

Module 6 – How to Evaluate Success

Questions to Michel Pradier, Feature Films Director Feature Film – Telefilm Canada

Is it time-consuming for you to collect all these data or is it automatic?

We have a small Department taking care of collecting box office data. For festivals, we hire a freelancer.

Do you consider yourself responsible for the overall result the indexes show?

No. The only purpose of the tool is to show a company's performance, what it has done, or why it has been successful. It is not a decision-making mechanism. It is only neutral data. The positive side is that the new scheme shows that results are sometimes good, sometimes bad — unlike in the past, when they were calculated only on the basis of the box office and were continuously bad, which was frustrating. We do not feel responsible for a bad score. It shows, for example, that if international sales are bad, we can do something with promotion to improve the results.

If I have a bad company index because I am a beginner or I have a low frequency of production, but at the same time I have a very good script, what are my chances in the selection process?

The index only shows how we assess the track record of a company. It is crucial when we deal with applications by bigger players. When it comes to companies with low-budget films and a poor track record, we do not expect them to show that there is market interest for their films. We check only the content, and we demand that they have a marketing strategy on how to reach their targeted niche audience. The criteria will be reduced for them, and they will be compared with similar, same-ranking companies.

How do you communicate the results? At the end of the year, do you disclose the score of every single title or do you hide that information?

It is not publicly announced, but every production company can see their results. However, we do not give information to one company about other ones. What we are planning in the future is to make a graph that will give them an approximation of their position— the top quarter, bottom quarter, etc.—according to their index. Actually, we just made it possible for producers, directors, scriptwriters and production companies to access their portfolio and check their data. If necessary, they can call us and correct it.

Do you consider the Belgian tax shelter, for example, as a market interest?

No, according to our rules it can be considered as private investment, like all the financing sources (private and public money). Those amounts are included in the 10% of the mandatory market interest. In this way, we incite Canadian producers to co-produce more.

Is there a danger that one day we will merely feed all the data into the tool, and then the tool will decide which projects are going to be supported?

No, because we may still decide differently from the suggestion of our tool. If we receive a

project with a budget over 5M CAD but with no market interest, we can still support it if the director has an impressive track record. On the other hand, if a project is expensive and the director does not have a good track record, what our tool provides can be a good argumentation for rejecting the project. We can also suggest that the producer come back with a lower budget project. The tool can be used any way we want.

Do you have different requirements for a specific genre or children's films?

Yes, there are different benchmarks for different film genres.

This is the justification tool for your fund. It also increases efficiency in managing applications. But does it reflect reality?

It is just a proxy. But it is more reliable than the previous system when we evaluated everything only on the basis of CVs and box office results.