

FILM DISTRIBUTOR ADVANCE/PRESALE

When it comes to financing your film, I'm sure that the thought of how you plan to sell or give the rest of the world the opportunity to see your work has across your mind.

Here's where the first financing method comes in.

Would you like to receive a reasonable chunk of money to go towards your production budget, and have a guarantee that it will be shown to an audience?

If so, then welcome to the world of *film distributor advances and pre-sales*.

Presales are based on the script and cast selling the right to distribute a film in different territories *before* the film is produced. This is a primary means of film financing, especially when it comes to making bigger budget movies. Once the deal is made, the distributor will insist the producers of the film project deliver on certain elements of content and cast.

You can receive a worldwide presale, domestic presale or foreign presale deal, but usually independent producers are most successful at attempting the presale of foreign rights.

The amount given to filmmakers in the form of distribution advances varies depending on the selected actors, director and the specific film genre. As a general rule, producers can expect to raise 60% to 70% of their budget from foreign presales and 30% to 40% from domestic advances. If you live in

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America it can be a challenging task to secure domestic rights for a film project that is in development.

Independent filmmakers usually have better success financing their films with a combination of equity money and foreign presales. Most often than not, the U.S. distribution rights to the movie are sold once the project is completed. One of the keys to successfully securing a presale deal is working with a competent international sales agent or producer's rep.

In a nutshell, an international sales agent is someone who travels the world in search of new and original ways to sell, license and finance movies. Their role is to create relationships with qualified film buyers and distributors in all of the major territories throughout the world. They are constantly informed and up-to-dated on what types of films will sell in various territories, what genres are the most popular and which film buyer pays and which ones do not.

A producer's rep on the other hand is more involved with filmmakers throughout the financing, production, marketing and distribution of a film. They should be considered like an agent for the producer.

If a producer's rep highly recommends a film project to a distributor or a sales agent that will catapult a filmmaker's chances for success by tenfold.

If you decide to use presales to finance your movie than its recommended that you partner with a producer's rep as early as possible during the development or pre-production phase.

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So what will all this potentially cost you?

Generally speaking, international sales agents will charge from 10% to 35% of the gross receipts from each territory your movie sells in. A producer's rep usually earns a flat fee or a commission fee ranging from 5% to 20% of your film's budget or revenue generated from the movie.

Getting the interest of a distributor in your project while it is in the development or pre-production stage will not only help trigger the money train but also dramatically increase the opportunity of your film becoming a financial success.

What is an effective method for contacting film distributors?

Email.

You can email a few film distributors, attaching a production budget top sheet, financing scenario and a one-page synopsis of your proposed film project.

If the distributor is interested in the film project they will request that you send them a copy of the film's screenplay to further evaluate the project.

If they are attracted to the film project they will then discuss details about investing money into the project i.e. casting and talent, distribution rights, contracts.

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