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# The Complete Filmmaker's Guide To Film Festivals: Your All Access Pass To Launching Your Film On The Festival Circuit



## **Synopsis**

The first step-by-step “How To” guide to film festivals, offering filmmakers a bird’s eye view of what it takes to have a successful festival experience. Practical, hands-on information with examples and exercises to help the filmmaker include: Targeting the right festivals; Creating a press kit; Promoting and branding your film; Promoting and branding yourself; Filling out entry forms; Creating a logline; And much more.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

The first step-by-step “How To” guide to film festivals, offering filmmakers a bird’s eye view of what it takes to have a successful festival experience. Practical, hands-on information with examples and exercises to help the filmmaker include: Targeting the right festivals; Creating a press kit; Promoting and branding your film; Promoting and branding yourself; Filling out entry forms; Creating a logline; And much more.

Rona Edwards. Graduating from California Institute of the Arts, Rona Edwards became Vice President of Creative Affairs for multiple Emmy-winner John Larroquette (Night Court), Academy-Award Winner Michael Phillips Productions (The Sting, Close Encounters of the Third Kind, Taxi Driver), and Emmy-winning and Oscar-nominated Producer, Fern Field (Monk, Heartsounds), before she was dragged kicking and screaming into the world of independent producing. As a Producer, she co-produced and/or executive produced One Special Victory (NBC) starring John Larroquette, The Companion (USA/SCI FI CHANNEL) directed by Gary Fleder, I

Know What You Did (ABC) starring Rosanna Arquette, Out of Sync (VH1) starring Gail O'Grady, and Der Morder Meiner Mutter (Sat.1/Studio Hamburg) for German television. Monika Skerbelis. Monika Skerbelis started her industry career as an assistant in the Story Department for Paramount Pictures, then moved over to 20th Century-Fox as an assistant story editor, later promoted to story editor. At the same time Universal Pictures offered her the opportunity to run their story department where she worked for ten years and was promoted from an executive story editor to a vice president. She developed a number of screenplays including Black Dog starring Patrick Swayze. In addition to her story department duties at Universal, she scoured film festivals, student film screenings, and screenwriting competitions in search of new filmmakers. Since its inception in 2000, Monika has been programming films for the Big Bear Lake International Film Festival, and has been the programming director of The American Pavilion Emerging Filmmaker Showcase at the Cannes Film Festival since 2008.

Having had several interactions with this pair (Edwards/Skerbelis) in person, I know well that they are in the business of writing books not to assist green filmmakers in navigating the confusing film festival circuit--but in making green themselves. (Don't believe me? Just visit their personal business site and let your jaw drop at their consultation prices, which are not industry standard, by the way.) Nevertheless, I read this book prior to meeting either, so my review, while exacting, is not based on personal bias. It is formed entirely upon the 'content' (or lack thereof) of the book...The book, in 2015, has several major problems. One of the greatest is that it is woefully OUTDATED for 2015. The way that film festivals evolve in technology, politics and structure--there is no excuse to publish a book and not revise in order to remain current. The fact that Edwards/Skerbelis have not done so is a blatant disservice to their readers, as well as a sign that they truly do not care about teaching the 'ins' and 'outs' of festivals circuits in the most contemporary ways possible. They are in it for the money. (Example: They run a small festival, Big Bear Mountain--which is plugged to no end in the book (conflict of interest?), and Skerbelis herself oversees the American Pavilion at Cannes each year. They each obviously have keen insight and up-to-date knowledge of the festival world, from several vantages and thus have absolutely no excuse not to make tweaks to their book, which would greatly enhance and assist their readers. (This one included. Much of what they speak about in this day and age is ill-advised. Festivals rules about certain things have changed. It is to one's detriment to follow their stale advice.) Another issue is that the book, frankly, seems like a 'catch-all' for anyone interested in the festival scene. The first several chapters are very basic introductions to the filmmaking world, the 'meat and potatoes' are really the submission process section / how to

enhance your submission and what programmers look for--though this is rather paltry--but then, the book goes on...and on...and on, to the point where you begin to wonder if they had a page quota to fill with their publisher. (Literally, an index defining such things as IMDb? A chapter dedicated to founding your very own film festival?) Less is more--which is often the tune that programmers themselves whistle. It's all a little ironic. Admittedly, peppered throughout the book are pieces of advice and interviews with filmmakers that, while not scintillating, are interesting enough to keep you reading. (An anecdote about Skebelis/Edwards meeting an executive at Orion Pictures was dated but a point well-taken when it comes to rubbing elbows with nearly anyone at festivals.) And the Duplass advice, in terms of which festivals he's enjoyed the most throughout his career (they're all off-the-grid), is a nice touch. It's not a poorly-written or slapped-together book by any means. But it's not fair to continue to sell it as something viable in today's ever-changing marketplace. Should Edwards/Skerbelis truly care about their audience, a major revision is past-due.

The authors definitely know what they're talking about. After working the film festival circuit for over 5 years, having gone to film school for over 6 years, I found myself back again, sitting in a film school classroom, while learning new things as if I were in a film festival kindergarten-like classroom setting...In other words, I was learning an abundance of new things. The wealth of information these authors cover when it comes to the industry (specifically film festivals), is just absolutely invaluable, but most of all, relevant to today's market. I highly recommend this book for all producers, agents, filmmakers, students, and industry professional...or better yet, this is a great addition to those aficionado of everything entertainment!

This fabulous book--"The Complete Filmmaker's Guide to Film Festivals: Your All Access Pass to..." truly helped me find and select choice film festivals that fit my production needs! I am even happy to say, that as an aspiring filmmaker, one of my short films got selected into a festival that I learned of in this absolutely wonderful guidebook! I would enthusiastically recommend this guide to any aspiring filmmaker! Three Cheers!

Highly recommend this book/survival-guide. These guys have been at, around, and run this game for some time. They know the global festival circuit very well and have awesome experiences and insight to share. Research and festival interviews/testimonials, submissions musts, markets, dealing with agents & distribution, are just some of the important subjects they tackle. If you're new and thinking about, planning for, or a serial festival entrant, this book is invaluable.

Rona Edwards and Monika Skerbelis have done it again! They have written the ultimate guide book for making Film Festivals work for you. Anyone with a film should read this book. It's filled to the brim with great insider information and practical advice. Keep it for your reference shelf and refer back to it often. These authors know how to make a text book interesting and easy to read.

too basic in my opinion. if you already know stuff about festivals this is not your book. if you don't know anything it's an ok way to start.

A marvelous book, which gives me wonderful additional insight into promoting my movies at film festivals! I heartily recommend it.

I finished a short film recently so this book was perfect to read to see if I wanted to enter my film into film festivals. Well, I did enter my film into a film festival and it was accepted! While reading this book, I took Rona and Monika's online class: Maneuvering Film Festivals, and it was excellent. They provided so much feedback on homework. If you aren't able to enroll in their class, I highly recommend this book to any filmmaker interested in getting your films seen other than on the internet. The authors go into detail about submitting to film festivals, promoting your film once accepted, creating an electronic press kit, what to do at a festival--most importantly HAVE FUN, and more. What a great reference book! So happy I found it and read it!

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