/9780367763084>

NEED MONEY FOR A MOVIE? DON'T GO IN EMPTY-HANDED.HAVE A BUSINESS PLAN.

The benefit of using a reliable business plan to raise financing for a film is that it allows the investors and the filmmaker to gauge the potential success of a film. Louise Levison, the President of Business Strategies, is a highly respected financial consultant in the entertainment industry, specializing in creation of film business plans. She is the author of *Filmmakers & Financing: Business Plans for Independents*, currently in its revised and expanded ninth edition (A Routledge/Taylor & Francis book, 2022). She also has a starring role in the feature documentary *Movie Money CONFIDENTIAL* which was inspired by the book. More information at moviemoney.com. Levison also is editor of the newsletter *The Film Entrepreneur: A Newsletter for the Independent Filmmaker and Investor (TFE)*.

A polished business plan with projections based on the worldwide results of other films and with clear explanations of the industry is far more effective than an incomplete document that leaves prospective investors wanting more information. In our “new normal,” *TFE* has developed (and continues to adjust) a new format for forecasting Indie films to include the current hybrid system of releasing films for a shorter span in theaters (currently mostly drive-ins but also the rest of the country’s cinema sites as the industry opens) and, often, into streaming rather than the standard online release pattern of DVD/Blu-ray and downloading.

Levison’s clients have raised money for low-budget films including *The Blair Witch Project*, the most profitable independent film in history, as well as for companies raising as much as \$300 million.

Among other clients’ projects are *The Prophet (Kahlil Gibran’s)*, *Unlimited* (Nathan Frankowski), *Burning Bodhi, Greater, The Redemption of Henry Miller, Emoticon(,)*, *Moving Midway, Redemption Road, Haunted* (2012), *The First of May, The Open Road, Aluna, Yak: The Giant King, Visual Acoustics: The Modernism of Julius Shulman, My Father and the Man in Black* and *Michael Winslow Live*. Her corporate clients include Danny Glover’s Louverture Films (2008 nominee for Best Documentary Academy Award *Trouble the Water*), Pamplin Film Company (*Hoover*), Majestic World Entertainment, Gundersen Entertainment and Tokuma International Ltd. Levison was an Instructor in the Extension Program at UCLA for 22 years before moving to Florida. She also has been a Visiting Professor at the Taipei (Taiwan) National University of the Arts, ChapmanUniversity (Orange County, CA) and the University of Montana(Missoula). She also has presented seminars and/or been on panels at festivals and markets around the world.

Contact Levison at louisel@earthlink.net to find out how you can put her 30 years of experience as Film Business Consultant to work creating a business plan for your film.

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