



Producer's Workbook **5**

Essential reading for emerging
and established producers



Fully revised and updated
with an online component

Producer's Workbook 5

Presented by
Women in Film and Television Vancouver
and the Canadian Media Producers
Association – BC Producers Branch



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About Women in Film and Television Vancouver

Women in Film and Television Vancouver (WIFTV) is a not-for-profit society with a mandate to celebrate and advance the artistic development and careers of women working in screen-based media. We are at the forefront of the gender parity movement in the screen-based media industry and initiate and participate in national advocacy efforts. We offer a variety of programming designed to increase the participation of women in key creative roles in the production of screen-based media.

WIFTV's Board of Directors 2016/17 and 2017/18: Susan Brinton, Amanda Burke, Rachael Dudley, Eileen Hoeter, Carla Jones, Pamela Jones, Sarah Kalil, Shannon Kaplun, Dusty Kelly, Krista Magnusson, Sharon McGowan, Arianna McGregor, Meeshelle Neal, Nicola Pender, Michele Billy Povill, Kaila Sept, Jaclyn Smith, Peggy Thompson, Christina Toms, Karen Wong

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About CMPA-BC

The BC Producers Branch of the Canadian Media Producers Association (CMPA-BC) is a non-profit trade organization that works on behalf of over 90 British Columbia companies engaged in the production and distribution of television, feature film and digital media content. More specifically, it promotes the interests of its members with all levels of government; negotiates and manages labour agreements with guilds and unions; and undertakes a variety of export and industry development initiatives to build the capacity of BC-based companies.

Preface

The original Producer's Workbook was published in 1989 as a textbook for the 125 participants in a 16-day Business Skills for the Independent Producer workshop series, created by Women in Film and Television Vancouver (WIFTV) in its inaugural year. The Workbook's popularity immediately spread beyond the workshop and copies were sold across Canada and around the world. Since then, the Workbook has been revised four times to keep up with the ever-changing industry.

The Workbook continues to be the result of contributions from many producers willing to share their knowledge and expertise. Now, with the release of this fifth edition, WIFTV celebrates the enduring spirit of collaboration and mentorship that has kept this publication relevant for so many years.

The Producer's Workbook is an invaluable roadmap to independent producers bravely making their way through the ever-changing complexities involved with bringing a project from script to screen.

However, as every project is unique and presents its own challenges, producers are advised to always seek the advice of their own legal counsel as well as their own local production experts before embarking on their own production journey, and to carefully consult the published policies and guidelines of the agencies and organizations listed in this workbook (which are subject to change).

Throughout this book, the words film, project, video or screen-based content are used to represent a completed motion picture, ready for release, streaming or broadcast, whether it was shot or mastered on film, videotape or digital media.

PW5 Online

An online component (PW5 Online) has been created to accompany this book and can be found at www.womeninfilm.ca. PW5 Online contains a variety of forms and links to third party sites offering information and resources to the independent producer.

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WIFTV would also like to thank the many WIFTV members and contributors who have worked on the previous editions of the Producer's Workbook.





THE CMPA WORKS FOR PRODUCERS

THE CANADIAN MEDIA PRODUCERS ASSOCIATION WORKS TO ENSURE A PROSPEROUS FUTURE FOR YOU AND YOUR BUSINESS.

THROUGH ADVOCACY, INDUSTRY PROMOTION, NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES AND BEST-IN-CLASS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, THE CMPA HELPS PRODUCERS GET THEIR PROJECTS TO THE OPENING NIGHT PREMIERE.

- WE ADVOCATE FOR POLICIES THAT SUPPORT CANADA'S INDEPENDENT PRODUCERS AND THE COUNTRY'S SCREEN-BASED PRODUCTION SECTOR
- WE NEGOTIATE ON BEHALF OF INDEPENDENT PRODUCERS WITH UNIONS, GUILDS, BROADCASTERS AND FUNDERS
- WE CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ESTABLISHED AND EMERGING CONTENT CREATORS TO EXPAND THEIR SKILL SET AND GROW THEIR BUSINESS
- WE OPEN DOORS TO INTERNATIONAL MARKETS
- WE SECURE EXCLUSIVE RATES FOR INDUSTRY EVENTS AND CONFERENCES



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INTRODUCTION

The role of the producer is difficult to define. The producer may be responsible for the entire production, from conception to screening and everything in between. If she is making a feature with a micro budget her duties may include cleaning up after the crew has left. In contrast, a network television series may have a team of producers, each responsible for only one aspect of production, like finance or creative.

The tasks of producing are many and varied and producing is characterized by challenge and change. Technology transforms, funding opportunities come and go, and the production landscape is in flux. Each screen-based media project tells a different story, and each story requires its own path to production. As such, there is not one way to produce but instead a myriad of changing possibilities and opportunities that must be navigated.

The workbook is intended to accompany those producing within the Canadian funding model (including international co-productions). It provides a wealth of information pertaining to the variety of elements producers may confront along their production paths as well as tips and commentary from successful independent producers. While the phases to bringing a project to completion are overlapping, the book defines seven distinct phases and devotes a chapter to each: The Production Company and Getting Started; Script and Development; Financing; Production; Post-Production; Distribution; and Marketing.

The workbook is complemented by an online component where up-to-date forms and resources can be found. Each chapter has a corresponding set of online materials to help the producer obtain the most current and useful information. To access **PW5 Online**, please visit www.womeninfilm.ca.



Writing about being a producer...

is not a very exciting idea, to me. Why? Because, by itself, the job has no interest to me; it is a tedious undertaking. We all love to be loved, and you will rarely find that attainment under BEING a producer. When the film is judged to be good, it is, and justly so, the work of the director, and when it is bad, it is primarily the producer's fault.

So, why do it? I get excited about being a producer when I can talk with a writer or director about an idea... and a dream.

The rest will be negotiations, lawyers, accountants, bankers, funders, and being an everyday watch-person: making sure everybody gets along, making sure everybody respects the budget, making sure, making sure, making sure and making sure. All this with a smile, a lot of anxiety and fingers crossed that you will not go bankrupt.

It will ONLY be worth it if I can dream of that good, if not great, idea – that dream that we want to see come true.

It will ONLY be worth it if I know, deep in my heart, that when the audience sees the finished work, it will also please them. It will warm their hearts, lighten their burdens and help them become better human beings. If so, we will have the privilege of sharing an experience through which they have derived a certain pleasure, whether through the sensation of a new emotion or the enrichment of the knowledge.

AND, if we make money, real money... the kind that only comes once you have paid back the \$100,000 to \$6,000,000 budget needed to see the dream come true... Well, I'll be darned: sharing it with the writer and director would be heaven on earth. I can dream, can't I?

Louise Carre, Writer, Producer, Director



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Thank you to our sponsors	8
Chapter 1: The Production Company and Getting Started	13
INTRODUCTION	14
BUSINESS STRUCTURES	14
STARTING FROM SCRATCH.....	16
A GUIDE TO READING CONTRACTS.....	16
Chapter 2: Script & Development	19
INTRODUCTION	20
WRITING	20
RIGHTS AGREEMENTS FOR WRITTEN PROPERTIES.....	21
WRITER SERVICE AGREEMENT	23
DEVELOPMENT FINANCING.....	24
DEVELOPMENT BUDGET.....	25
PITCHING	27
Chapter 3: Financing.....	29
INTRODUCTION	30
FINANCING SOURCES	30
THE COMPLETION GUARANTEE.....	41
CO-PRODUCTIONS.....	42
Chapter 4: Production.....	45
INTRODUCTION	46
PRODUCER'S ROLE.....	46
PRODUCTION PREPARATION	48
ROLES ON THE SET.....	51
SAMPLE – PRE-PRODUCTION TIMELINE – CREW START DATES	53
FILM INDUSTRY UNIONS AND GUILDS	55
THE LABOUR RELATIONS BOARD.....	55
WORKING IN CANADA.....	55
FILMING OUTSIDE CANADA.....	56
THE DIRECTOR CONTRACT.....	57
DEAL MEMOS	64
LOCATION RELEASES.....	71
LICENSED MATERIAL.....	71
PRODUCT PLACEMENT / BRAND INTEGRATION / EMBEDDED MARKETING	72
ARCHIVAL AND STOCK FOOTAGE	72
PRODUCTION INSURANCE.....	73
PRODUCTION BINDER	82

Chapter 5: Post-Production.....	83
INTRODUCTION	83
HELPFUL TECHNICAL DEFINITIONS	84
CAMERA SELECTION AND CAPTURE FORMATS	85
ARCHIVING AND BACKUP	86
EDITING	86
SAMPLE POST-PRODUCTION WORKFLOWS.....	86
POST-PRODUCTION ROLES	87
VISUAL EFFECTS (VFX)	90
OPENING TITLES / CLOSING CREDITS	90
TRAILERS AND BUMPERS.....	90
SOUND DESIGN	91
FINAL OUTPUT AND DELIVERY	91
THE CONSULTATION AND APPROVAL PROCESS	92
TEST SCREENINGS.....	92
PICK UPS	92
BROADCAST VERSIONS.....	93
ARCHIVING IMPLICATIONS	93
MUSIC LICENSING AND ACQUISITIONS	93
DELIVERY ITEMS	97
DEVELOPING CURRICULUM MATERIALS TO ACCOMPANY PRODUCTION	98
 Chapter 6: Distribution	 100
INTRODUCTION	100
SELF-DISTRIBUTION	101
DISTRIBUTION AND LICENSING AGREEMENTS.....	103
THE DISTRIBUTION AGREEMENT.....	108
FEATURE FILM DISTRIBUTION.....	110
 Chapter 7: Marketing.....	 115
INTRODUCTION	115
SOCIAL MEDIA	116
PUBLICITY AND THE PRODUCER.....	119
 Conclusion.....	 125