

**QUICK
GUIDE**

HOW TO MAKE A **FILM** FOR \$500 WITH NO CREW...



AND CREATE FINANCIAL FREEDOM FROM IT

Just Let Go ...

Let go of all your fears and surrender. Sometimes when you feel like you have no choice, you have to do just that ... **let go**. But letting go is a choice! That's what I did the evening of my wife's birthday dinner. No, I didn't get plastered or go streaking ... hmm, that could have been fun.

My full-time employer was suddenly unable to pay me my paycheck. I worked for a company whose clients were schools. So, when school funding was slashed, my company felt the pain. I made videos, cartoons, and assisted in the web development for my employer. I was happy, I was content, I was making money doing what I studied in college ... Filmmaking! Of course, I wanted to make my own movies, who doesn't when you come out of film school? But I'm an old man now dammit, I hurt myself just reaching for the remote ... having a family also changes things and thus ... your priorities change too.

My employer didn't completely shut down, so thankfully our health insurance was still in place; they simply informed us that it was going to be a long time before anyone would be paid at the company. Bummer. So, what do you do? Just **let it go**, it's out of my control, right? I could only focus on what was happening in the moment ... to be mentally present of the "**now**".

It was my wife's birthday, it was her day, so I just **let go** of my crap and focused on enjoying her birthday festivities with friends and family.

It's a funny thing when you **let go**, it's as if all your mental anxiety just takes a giant deep breath. Needless to say, I had a great time that night ... and **NO**, it didn't involve sexy time. It was her birthday, remember? Haha.

We just had a blast spending time with good people. Our friends had just moved into this new apartment that overlooked the city of Portland, Oregon. That's where we live, by the way. So, after the birthday dinner, we all took a quick tour of the new digs. It was one of those cool concrete-styled apartments -- hell, there was even a concrete pillar in the middle of the room!

My wife and I returned home and conked out. But I couldn't sleep. Not because I was stressed. My imagination just ran wild ... all kicked off by checking out our friends' new apartment.

I awoke early that morning with the clearest thought I'd ever experienced. I knew the beginning, middle, and end of a story that could be made into a movie. A movie that could be shot primarily in my own house. I've been stumbling for years trying to come up with a story that I could realistically produce in my own home. And I found one. I wrote down the outline that morning and BAM! — I was off and running.

Fast forward a few months later, and I did it! I finally made a feature film. I didn't have to think about whether or not my film was right for the market, or who my audience was going to be, or how much it was gonna cost (because it cost practically nothing!), that's why you're reading this quick guide, which isn't turning out to be that quick at all.

Nope. I didn't allow myself to worry about any of that stuff. I simply **let go** and was inspired to write down an idea that turned into a feature film.

The film is called **THE CUBE** and you can check it out at www.thecubemovie.com.

I'm sure my story is nothing new, but what made it special for me was that it was made for **\$500 with no crew**. After all, you saw that in the title of this quick guide, so you knew already that. It wasn't my plan to **NOT** have a crew ... it just worked out that way. I had set things in motion, my actress was in place and she said that she would be leaving the country, so if I wanted to make this thing, I'd better get going -- it became "go" time. I just followed what Richard Branson is famous for saying, "Screw it! Let's do it!"

I used my creativity to figure how to get scenes shot with no one behind the camera and with no one recording sound. Drum roll forward -- I did it!

How To Make a FILM for \$500 with No Crew

1. Your story must take place in 1-2 accessible locations. Like your own house!
2. You must have (or have free access to) your own equipment. That means everything, camera, sound gear, lighting kits, and editing software.
3. Actors who are willing to work for free. Friends and Craigslist!
4. You will most likely be one of the actors, so you'll have to design a shot list of primarily locked-down (stationary) shots, as your camera will remain on a tripod since there will be no operator. Remember no crew!
5. Be sure to get a camera with a flip out LCD screen or moveable viewfinder.
6. Use a mic stand as your stand-in to help focus the shot. Again you have no crew.
7. Check your shots after each take to ensure that it was in focus. Haha. No crew.
8. Same principle holds true when you are acting with another actor. Set up the stationary shots, use a tripod to approximate your location. Hit record on your camera and act!
9. Plug your mics into a separate audio recorder, position everything off screen, use a boom mic stand and secure the stand with sandbags.

10. What I should have done with the audio recording instead, was invest into battery powered lavalier mics, and plug them into small portable audio recorders. Each actor would have their own recorder hidden in their wardrobe. No fussing with wireless technology.
11. Each actor must clap or snap before each take to help with video and audio synchronization.
12. Avoid shooting around meal times. I only shot in 4-hour increments. I have a full-time job, so it would have to be after hours and before dinner time. I couldn't afford to pay for meals. On weekends, I shot from 9am-12pm, or 2pm-5pm. Again avoiding the expense of meals altogether. Then again I had no crew!
13. Shooting indoors, I replaced all in-house lightbulbs with ugly bright daylight fluorescent lights that would match the same color temperature of the outside light. It looked ugly in person, but the color balance in the camera was beautiful.
14. Take all the footage and edit yourself!
15. Most importantly, don't take it too seriously, have fun and accept that things won't be perfect. With no crew, what can you expect?

How To Create Financial Freedom With Your Film

Digital Revolution

The digital revolution has shattered the barriers that may have held back independent filmmakers from making their films. Being in the film business is no longer an exclusive club that the lucky few auteurs get to enjoy. Prosumer cameras and filmmaking software has given everyone the tools to produce their own movies.

Film Financing Breakthrough

In addition, the barrier for raising film financing has been shattered with the onslaught of crowd funding participation and the websites that facilitate such a movement.

Global Distribution Access

Lastly, the once coveted barrier of global distribution was so heavily influenced by the six major studios, it seemed impossible for any independent filmmaker to reach a wide audience.

But with the explosion of Video On Demand (VOD) and digital media players such as the Apple TV and the Roku box have allowed audiences to experience filmed entertainment on their home systems and do it at the audiences' own leisure.

iTunes, NetFlix, Amazon On Demand, and now Vimeo On Demand have helped kick down that distribution barrier. Independent filmmakers are free! There are no excuses anymore to NOT make a movie and share it with the world.

But how can your film stand out from the gluttony of all the other media competing for the same audiences? And how can you create a sustainable living through your films in order to make another one and another one after that?

Mindset Change

This is what I have come to accept. Hollywood is **NOT** in the film business. They are in the business of exploiting licenses. What does that mean? The big six studios:

- Walt Disney Company
- Fox Corp
- Universal
- Time Warner/Warner Bros.
- Viacom/Paramount
- Sony Pictures

The big six primarily utilize their film products as a gigantic marketing tool to exploit and sell the licenses they own. This is why they make so many sequels based off book franchises, toy franchises, etc. They control a license that they can exploit in film, TV, web, books, and multitude of media outlets.

Merchandising

Perhaps the glowing example of this was done not even by the studios themselves, but by George Lucas when he retained all the rights to the ancillary merchandise license for his Star Wars films. 20th Century Fox was only interested in retaining the film rights, not the merchandise rights. What sold more? What served as an advertisement for actual products?

This is how the big six can weather the storm when a film bombs. They have enough diversity to exploit their licenses in infinite areas of the market.

How does an independent filmmaker compete with that?

Maybe we shouldn't?

Nah.

Filmmakers Become Entrepreneurs

Now that the barriers for film production, film financing, and film distribution have been shattered ... the last barrier that remains is marketing.

Frankly, it's time for independent filmmakers to become entrepreneurs and champion their own work and learn basic marketing principles to grow their filmmaking career and transversely transcend their art.

Tips On How To Become An Entrepreneur

1. Change your mindset. Becoming an entrepreneur is as creative as making your film.
2. You must find your purpose in this world.
3. You must share your purpose with the world. This is the value you offer.
4. If your purpose is to attain fame and wealth, then you have nothing of value to give to the world.
5. Look outside the film industry to learn how to become an entrepreneur.

6. Remember, business is made up of four basic principles:
 - a. You're either selling a product/service (supply)
 - b. Is there a need for your product/service? (demand)
 - c. Is there a method of getting that product/service to your customer? (distribution)
 - d. How will your customers know about your product/service? (marketing/promotion)
7. Was it scary becoming a filmmaker? Why should becoming an entrepreneur be any different?
8. Becoming an online entrepreneur will shatter the barrier of marketing/promotion for your product/services.
9. Social media is a powerful tool to reach your audience/customers, it's an important tool, but there are some other methods that are less sexy but more effective.
10. Building an opt-in email list is one of the least expensive and most effective ways of reaching your audience/customers.
11. If you have discovered your purpose and value, you will be able to retain your audience/customers.
12. The secret to most successful entrepreneurs is they need to deliver a lot of value to be worthy for their audience/customers.

Conclusion

All things are possible and they are happening everyday to people just like you. If you want to make a film right now without a crew ... you can do it!

The inspiring thing about the YouTube generation coming up is that they don't wait, they just get on with it and just do it. And so can you ... no matter how old or how inexperienced you may feel you are. You're not. You are completely capable of creating a sustainable living through your films ... from you art.

My favorite quote comes from Walt Disney himself. "I only hope we don't lose sight of one thing - that it all started with a mouse."

The reason why you would want to make a film with no money and no crew is to keep your product development low ... in order to allow for the chance of earning a higher profit when it comes time to sell your film online.

One day, some kid is going to make a film for nothing ... upload it online ... and make \$1 million!

Remember when the smart phone app market emerged? A single programmer could create a "fart app" and make a million dollars. Who's to say this can't happen to a filmmaker? Maybe that filmmaker will be you?

Learn more at: <http://filmtrooper.com>