

Methods Note v.22.5.18 – For Information Only – updated 17.12.2018

Examining the understanding and management of risk in the film industry.

The research examines the technical methods, experience-driven practices and business structures by which practitioners and the sector overall understand and manage specific sources of risk and broader industry uncertainties.

Research methods used include, primarily, analysis of consultations with over 40 high-level film industry professionals from across the film value chain (the sequential sub-sectors, including production, distribution and exhibition - the FVC), and consultations with three world-leading academics.

The research process included formal interviews and background consultations. Participation was voluntary and anonymity offered for interviewees in order to access the richest information. Some participants wished to be quoted and named; some wished to be quoted and anonymous; some wished not to be quoted but purely to provide information to enable deep understanding. Different publications utilise different combinations of data according to purpose and format. The information provided includes experienced expert insight, direct data provision, demonstration of private IT systems and Beta testing of new toolsets. The focus is on the UK and film, but necessarily draws on the contextual environment, which is international and cross-media, with information from practitioners in the US, China and EU institutions.

Insight is drawn from representative / regulatory bodies, and from those integrated with relevant broader audiovisual sectors (TV, VR, Theatre) and creative industries (music, publishing). The analysis benefits from the input of: independent film producers; independent film and TV producers; TV networks; public and private film financiers – specialist and institutional; physical production entities; integrated companies across production, distribution, exhibition in the UK & other territories; larger scale international / US producers; Mini-Majors; Majors; VOD platforms; and Chinese conglomerates. Experts in legal and business affairs; HR; casting; industry analytics; and VR –VFX further contributed to the study.

For independent companies, the interviewee was typically the Owner / Founder / CEO, and in production these entities are Oscar, Golden Globe and BAFTA nominees. Within larger companies / institutions / multinationals, the interviewees are at the level of: Managing Director, Chief Business / Creative Officer; Director / Head of Department (Productions; Legal and Business Affairs; Investments; Fund; Policy; Business Development; Creative Technology); Vice President (Legal, Commercial, Acquisitions). Professors consulted are at the Institute / Program Director level for initiatives combining business / management and creative arts in the US.

The insights of these experts were analysed alongside any data or demonstrations that they provided. In addition, at the secondary level, more than 300 documents were analysed, including company literature, academic research and industry reports.

By exploring investment and other risk related decisions on an individual project basis and with regard to business management via personal interviews and direct data access, richly detailed information of current practice and institutional knowledge can

be accessed. The resulting quantitative and qualitative data was analysed together, thematically, from a middle-ground constructivist perspective. A composite narrative from a constructivist viewpoint has been developed by examining the industry interviewee data, archival and contextual information and analysing this information through first level dimensions, secondary order themes and then aggregated components. Relevant codes were developed via the initial question areas noted in the research synopsis Section 3, emergent themes from data assembly, and iterations of thematic groupings.

Updated Context

Recent major project publications concerning the boarder landscape of the film industry offer useful comparator contributor lists to illustrate the type and level of involvement in the risk research. The BFI Commission on UK Independent Film and BFI Report on Screen Business by Olsberg SPI with Nordicity involved multiple participants who also contributed to this risk research.

For example, this research benefits from the participation of fifteen commission members and two further consultation respondents with the BFI Commission (either the specific individual or an individual of similar seniority at the same Organisation / Company). This shared response base includes representation across independent production, major studios, mini-majors, TV companies, financiers, representative bodies, and public organisations. In other sectors, such as award winning independent film & high end TV producers and VOD services, this research has participation from different but equivalent level companies and individuals. In addition to those already counted the research benefits from the input of five further members of the British Screen Advisory Council.

Where, due to its particular subject, this study differs in its participant base from those mentioned above is in its inclusion of on integrated production, acquisition, distribution and acquisition in the US; inclusion of participant expertise from casting, HR, and wider finance; and academic insight from the US where research into business and creative aspects of film industry and data science are significantly advanced.

Methodologically Relevant References

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