

# Finicky financing for filmmakers

Seminar teaches better ways to get backing for movies

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Larry Meistrich speaks to aspiring Canadian filmmakers and content creators.

Canada is full of creativity and talent but its filmmakers can be lazy when it comes to securing money, says one Hollywood producer.

Hollywood veteran Larry Meistrich, best known as the executive producer of *Sling Blade*, said Canadian filmmakers need to get a better grip on financial matters to forge successful careers in the movie industry.

"There's a really good creativity that comes out of Canada, but I think there's a laziness because it seems like there's also very little drive to get the investors and get the equity," he said, suggesting that government grants and film funds tend to pamper Canadian filmmakers.

Yet, Meistrich insists that real funding can be found in Canada for filmmakers willing to work hard and offer investors good incentives to dole it out.

Working with *Sex And The City* producer Antonia Ellis, Meistrich helped produce a series of filmmakers' Boot Camp seminars across Canada, which let aspiring producers, directors, actors and writers from across the country get professional advice directly from the Meistrich and Ellis.

The first piece of financial advice offered by Meistrich? Don't think your investors are stupid.

Rather than asking wary investors to pony up huge sums of cash with little to no guarantee of ever seeing it again, Meistrich suggests offering something worth investing in — yourself. Have a second or third movie idea already in the works before starting on the first one and offer investors chunks of your future earnings, perhaps as much as 5 per cent or more, rather than trying to peddle a dubious slice of unlikely profits from your first project.

"You should ask people not to gamble. Make people invest in you," Meistrich said.

Of course, Meistrich admits many first-time producers are loath to sell off a chunk of their financial futures so early, but he insists people who truly want to be in the industry have to think of the long term and understand where investors are coming from.

"Don't be greedy. Your investors should make more than you because they took the risks. If you sit in front of an investor with that attitude, they're going to appreciate it because they'll see you understand the money situation," Meistrich said.

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