

Indie Film Hustle's 6 TIPS ON GETTING INTO FILM FESTIVALS FOR CHEAP OR FREE!

by: Alex Ferrari

Hello fellow filmmaker. I'm Alex. I've been in the film industry for **over 20 years** and have worked on over **1000** feature films, shorts, commercials, music videos, network promos, documentaries and webisodes. My personal films have been screened in **600+** film festivals around the world.

Many filmmakers have walked through my doors over the years and I have had the pleasure of a front row seat to see how all these projects start and finish. I've worked with Sundance and Academy Award™ winners as well as the beginning film student. Some projects make it and many never see the light of day.

I created **Indie Film Hustle** to share what I've learned over the years as a screenwriter, director, producer and post production/vfx supervisor. **IFH** is here to give you the **REAL DEAL**. The truth on how to make it as a filmmaker in this crazy and sometime brutal business.

You'll find my approach to the biz a bit raw and real. That's because I care about my fellow artists and filmmakers. I've seen and personally made many missteps over the years and I want to help you avoid making the same costly mistakes. The industry is abusive to the new comer and I hope I can help you navigate the shark infested waters.

I also run the **#1 Filmmaking Podcast** on iTunes, **The Indie Film Hustle Podcast**. Truly a wealth of free filmmaking knowledge with interviews from top industry insiders. But enough about me, let's get into those **Six Tips to Get Into Film Festival Cheap or FREE!**

1. HAVE A KILLER WEBSITE FOR YOUR FILM

One of the most important elements you need in a marketing plan for an indie film (short, feature or web series) today is your

website. Imagine going on a date and you want to impress someone but you come dressed in an outfit circa 1996. Probably won't go to well. Not having a website is death but having a poorly designed website is almost worse. Design is so important in every

aspect of your writing, producing and marketing of your project. Check out my guide to designing a killer website easily and cheaply with very little technical knowledge here: **[Build A KILLER Movie Website](#)**

2. MAKE A BAD ASS TRAILER

Filmmakers under estimate the power of a great trailer. The trailer for your film will be seen by more people than your full project. Trailers get the appetite wet for the film it's promoting, if done well.

Now action, comedies, horror and genre films have an easier time when trailers are being created but I've seen some drama and documentary trailers that gave me chills. As a storyteller, you have to create an emotional connection with your audience and the trailer is the first line of offense.

3. POSTER OR ARTWORK

"Give me a poster and a trailer and I can sell any picture." - Film Distributor.

I would like to think we have evolved beyond the above statement but unfortunately it is still true. Poster artwork is very important in creating a professional and artistic image for your project.

Want to have world class designers battle to give you an amazing movie poster? Then head over to **[99Designs.com](#)** and check out how they can design your movie poster, business cards, logos, festival fliers and more.

4. CREATE A LARGER THAN LIFE IMAGE FOR YOUR PROJECT

When potential film festival programmers come to your website, they will determine in 5 seconds if they are going to watch the trailer. If you create an "event" style website you odds go way up. What I mean is when creating your website you need to create the air that your film is getting a lot of attention and that it was a well produced and professional film.

When I made my short film **BROKEN**, I had a trailer, press page, wallpaper downloads, any festival laurels I had you could see them instantly, behind the scene videos, images, t-shirts, mugs, etc.

This gave my film an edge on the competition as **BROKEN** looked like big production film. Programmers loved it and we played that film in over **200 film festivals around the world** and I only paid for the first 20 festivals submissions. Now, the last two tips will bring everything I've been saying altogether.

5. SIGN UP FOR WITHOUTABOX

If you haven't heard, **Withoutabox.com** is the industry standard for film festival submissions for festivals and filmmakers. You

can create a profile on your project, upload you film and/or trailer and then festival programmers can watch you film digitally. No more burning DVDs, though some festivals still like you to send a DVD. Now the great thing is that Without a Box send you a weekly email with all the festivals submission deadlines approaching. Up to 6 months out.

What I did was go through every festival on the list weekly and email them the template below. It was so convenient not to have to hunt the internet for contact emails and phone numbers for festivals. The next tip the gold of this list.

6. EMAIL BABY, IT WORKS!

Before I continue, these templates work. My films have been in **over 600 film festivals** world wide and only paid for a fraction of them.

Now all I did was create a few email templates and cold emailed every festival I could get my hands on (please note: I suggest submitting to a ton of festivals for shorts, feature films should be a bit more selective but the above tips still apply).

Having all of the above in place the email I used worked like a charm. I would get accepted to maybe 4 out 10 festivals I'd send the email to. The basic outline of the email is:

Hello, I'm (insert name) and my film is (insert name). Here is a link to the trailer. Here is a link to the BTS videos of the film .Here is a quick synopsis.

I was wondering if you were interested in possibly screening (insert name) in this year's festival. If you like the trailer, we would be more than happy to send you a private link to the full length short/feature for your consideration.

Thank you again so much for you time.

Quick Tip: I also attach the movie poster in the email.

This email isn't asking for anything for free. You're just innocently asking to be part of the festival. Now, if the programmer is interested, then they'll email you back telling you how to submit. At this point you send them a follow up email.

Here is what I wrote:

Thanks for getting back to us. I hate to ask (and to be honest embarrassed to ask) but we are respectfully requesting a wavier of the entry fee to submit to your festival. We have already exhausted our entire film's & promotions budget and would still love to be a part of your festival. We put everything we had up on the screen =)

Please let us know. If you like the trailer, we would be more than happy to send you a private link the full short/feature for your consideration. Thank you again so much for you time.

After this I would get into 40%-60% of the festivals I sent this email too. Now if they email you back and say "no" you have one more chance. If I wanted to get into the festival bad I would say:

I completely understand. I have an idea, if you like we can send you a copy of (insert film name), if you like it and accept it into the festival we would pay the entry fee. It's just so expensive to shell out cash for festivals and not get shown. What do you think?

Thanks so much for your understanding.

I'm not about screwing over film festivals out of entry fees but I just want things to be fair. Spending \$25-\$50 on an entry fee and have no guarantee of play in the festival is nuts to me. If you have to pay \$25 to get screened at a festival I'm cool with that. Many festivals just want great content to screen and in many cases they'll let you in for free. There are 1000's of film festivals world-wide and they are **ALL** looking for amazing content to screen.

I'll have writing a ton of blog posts about film festivals on www.indiefilmhustle.com. What and who to submit to and why some festivals make more sense than others.

If you you want to go deeper down the rabbit hole of film festivals, I developed the **ONLY** online course dedicated to film festivals in the world.

Take a look at what this killer online course has to offer:

Film Festival Hacks: How to Submit Your Film Like a Pro.

Can't get your indie film into film festivals? Are you tired of spending TONS OF CASH, you don't have, on submission fees? Want to get the inside secrets to give your film the best chance on being accepted to film festivals?

- Don't have the money continue submitting to film festivals?
- Do you want to submit to film festivals for cheap or FREE?
- Do you want to learn how I got my films accepted into almost 600 international film festivals without paying submission fees?
- Do you want to Enroll NOW and get into the minds of film festival programmers? Let's get started?

Film Festival Hacks is a course pulls back the curtain on the film festival business (and it *is* a business). **THIS IS A MUST FOR ALL FILMMAKERS!**

Save **TIME** and **MONEY** by learning what film festivals are looking for and how to position your short or feature film to have a fighting chance of being accepted. This is a **LIVING COURSE**, we will be adding to it and updating it often!

You will be taught from both sides of "*the badge*." Alex Ferrari is an award winning filmmaker with almost 600 international film festivals under his belt. He'll show you tricks and techniques on how he got his features and short films accepted with paying little or **NO MONEY!**

Here's what legendary film critic Roger Ebert (which he met at a film festival) had to say about Alex's short film:

"BROKEN is essentially a demonstration of the mastery of horror imagery and techniques...effective and professional." - Roger Ebert (Chicago SunTimes)

On the "*other side of the badge*" is Chris Holland, author of ***Film Festival Secrets: A Handbook for Independent Filmmakers*** and festival organizer who has been on staff at two Academy-Accredited (Oscar-qualifying) film festivals.

Chris has also worked closely with the staff of more than 200 festivals worldwide, including ***Sundance, Slamdance, AFI Fest, SXSW***, and many more. Over the last decade he has consulted on festival strategy with hundreds of filmmakers just like you and helped them take control of their run on the festival circuit.

Here's a bit about Film Festival Hacks:

Included in this game changing course: more than 4 hours (and growing) of insider secrets and strategies for getting your film into film festivals (over 35 videos). There has never been an online seminar like this one -- it's the Ultimate Film Festival Course.

FILM FESTIVAL HACKS COVERS:

Why Submit to Film Festivals Today

- Audience Building
- Distribution for Your Film
- Career Building and Networking
- Travel the World
- Educate Yourself for FREE
- Prize Money and Awards

The Hidden Benefits of Film Festivals

- What are Your Goals?
- This is a Business, and the Film Festival is Your Customer
- How to Do Research
- How to Submit to Film Festivals for Cheap or FREE

Understanding the "Mystery" of How Film Festivals Program their Fests

- The Screening Process
- Common Fears and Myths
- Film Festivals Have an Audience to Serve
- The #1 Predictor of Film Festival Success

How to Leverage a Film Festival Screening to Help Sell Your Film

- Audience Building Techniques

- Networking with Other Film Festival Programmers
- Discover What Distributors Want and How to Find Them
- What are Your Chance of Getting a Traditional Distribution Deal?

Technical Requirements for Film Festival

- What's a DCP?
- Quicktime Compression
- HDCam vs HD-SR
- DVD and BluRay
- Warnings and Security

and much more!

To get a **30% OFF Coupon** on this course go to:

<http://www.filmfestivalhacks.com>

Good luck fellow filmmakers. It's a jungle out there.

Keep That Hustle Going,

Alex Ferrari

www.indiefilmhustle.com

Get Social with Indie Film Hustle:

Facebook: Indie Film Hustle

Twitter: @indiefilmhustle

Instagram: @ifilmhustle

YouTube: Indie Film Hustle TV

Podcast: IFH Podcast

IFH: Indie Film School