

Off the air

Screenrights' Newsletter

screenrights

Screenrights is a non-profit company which administers copyright licences in Australia and New Zealand and collects similar royalties from Europe and North America for its 2,500 members from 52 countries.

April 2007

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The newly branded EnhanceTV ATOM Awards are calling for entries.

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This is an online newsletter. You can subscribe by emailing ota@screenrights.org

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Feature: To market to market

No one ever gets a second chance to make a first impression, according to AFC Acting Manager, Marketing, Frances Leadbeter, and these are words that should be noted by all filmmakers before they commence knocking on doors.

"I think one of the challenges many filmmakers face here is pitching," Frances told **Off the air**. "I have heard it said (more than once) by international sales agents that the only time they have been pitched to whilst at a urinal, was by an Australian!"

"The key thing to remember is that this business is about relationships, and how you approach someone to try and get them interested in your project will be remembered – and if it is a bad or inappropriate approach, it will be remembered for every project you have."

The AFC's Marketing branch aims to help Australian filmmakers and their work participate in the global marketplace. It does so by providing: travel grants to attend international film festivals and markets; an operating base at major international markets and festivals which filmmakers can use for meetings, promotional materials or communication; information about the international market place to Australian filmmakers, and information about Australian films in the international marketplace. It also hosts key international festival scouts/selectors/directors who come to Australia looking for films for their festivals, and it organises several national initiatives providing a marketplace environment for filmmakers.



AFC Stand at MIPTV 2006

All filmmakers face a number of challenges, first in getting their projects financed so that they can go into production, and then in getting an audience for their film, but the experts do have tips to make it slightly easier.

In terms of pitching, Frances advises filmmakers to think of pitching as a conversation rather than a performance.



MeetMarket 2007 pitching room

"Pitch in a way you are comfortable with – don't force yourself to be something you are not," she said. "A gimmick can get people's attention but make sure you also have the substance behind it."

Experts who have participated in AFC marketing initiatives stress the importance of marketing to the industry even before the film is marketed to an audience. This is a matter of knowing sales agents and distributors, researching what they buy and understanding their taste, with filmmakers advised to tailor their pitch to the buyer rather than using a scattergun approach.

Frances also urges filmmakers to try and protect their marketing budget for marketing, with stills and material for the trailer both being important tools that should be budgeted for.

"Take stills during your shoot (rather than after) as these can be very helpful in conveying the general mood or atmosphere of your work," she said. "You can also use these for postcards, flyers and other marketing materials, and a good still can help your film being highlighted in a festival catalogue or programme."

The trailer should be seen as an advertisement for the film, with experts usually advising that less is more.

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"It doesn't need to convey your entire plot line but at the same time it does need something more than mood alone. If you can afford it, get a different editor to work on your trailer – their objectivity can be invaluable," Frances said.

Once a project is complete, one of the key challenges can be finding an appropriate festival for the international premiere.

"Trying to figure out which festival your film is best suited to is a challenge and requires some research from filmmakers," Frances said. "A good starting point is to look at the International Festival Profiles on the AFC website, including researching what Australian films have screened previously at the festival with tips from filmmakers who have attended."

Frances sees festivals as crucial for international exposure, critical feedback, awards and sales and networking opportunities.

"If you have a sales agent it is their job to sell your film internationally – work with them as they often have a good relationship with key festivals," she said.

Being realistic is also imperative.

"Don't be disheartened if you do not get accepted into Cannes, Venice or Berlin," France said. "There are only a limited number of places available within a particular program within a film festival and they have to choose from a large number of submissions. Keep researching and choose festivals that have an affinity with your film!"

The AFC website is an excellent starting point: www.afc.gov.au

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New Screenrights website

Screenrights has launched its new website: www.screenrights.org, with easy to navigate links for filmmakers and the people who use their work.

The new site provides general information about Screenrights and has a series of quick links that allow members to readily find the information they need to update or check title registrations, as well as details about all of Screenrights' services.

Marketing manager Kerry Franta said the site had a complete overhaul and was "extensively tested with the film industry and education sector."

"All navigation and content has been revised," she said. "The new site also has a much fresher look with regularly changing images. It will be a dynamic and useful communication tool for our members and for the education sector."

Deadline for 2001 royalties

With the deadline for distributing 2001 royalties fast approaching, Screenrights is contacting rightsholders who may have a claim to this money.

Under its Articles of Association, Screenrights has six years in which to distribute educational copying royalties. The deadline for 2001 royalties is 30 June 2006.

With only 2.46% of the Australian pool and 3.9% of the New Zealand pool remaining, the team has continued its excellent record in distributing the money that it collects.

"Our aim is to get as much of this money into our member's hands as possible," Member Services Executive Emma Rogers said. "We are urging anyone whose program was broadcast during this period and who believes they may have a claim to contact us."

If you have any questions, email memberservices@screenrights.org

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ISAN mandatory for HD-DVDs

Filmmakers wanting to release their films on high definition DVD will need to obtain an ISAN, the unique new identifying number for audio-visual material.

With the authoring tools for both of the new high definition DVD formats, BluRay and HD-DVD, requiring an ISAN as metadata, it is clear that ISAN is being embraced by the industry as the most efficient way of identifying material in a global digital age.

ISAN is a unique, internationally recognised and permanent reference number that enables the work to be identified quickly and easily, regardless of the formats in which it is distributed (eg. DVD, video recording), or its uses (film, television, mobile phones, Internet etc). It will improve efficiencies in future collection of rights royalties, digital distribution systems (eg 3G and the internet) and Digital Rights Management operability.

Developed by ISO (the International Organisation for Standards), ISAN launched its Australasian registration agency in June last year, operated by Screenrights and APRA.

Since its launch the FFC have made it a requirement for newly funded projects to obtain an ISAN.

To find out more about obtaining an ISAN visit <http://www.australasia-isan.org>

EnhanceTV ATOM Awards call for entries

The newly branded *EnhanceTV* ATOM Awards are calling for entries.

The Awards recognise excellence in over 30 categories of Australian and New Zealand film, television, animation and multimedia and are open to independent filmmakers, production companies, educational bodies and educational producers.

Now in its 25th year, the Awards are at the forefront of the development of Australian screen culture, with particular emphasis on documentary, new media, short film and educational/vocational productions.

The deadline for entries is 20 June 2007, with the awards presentation to be held in Melbourne on October 19.

For more information visit: www.atomawards.org