

THE FILM

CROWD



Film booking 101

with David Shear



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ADVICE FROM THE EXPERT!



David is CEO of Shear Entertainment, a consultancy company that works with Distributors, Producers and Filmmakers on their projects.

He is also currently works with Lorton Entertainment and Curzon Artificial Eye and was previously Head of Theatrical Distribution at Revolver, working on such titles *as Ill Manors, Tell No One, The Imposter, Exit Through the Gift Shop, Anuvahood* and the first live action digital 3D release in the UK, *U23D*.

Read on to find out more about David's expert advice on how to get your film booked and much more...

FOR AN INDEPENDENT FILMMAKER, WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO APPROACH EXHIBITORS FOR FILM BOOKINGS?

Politely! Exhibitors are incredibly busy and have 10-15 films on offer every week from established distributors, so it's best to send them a concise but comprehensive pack including **synopsis, cast, key crew** and ideally some **stand-out marketing materials** so that they can see exactly who your film is aimed at. If you've played at a festival and garnered **strong reviews** then definitely include those as well.

Do some research on who you're approaching as if you've made a pure arthouse title, then Showcase and Empire are probably not your best bet. Likewise if your film is a genre film aimed at teens, it's probably not one for Curzon Cinemas...

Not sure where to start? Look at the ICO website for exhibitor lists:

<http://www.independentcinemaoffice.org.uk/resources/cinemas/default.asp>

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ARE THERE STANDARD TERMS FOR INDEPENDENT FILMS? IF SO, HOW CAN YOU ENSURE YOU GET THE BEST POSSIBLE DEAL?

Independent films tend to be booked on standard terms with each exhibitor, so bear this in mind!

It tends to range between 25-35% back to the filmmaker/distributor, though that can be increased for live Q&A's.

Some filmmakers are becoming their own distributors by using [OURSCREEN](#):

OURSCREEN is where film fans can control their local cinema. In three easy steps

1. Pick a film
2. Decide where and when
3. Share your screening

Check out recent report on the power shift in film exhibition here:

<https://stephenfollows.com/power-shift-in-film-exhibition/>

WHAT ADDITIONAL COSTS SHOULD YOU BE AWARE OF WHEN YOUR FILM IS BEING BOOKED ?

The key costs are delivery of materials, like your **Digital Cinema Package (DCP)**, **trailer** and **posters** to the cinemas plus the **Virtual Print Fee (VPF)** all need to be taken into account when your scoping out your distribution budget.

What is a VPF?

This is essentially a hire charge to access the digital projector. This ranges from £60 for a one off show up to £500+ for a full week. Not all cinemas charge VPF's so it's worth doing your research and trying to play in non-VPF screens in order to save money.

Just under a year ago Picturehouse Cinemas ended their VPF, find out more here: <http://www.screendaily.com/news/picturehouse-ends-virtual-print-fee/5100865.article>

CAN AN INDEPENDENT FILMMAKER UNDERTAKE BOOKINGS THEMSELVES OR ARE THERE PROFESSIONALS OUT THERE WHO DO THIS?

It is possible to go direct to the cinemas, especially if there is a local connection and even more so if you have a film that you think would play really well with a particular cinema chain.

However, it is certainly easier to either go through a distributor or a freelance cinema sales person.

The upside of going through a professional is that they have long-standing relationships with exhibitors and they know which films will appeal to which cinemas. They know how comparable films have performed at specific cinemas and are able to use that information to help sell the film in.

IN THE AGE OF DIGITAL STREAMING IS IT JUST AS IMPORTANT TO LOOK AT ON DEMAND PLATFORMS AS A SOURCE OF REVENUE TOO?

Digital streaming has become an important revenue stream, along with theatrical and DVD.

It's not possible to go direct to the bigger platforms like iTunes so filmmakers would again need to go through a distributor or an aggregator like [Under The Milky Way](#) or [The Movie Partnership](#).

Likewise, digital distributors like Netflix or Amazon will only work with official partners otherwise they would have to contract with thousands of different parties in each territory if every filmmaker went to them direct.

WHAT IS YOUR TOP TIP FOR MAXIMISING A FILM'S SALES AND BOOKINGS?

Know your audience and tailor your marketing materials accordingly – if your film is skewed towards a younger demographic than its likely they are active on social media so make sure you invest in interesting digital content such as gifs and video to engage them!

Also, if you're willing to travel up and down the country with your film, that usually helps secure bookings.

The FilmCrowd alumni *Light Years* did just that with their film, find out more here: <http://www.screendaily.com/news/how-light-years-took-the-direct-distribution-route/5109724.article>

FURTHER INFORMATION

Do you have a film project that needs Film Sales & Distribution Consultant?

Drop David a line: david@shearentertainment.co.uk



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