



Exploring the Film Producer: Russian and American Perspectives

Polina Faizullina

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Faizullina, Polina

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Abstract

This thesis explores the profession of the film producer from Russian and American perspectives. This study aimed to determine what being a film producer means, what the responsibilities are, and how the producer can influence the success of the film. The producer's role within a film production is considered somewhat obscure because the producer's responsibilities vary depending on specific production circumstances, the scale of the project, the size of the budget, and other aspects of film production processes. At the same time, the power that the producer wields, and his or her actions, directly influence the film's success.

It is widely accepted that the American film industry is one of the most successful in the world in terms of the number of films produced annually. Because the researcher is Russian and has some experience in the Russian film industry, curiosity was raised concerning the differences between the role of the producer in Russian and American perspectives. Therefore, the objective of this study was to explore differences between the process of film production in the United States and Russia. A review of the literature produced insights into the American film industry. Primary data was collected through semi-structured interviews with working professionals who each have substantial professional film production experience in Russia. The semi-structured interviews allowed in-depth findings and information for the study. The flow of information was natural, and the researcher was able to ask additional questions when new ideas arose during the interviews. Subsequently, the data from semi-structured interviews was reflected on the theoretical framework in order to reach conclusions about the phenomena studied.

Based on the results and analysis, an understanding of the film producer's profession and his or her functions was formed, and insights emerged from both the American and Russian industries. Possible ways of improving the Russian film production system are raised after examining the American industry's examples. In addition, limitations of the existing study are described, and recommendations with suggestions for improving further research are provided.

Keywords/tags (subjects)

The Film Producer, Film Production, Cinema Industry

Contents

1	Introduction	5
2	Theoretical framework	6
2.1	Film producer. His responsibilities and characteristics.....	6
2.2	How can a film producer be taught the necessary skills?.....	9
2.2.1	The challenges of film education in Russia.....	10
2.3	Ideation	10
2.4	Finding financial investment	12
2.4.1	How to find the money for film production in Russia?	12
2.4.2	How to find the money for film production in the U.S.A.?	14
2.5	Marketing.....	15
2.6	Distribution.....	16
2.6.1	Film distribution in the U.S.A.....	16
2.6.2	Film distribution in Russia.....	17
2.7	Cultural characteristics and main differences of Russian and American film production and producers	19
3	Research questions and objectives.....	23
4	Methods and data collection.....	24
4.1	Research design.....	24
4.2	Philosophical stance	25
4.3	Research approach.....	26
4.4	Research strategy.....	27
4.5	Methods and data collection	27
4.5.1	Semi-structured interviews	28
4.6	Analysis.....	28
4.7	Timeline of the research	29
5	Results.....	30
5.1	Participants of the interview.....	32
5.1.1	Ilya Shemytov.....	32
5.1.2	Galina Sytsko.....	32
5.1.3	Viktoria Lupik	32
5.1.4	Alexander Nazarov.....	33
5.1.5	Irina Savakova	33
5.2	This strange word - "PRODUCER."	33
5.2.1	Defining a film producer	33

5.2.2	The personality of a film producer	34
5.2.3	Role of education.....	35
5.3	Producer searching for idea	36
5.4	“Must have” supporting team members	38
5.4.1	Searching for a crew	38
5.4.2	Professional Networks	39
5.5	The biggest challenge “Where and how to get money for your film?”	40
5.6	Film script crisis:	42
5.7	Marketing	42
5.8	Differences between Russian and American film producing models	43
5.8.1	Different markets.....	43
5.8.2	Advantages of film education in the USA	45
5.8.3	Funding	45
5.8.4	Marketing is crucial!	46
5.8.5	Distribution	47
6	Discussion.....	47
6.1	Findings	48
7	Conclusions	56
7.1	Study limits.....	57
7.2	Suggestions for further research.....	58
	References	59

Figures

Figure 1	“bottom-up” approach of inductive theory.....	26
Figure 2	Ways to get Funding for a Film Production in Russia	52
Figure 3	the relationship between an idea and market research	55
Figure 4	Producer's power	57

Tables

Table 1	Research Implementation Timeline	29
Table 2	Coding: categories and codes.....	31

1 Introduction

It is impossible to give only one complete answer to the question “Who is a producer and what are his functions?” which will be universal for any country. Each region where film production is developed and works at least on an affordable level has its environment with its different factors that influence the producer’s actions, skills, habits of mind, and knowledge. In this study, the researcher look at the film producer profession from Russian and American perspectives. Why these two countries?

Hollywood today is the focus of the world’s primary film production resources. It might happen for many reasons, both cultural-ethnic and socio-cultural, as well as economical. Hollywood recruits not only the most talented people but also the most successful technologies in the world. According to Rodnynskiy, American and foreign banks and hedge funds have invested \$ 15 billion in Hollywood. Significant Chinese businessmen are increasingly talking about their intentions to invest in major American movies (Rodnynskiy 2016, pp. 220-221). The global success of American cinema and the local film production model is a well-known fact. Why is Russia the second country to study?

First, the author of this study is from Russia and is directly related to the film industry, and she almost graduated from the Russian University of Drama Arts. Secondly, Russian cinema is at the stage of active growth with variable ups and downs that are difficult to predict, and the researcher is curious to investigate this question. Moreover, another motivation for this research is that possibility of going to a master’s degree in film producing is being considered by the author.

Returning to the research question, in the film industry, there is no more obscure profession than a producer. One of the reasons it might happen is that the producer’s role varies depending on the specific production circumstances. In the modern film industry, a producer can be called a person who, without delving into the organizing process or responsibility for administrative tasks, gives money for the project and the one on which the entire document flow.

In this study, the main questions are “What are the functions of a film producer?” and “What are the differences between the process of film production in the United States and Russia?” Even though the researcher will talk about producing as a process that is inextricably linked with money

turnover and process organization, the researcher of this study study also will examine the personality of a successful film producer, his or her possibilities to influence the film's success, the people around him, and the cultural characteristics of producing in the USA and Russia.

2 Theoretical framework

2.1 Film producer. His responsibilities and characteristics.

Atanesyn (2007, p. 7) said, *“Это странное слово – “ПРОДЮСЕР”* [“This is a strange word – “PRODUCER”]

According to Atanesyn (2007), the film industry does not have a more incomprehensible profession than the producer's role because the producer's responsibilities are changing during a film production process all the time. In most films, several producers are working at the same time, and their tasks overlap. On the other hand, he states that sometimes it is impossible to find borders between them despite the task division.

Since a producer's work includes a variety of responsibilities that have been expanding over time – some U.S.A. cinematographers attempted to create a professional classification that after some time were accepted and applied all around the world:

- Creative producer – compared to other producers' types, a creative producer is immersed in the film production process in all its stages, from the choice of a scriptwriter to the film's release. In addition, he is responsible for the film company, for the quality of the product and rational use of budget money. A creative producer becomes a coordinator between a studio and a director and controls the work of an executive producer.
- Executive producer – a producer who plays this role is responsible for financial operations related to the creative side of film production.
- Line producer – when the film's budget is objectively big, a director and line producer work along with each other. Line producer plays the role of the manager-supervisor who is responsible for the optimization of financial operations. Also, one person may play the role of a line producer and a director simultaneously.

- Associate producer – even though this class of producers is usually considered just an assistant, a person who plays this role has many various responsibilities and has big chances to become a line producer during the film production process (Atanesyn 2007, pp. 7-8.)

In addition, Honthamer (2010) also outlines that producers' tasks and duties overlap. However, producers' roles and their definitions characterized by her have differences from those described by Atanesyn. She outlines executive producer, producer, co-producer, line producer, post-production producer, associate producer.

- Executive producer – a person responsible for the whole project overall; he or she controls and supervises other producers working on the film. What is more, he or she might find or invest money in the film production and owns the rights. Also, it could be possible that the role of an executive producer is played by one of the actors in the film (this is happening more and more often nowadays) who gets a role this way.
- A producer is a person who controls several departments in the film production process (creative part, administrative tasks, technical side) from the idea of the film (inception of the process) to the final phase.
- Co-producer – producer's helper. Also, the responsibilities of this person could be the same as the *line producer* has.
- Line Producer – he or she could be the producer's right hand and the one who is responsible for such tasks as financing, budgeting, technical and administrative duties. The principal difference from the producer is that this person focuses on a vast number of smaller tasks that make the film production process run on an everyday matter, not just supervising the whole process from a bird's eye view.
- Post-Production producer is the newest producer type who before could be named *an associate producer* or *post-production supervisor*.
- Associate Producer – might be the most unclear producer's title. This person could be the one who makes a producer and an investor meet and come to a conclusion; also, he or she could be the producer's assistant who has just been raised. (Honthamer 2010, pp. 1-3).

Even though many producers are working on the film simultaneously, Thurman (2005) outlines that the most important is the producer as he or she gets an Academy Award for the best picture in case of success. He defines a film producer as someone who creates or discovers an

idea (it could be a script, a story, or just a character) worth telling. What is more, he shares what motivation and characteristics the actual or potential producer must have to compete on a film-producing battleground. Turman sees the best motivation for becoming a producer is a desire to make an impact on the world by the produced films; and the producer's profession could allow doing it as he or she is the one who controls every aspect of the film, makes the most important decision and has the power to influence people around. However, to obtain this "power," a person should respond to it by his or her characteristics and skills. Producer's profession is for those who are not afraid of challenges and even are more like solving them as this work consists almost of them; for example, Brian Grazer ("A Beautiful Mind" producer, who won Academy Award) states that a producer's day is a roller coaster and you must be aware in advance of every turn it makes – Turman agrees with this opinion and adds that nothing could be more exciting. However, this job is not for everyone as it is not only a job, it is a way of living this life. Moreover, Grazer mentions that every movie he produced was a completely different experience, and he needed to learn all the time; Turman also concurs with it and says that one of the most producer's essential characteristics is being creative all the time.

Likewise, Rodnynsky (2016, p. 15) writes about a producer that he or she is not just the one who brings money into the project to bring an idea to life but producing is a lifestyle. What is more, the capability to solve challenges in a creative way could be called producing as a producer is the one who connects all pieces of the puzzle, who sees the result before the beginning of the process, and who knows how to reach success.

Worthington (2010, p. 11) adds that a producer should be organized, educated enough, and know all aspects of the film production process despite being capable of solving problems creatively. What is more, a producer should not be afraid of taking responsibility and making decisions, and being prepared to meet with the consequences of these decisions. The last but not the minor skill is that a producer should have good communication skills as the big part of this job consists of being in touch with people, helping to solve their challenges. In addition, a producer plays the central role in assembling the team as it is his or her responsibility to build trust and healthy culture in a team.

2.2 How can a film producer be taught the necessary skills?

Thurman (2005) argues that what can be learned can be taught. Thurman teaches producing in the United States, and he pays equal attention to the business aspects and the creative part in his program since film producing is based on these two things. Students take courses about film economics during the first semester, which help them understand how the film BUSINESS works - how the big studios in the industry work and how film financing is built. Students also learn accounting, budgeting, marketing, and ways to raise money for their films. As for the creative part, students are “forced” to read a lot, watch, and then discuss what helps them to develop creative thinking in one way or another.

Thurman attaches particular importance to values and ethics in the learning process. Thurman believes that art, especially visual art, can substantially impact people, encourage people to do the right thing, make them think about significant social problems, etc. Accordingly, the producer has a huge responsibility as the ideological mastermind of the project, who has power over the film production process and its release. It is impossible to teach students ethics or impose values. However, by introducing them to particular literature and films, expanding their horizons, and regular seminars where everyone has the right to speak out, it is possible to help them form the “right” principles that cannot harm the audience.

However, there is a school of production and a school of life, and they often may not coincide. Thurman did not study at film school and became a successful producer, he learned along the way. Is it possible to become a producer without an appropriate education? It is possible. For example, Irving Thalberg and Saul Zaentz won Academy Awards and did not study to be producers at university. They gained all knowledge and skills by working in the industry.

Rodnyansky (2015), in an interview, claims that the producer is an entrepreneur with creative expertise who needs a humanitarian education for successful work as it helps to understand people, characters better, analyze stories and scenarios. During education, the student masters the “cultural codes” with the help of which he better understands the tastes and preferences of the audience. Nevertheless, Rodnyansky speaks about the importance of education and himself began teaching at one of the universities; he said that it is impossible to teach a person to be a producer,

as well as a director. A person will either become one or not. He says that the only thing he can do as a teacher is to put into his hands fundamentally important knowledge and ideas about the craft.

2.2.1 The challenges of film education in Russia

The crisis that has become a stable state of Russian cinema is directly related to the poor quality of film education. After all, movies are made mainly by young people – what is called fresh blood. Alexander Mitta (2011, p. 15) said: “The question, of course, is not the age of the blood, but the productive work of the brain.” In Russia, there is no full-fledged system of courses and electives on modern cinema. Russian cinema youth is distinguished by aesthetic provincialism, old-fashioned, and unable to solve modern problems. Therefore, there is a practice that some people prefer to go to the USA for a year or two to get at least an “express education” there as it later allows them to understand the film business and solve problems in modern ways. For example, director Nikolai Homeriki became a successful Russian director with foreign education.

Today, young graduates of film schools are simply not ready to create a full-length film, since all their previous experience is associated with a small number of short films, the process of creating which is far from the actual film business. Russian students graduating do not know what kind of world they are entering, being not familiar with the trends of modern world cinema. Students of Western and European universities, while studying, become part of the film market, attend many courses, master classes, and summer seminars; any international film festival is always full of students from around the world, but not from Russia. Mitta says: “So when our under-educated (Russian students) do something new, they have to reinvent the wheel.” (Mitta 2011, p.20).

2.3 Ideation

According to Atanesyn (2007), a producer, in order to start, needs to decide on what is personally interesting for him or her. After then find or create an idea that has a distinctive feature from what is already on the market and can be filmed and commercialized. Despite the fact that a producer is not a scriptwriter or a director, the concept is on a producer’s shoulders. The idea concept should be something unique, even if the story is trivial. What is more, it is essential to know beforehand the story’s ending. In addition, in the process of developing an idea, one of the crucial

features is the knowledge about a target audience. Even though a story should be unique, recognizability of it should be on a high level as a man is interested in what he or she has seen before or known. However, it is not possible to obtain the attention of everyone. Thus, the focus should be made on a customer group with particular tastes, preferences, problems, educational level.

Similarly, Thurman (2005) says that the choice of the story should be based on a producer's character. The producer should find a story worth telling personally for him or her, and nobody else could tell if the choice is right as with whom to date, where to go, or what hobby to like. However, Thurman created some tips that could help a future film producer to awake his/her imagination:

- Hitting the books. Reading novels is the simplest way to find inspiration or even a story to develop.
- "Know your history." Every human has his or her background, and a producer does too. He or she could have experienced before or seen something that immersed him or her deeply in the soul that could be a good start for creating an idea. What is more, this tip is not only about the producer's experience; it is also about a world history that contains plenty of stories, the question is on which to focus.
- Friends and family. Sometimes it might be a surprise what our families and friends have gone through. One of their stories might develop into a film that will capture attention.
- Read the headlines. It is impossible to predict where inspiration can come from, but the world around is an excellent source for inspiration as thousands of situations are going on at the same time.
- "On stage." A producer might find his or her inspiration in a theater as it has a unique creative atmosphere inside, but also he or she could obtain rights for a particular play and then make a film based on it if he or she liked it so much.
- Film scripts. There are more scriptwriters around than could be seen from the first look, and they might be found in specialized universities, on the Internet, in particular clubs. For a producer, it will take time to find these people and read all their stories, but it is not possible to predict where a diamond will be found.

What is more, Thurman also says that it is vital to think about the target audience while developing an idea; two essential questions that a producer should answer, "Why are YOU making the

film?” and “Who are you making it for?”. The producer’s tastes and preferences might be too specialized to reach commercial success, and he or she is the one who is responsible for it; thus, producer’s character and personality might be a starting point for idea creation. However, in the process of developing the story, the possible audience portrait should be taken into consideration.

In addition, Ryan (2020), in contrast to the statements above, pays special attention to how this or that idea may affect the future career of the producer. It means that an idea or a script should inspire and be close to the producer of the film and fit into the career direction in which the producer would like to move. There are no ordinary projects. One project in its ideological content can be set back five years or vice versa five years ahead. As a tactician and strategist, the producer should think about it when choosing an idea for implementation. Also, Ryan says that a producer needs to have a certain level of reading and viewing of scripts to choose a good one in the future or order it to the screenwriter. To understand what a “good script” is, the producer must read a lot of them and pay special attention to the classics.

On the other hand, it is impossible to predict what will make a producer stop on a particular story. For example, Rodnynsky (2016) said that when reading the script of “9th Company” (a famous Russian blockbuster), he was not impressed at all. However, he-change his opinion after meeting with Fedor Bondarchuk, who wanted to direct this script. Rodnynsky was so fascinated by Fedor’s impression while he was talking about the script he wanted to be in cinematography. He said nothing about festival works, awards, and Rodnynsky, due to the director’s character, decided to join the team and become a producer of “9th Company”.

2.4 Finding financial investment

2.4.1 How to find the money for film production in Russia?

Krol (2010) said that, for any risky project to occur, and cinema belongs to this category, two participants are needed: the one who makes the film and the one who finances it. It could be said a lot about the rolling fate of the project, but this is secondary. First, to start, money is needed. The question of where producers get the funds to launch film projects is perhaps the most mysterious and closed in Russia.

There is an opinion that money for movies is taken from state bodies that support movies (for example, the “cinema fund”) or from friends of millionaires. Some time ago, there was no film business in Russia in the traditional sense, and the issue of refunds was not on the agenda. It was important for the Ministry of Culture to report on the budget funds spent and millionaires to feel ownership.

Until recently, the entire methodology for raising funds for film projects was based solely on the power of personal connections. Krol does not detract from the importance of personal connections in Russia and cinema in particular. However, as cinema becomes a business, he schematically demonstrates a methodology for financing cinema based on business, not on acquaintances.

Krol (2010) writes that many talk about the Russian film business finally becoming a profit-making business, but he claims that this is a half-truth. The Russian film business has become profitable, and there are objective reasons for this. On the other hand, this business has not yet become full-fledged because it has not yet formed into a respectable investment product. Consequently, the system investor has not yet entered this business. Moreover, the financial infrastructure of the film industry has not yet emerged in Russia. As mentioned above, two parties (the investor and the producer) participate in the film’s financing, which are guided by one motive – to make a profit at the expense of the invested funds, in this case, when creating and promoting a film product. Firstly, the investor is interested in not losing his money, and secondly, to get income. The more clearly he will be presented the mechanisms for returning funds and minimizing risks, the faster and more willing he will be to invest. The task of the producer is to convince the investor of the realism and profitability of the project. The better they understand each other, the higher the probability of a successful transaction.

At its core, the film business is no different from the usual business. The film company’s profit model is a classic investment campaign model. It attracts other people’s money or invests in the creation of a movie. The distributor’s profit model is the usual model of a wholesale and logistics company that manages an assortment (portfolio) of film projects. The distributor spends working capital on acquiring rights, replicating copies, logistics, advertising, and marketing activities. Its task is to place the film in retail or cinemas. The distributor’s risk is that he can spend significant funds to make the film come out with the maximum number of screens, and the film will not

gather the necessary number of viewers. Thus, the distributor's task is not to make a mistake in assessing the rental potential of the project. However, since this is difficult, the distributor reduces its risks by forming a whole range of projects that go one after another. One film can make a profit, another is a loss. The retailer's profit model is retail sales to the customer. The movie theater lives on the rental fees plus the proceeds from the sale of popcorn, slot machines. The movie acts as a bait for the viewer, who comes and spends money on food and drinks. The asset of cinemas is real estate, and this is their main advantage (Krol 2010).

2.4.2 How to find the money for film production in the U.S.A.?

Thurman (2005) talks about the process of finding money to create a movie more like some life hacks that can help: a) star power, b) studios, c) foreign rights, d) foreign rights.

- a) The producer is also the person who chooses the director and has an extraordinary influence when choosing the actors in the film. Attracting a "star" to participate in a film (whether it is a director or an actor) dramatically facilitates the process of searching for funding since for potential investors celebrities are a guarantee of high box office receipts. However, the coin has two sides, famous actors, directors, and screenwriters need the appropriate fees, and this already directly falls on the shoulders of the producer how to negotiate with them; to present the script, the idea of the film in such a way that the "stars" will agree to work for a smaller fee or will wait for payment after the distribution of the film and direct income.
- b) If the producer has contacts and the opportunity to implement his film, he can contact the studios. When working with the studio, the advantages are as follows: a) the studio will pay all the expenses to the last cent, b) the studio has the resources, c) the studio has the marketing power. But also, when deciding to work with the studio, the producer must understand that the area of his influence will be significantly reduced, and he will no longer dictate the rules of the game (the exceptions are top producers).
- c) Some sales agents can pre-sell a film abroad for a certain percentage. This trick may provide the producer with a portion of the budget to make the film, but not all of it. Moreover, when choosing an agent for such manipulations, one must be very careful about his decency and professionalism since the pre-sale of a film abroad is a complex process in terms of taxation and legality.

- d) In our time, the spirit of patronage of the arts is dying. Some time ago, it was still possible to finance a film with the funds of “movie fans with money” and not pay anything in return, now you must give something back. Nevertheless, the producer builds up valuable contacts throughout his work, which can once become helpful in terms of resources or finances. The main thing is to continue to present his work and his projects in a favorable light.

2.5 Marketing

Film marketing is an activity aimed at meeting the needs and wants of the audience and making a profit from the sale of a movie. It is a process that identifies market needs and encourages film market participants to respond to them. The principle of marketing and promotion of cinema is almost no different in its steps from creating a marketing strategy for any other product. The main steps: create a marketing plan for the film, analyze the audience and its size, find ways to reach the target audience, identify a step-by-step plan for the marketing company, calculate the budget for advertising costs (Film Marketing, n.d.).

Marketing has always played a vital role in the film industry. However, in the late 1970s, this importance increased to the point where the film’s marketing began to shade the quality of the film itself. Moreover, it is not just that marketing efforts help attract and buy funding, but they also encourage the audience to want to see the movie more than once. Marketing today is more important than the actual process of film production. In the end, it is marketing that determines whether a film will simply turn out or whether it will collect impressive box office receipts and become a hit (Shevchenko 2013).

A feature of the marketing of the film market is that its players when offering film products and film services on the market must take into account the needs and solvency of consumers and their willingness to spend their time on the consumption of these products and services. The goal of film marketing is to commercialize the film industry and achieve effective use of monetary investments. Furthermore, at the same time, cinema is an art, a sphere of application of creative abilities. Therefore, film marketing must consider the cultural and social function of cinema, that is, to focus on the consumer demand of the audience.

2.6 Distribution

Distribution and cinema activities are the essential elements of the film sales market at present. Despite the rapid development of new ways of consuming audiovisual products over the past decades, the primary market still provides the return mechanism for the entire film industry (Leontieva 2020, 5.)

2.6.1 Film distribution in the U.S.A.

Ryan (2020) claims that the sale of the film and its distribution is one of the most important responsibilities under the producer's control. It is necessary to return the money to the investors to pay the team. No matter how brilliant a movie is in terms of artistic value, it is not a sustainable business model if it does not make money.

Ryan highlights the main ways of distributing the film: a) sales agents, b) international sales, c) theater/television sales, and d) self-distribution.

- a) Sales agents act as representatives of the cinema in the market. They are needed to build a marketing strategy, promote films at festivals, and sell the film to distribution and DVD film companies. Some agents also work to sell films abroad, but most often, if there is a need to sell a film abroad, the producer should contact the agents specializing in this separately. The producer needs to discuss financial and monetary relations with the agents; usually, their earnings are based on the percentage that they receive from the film, but they also need to pay separately for transportation costs, office, additional employees. Also, it is necessary to discuss with them the time frame during which they will realize the sale of the film.
- b) As mentioned above, international sales are handled by a different type of sales agent. They are engaged in the distribution of films abroad (for example, France, Australia, Japan, or Mexico), are economically and legally savvy to secure the film for foreign sale.
- c) The producer almost always could sell the rights to the film to cinemas or television; in some cases both ways are used, in some cases, one is enough (depends on many factors). In the U.S.A., there are different television types: network television (for example, *A.B.C.*, *N.B.C.*, and *Fox*, etc.), subscriber cable (*Showtime*, *Netflix*, etc.), and cable television (*Bravo*

or *National Geographic*, etc.). Each of these types of TV market has its own rules of the game, economic policies, and content requirements that the producer must be familiar with. Nevertheless, the sale of rights has a specific time, and if something does not suit the producer on one of the markets, he has the right to sell the rights further to another T.V.

- d) If the producer in the United States failed to reach an agreement with distribution companies or sales agents about the sale of the film in theaters, the producer may try to organize the rental of the film independently. To do this, the producer must communicate separately with each cinema and its owners. It is advisable to consult with specialists in advance on how to conclude an economically profitable agreement.

2.6.2 Film distribution in Russia

In addition to working with the art of organizing the filming process and financial issues, the producer also deals with relations with distributors — another major player in the film market. A distributor can be either a film company or an individual(agent). All the time the film is in production, the distributor is responsible for its advertising. In magazines and newspapers, on the Internet, and on T.V. The distributor also determines the release date of the picture and the way it is distributed. The distributors are responsible for the release of the film in cinemas and or on other platforms (Sushinina 2020.)

Each sector of the film market consists of specialized distribution companies that monitor film production. Each distributor has at least one contract agent whose job is to find and purchase films. When an agent discovers a film for which he is willing to offer a specific price, he must first obtain consent from the sales and marketing departments and their management. Only then he can proceed to conclude a deal with the manufacturer. The producer should remember that the buyer in the film market will not be the public who buys tickets to cinemas, but a specific agent will be the buyer. If the film was attended by star actors or received reviews at well-known film festivals, then agents will begin to appear with requests to sell them the right to rent the film. If nothing of the above has been done, then significant efforts will have to be made to attract agents - then the producer's task is to inform the sales agents about the existence of the project before the start of film production. The first thing a producer can start with is to get publications in media that place information about upcoming film projects on their pages. Sales agents of all distribution companies pay special attention to these lists and try to contact the producers to find out the possible market

appeal and understand whether it is worth trying to get the distribution rights for the future film (Atanesyan 2007, p. 89.)

In Russia, there is a so-called group of the five largest film distributors. This number includes three representatives of Western distributors and two domestic companies.

- *“Sony Pictures Productions and Releasing”*: the company works with films of the film studios *“Columbia Pictures”*, *“Sony Pictures Animation”* and others. The studio periodically promotes films of Russian production.
- *“Universal Pictures Russia”*: the Russian division of *Universal Pictures International*. It distributes films of the studios *“Universal Pictures”*, *“DreamWorks”*, *“Illumination Entertainment”*. It also cooperates with Russian film studios.
- *“Walt Disney Studios”*: the Russian representative of one of the most extensive Western media holdings, which owns *Pixar*, *20th Century Studios*, *Marvel Studios* and *Lucasfilm* and are producers of well-known franchises and the most successful box office works.
- *“Karo”*: the Russian company *“Karo Premier”* was established as the official distributor of the studio *“Warner Bros. Pictures”*. A little later, another branch of the holding was created — the film company *“Karoprokat”*, which took over the distribution of films already made in Russia.
- *“Central Partnership”*: In addition to being the official distributor of *“Paramount Pictures”*, the company is also the largest distributor of Russian-made films.

In the era of the popularity of streaming platforms (*Netflix, Okko, Start, MORE.TV, Amazon, etc.*), many films do not get into theaters but immediately end up on online platforms. However, movie theaters still play a massive role in the film business; if a film is not immediately released on an online platform, its distribution in theaters is the main task of distributors, producers, and the film’s entire team.

According to Sushinina(2020) there are 2,088 cinemas in Russia, many of which are represented by the largest cinema chains: Kinomax, Karo, Mirage Cinema, Cinema Star. The undisputed leader among Russian cinema networks is the united network *“Cinema Park”* and *“Formula Cinema”*, it has 626 halls in 30 cities of Russia.

The primary income from the rental of the film is distributed among producers, distributors, and cinemas. There is such a system in Russia: almost half of all the money earned for rental remains to cinemas, from 10 to 15% goes to distributors, the remaining 40-42% - for the producer. The producer must build the work so that in the end he himself will not remain in the red if the film fails at the box office. After all, how much money the new film will bring depends not only on the producer's salary but also on the salary of the entire team. Earnings affect the image of the producer and the film company that he represents. The image, in turn, will be a crucial moment, determining whether actors and directors will want to work with this producer or his company in the future (Sushinina 2020).

2.7 Cultural characteristics and main differences of Russian and American film production and producers

Onodera (2014, p. 4) states that principles of film production are the same all over the globe; however, depending on the history of film development and the peculiarities of the film market of a particular country, there are significant differences in approaches to film production and methods of performing production functions. Differences in these processes are direct results of different cultures, life principles, and the country's history.

Onodera (2014) compares Russian and American film production in her research by looking at each stage of this process. She also outlines that the American film-producing system is the most successful and Russian in the active growth stage. She identifies four stages of film production: 1) script, 2) pre-production, 3) production, 4) distribution.

- 1) During the first stage of film production, differences already arise: America is characterized by the conveyor production type. More than a thousand scenarios are created per year, and 600 of them become films. Cinematograph in states is distinguished by a variety of genre forms and more predictable audience reactions (Krol 2007). While one of the most famous Russian producers Konstantin Ernst states that Russia comes through a scenario crisis due to lack of commercial cinema for a long time (thus, conflicts between producers and scenario authors arise frequently) and the pickiness of the audience. (Ernst 2012). Perhaps one of the reasons for the "scenario crisis" in Russia is the lack of full-fledged market research. Different Russian directors and producers have opposite points of view on

this matter: the executive director of the Film Foundation, Sergey Tolstikov, for example, suggests that the Russian audience needs a socially problematic cinema, producer Denis Petushkov offers the genre of “modern fairy tales” as a competitive option. However, some of the Russian filmmakers, such as Fyodor Bondarchuk, are convinced that the problem is the complete unpredictability of our moviegoer, who, unlike the Western one, cannot be attracted even by the presence of a major movie star in the film. But no one has carried out full-fledged research, which might indicate a conservative approach of the lack of necessary education (Onodera 2014).

The next big difference between Russian and American film production occurs at the scenario stage is the search for funding. Those budgets that are considered very average in the United States are already significant risks in Russia, and it is unlikely that anyone will decide to invest in it. In the United States, there are many funds and social projects aimed at the development of cinema, while in Russia, the primary support for cinema is television channels, which have limited resources and are very selective in content. However, next, in Russia, the conflict between producers and script writers is a typical story due to different views on the idea. In contrast, in America, the scripts are more “adaptable” and can be easily changed to meet the “needs” of the customer/sponsor. In addition to all the differences, in the United States, film production is exclusively a commercial story. In Russia and other European countries, the government plays a significant role in supporting and financing the cinema.

- 2) At the pre-production stage, the next big fundamental difference in Russian and American models of film production is revealed. In the United States, there is a strict, detailed organization of the film process, while in Russia film production process has not developed as a system yet.

In the USA, American producers attach more importance to the form of the script design, and there is a single form. Moreover, storyboards have great importance; many directors, such as Tim Burton, independently create them. Storyboards are incredibly useful for Western producers. They can give potential investors a clearer vision of the film rather than the literary script at the stage of searching for funding (Onodera 2014, pp. 7-8).

Mazurov (2011) Russian cinema suffers from a narrow profile of professionals, which is the main problem of Russian cinema. Cinema has not yet developed as a system, and therefore almost all film professions are in greater deficit.

In addition, Krol (2007) says that in America there are widely developed specialized film companies focusing on certain areas of film production. For example, in the United States and Canada, there are approximately 23 thousand such film companies, in addition to the giants of the industry. In Russia, there are only about 500-600 companies. Accordingly, the search for professionals capable of implementing a production project in Russian cinema is more difficult than in American cinema.

- 3) The following critical stage of film production - the shooting/production period - should be noted that the key to its success lies in the pre-production stage. At the production stage, we can see another big difference between American and Russian cinema: Historically, the producer plays a crucial role in cinema in the United States, and in Russia, the critical role is played by the director (Onodera 2014)

Bondarchuk (2013) says that Russian filmmakers realize that the schedule of filming in their country is much more conditional than abroad. On the set in Russia, there is often a lack of clear organization and discipline, but film producers try to deal with this. For example, Fyodor Bondarchuk evaluates the work on the film "Stalingrad" positively, while the shooting of his previous film "Inhabited Island" as painful because of the ill-conceived organization of the shooting process.

Shcherbakova (2010) argues that the absence of narrowly focused specialists during the production stage in Russian cinema is felt most painfully. For example, in the United States, not one concept artist is working on the film, but many, and each is engaged in his field: One makes projects of cars and another of equipment, the third is responsible for the interior, the fourth for the clothes of the characters, and so on. There are far fewer people involved in any Russian film than in any Western film. In Russian cinematograph "synthetic" people work - one person playing the role of director's assistant is engaged in media-planning, and also helps everyone in minor things - this is called "the second director", while in the United States, all these duties are handled by different people.

- 4) The next stage of film production, in which the role of the producer is crucial, is the distribution of the film. The rolling fate of a film is determined by many factors: the quality of the film, the literacy of the marketing strategy, etc. The American moviegoer is quite different from the Russian one, and the producer should take this into account. In the United States, significantly more people watch movies and know them, American viewers go to cinemas more often, they are older (in Russia, the main age of the audience is 15-25), they are more predictable, and in America, there is not such a strong stratification of the public into fans of original and commercial cinema, than in Russia. Also, a distinctive feature of the American film public is its attention to the opinions of professional film critics. A positive review in the New York Times can provide the film with a resounding box office success, while the Russian public pays relatively little attention to critical reviews (Onodera 2014).

- 5) The development of the cinema infrastructure also influences the film's success at the box office. The equipment of cinemas and their number in the United States significantly exceeds the Russian one. Therefore, American producers have more opportunities for successful film rental. In Russia, producers do not have the opportunity to wait for the right moment for the film's release since it is difficult to get into the right rental networks. Secondly, there is an urgent need to return money to the creditors of the project. Another problem of the Russian film market is the horizontal distribution system and the inability to roll a film digitally (most cinemas in Russia have not yet switched to digital format and so far only involves analog film screenings). Russian films are forced to be released in a small number of copies, and their rental time is, on average limited to a month. In contrast, in America, a film can be distributed in a considerable number of copies and remain on the screens of cinemas for up to a year. Moreover, in Russia, video advertising is hindered by piracy, which is still impossible to control at the legislative level.

Onodera (2014) pays special attention to the fact that for any successful American producer, it is obvious that the profit from the project is not only the profit from the rental and sale of rights but also the income from the vast market of related products (toys, souvenirs, computer games based on the film, clothing, etc.) The most successful film companies in the United States have their theme parks and amusement parks that bring in huge

profits. In Russia, unfortunately, this aspect of near-cinematic entrepreneurship is not yet developed.

3 Research questions and objectives

The purposes of this thesis are to find out what being a film producer means, what his responsibilities are, and how he can influence the success of the film. Also, it is a well-known fact proved by numbers that the American film industry is the largest in the world and the most successful, thus there is another question what differences from Russian industry make it more successful and what Russian producers could change for the better by looking at the example of colleagues from the states. By reading this research, the reader could create an understanding of what it means to be a film producer in Russia and the U.S.A. from theoretical and practical points of view, find useful advice that could be applied in practice while working in the film industry with the use of data received from professionals in this field, and also, for those who are interested in working as a film producer, analysis of the difference between film producing in the United States and Russia can bring ideas for further improvements in their style of work.

The thesis' theoretical framework has been established for the research to answer the following questions:

- 1. What are the functions of a film producer?**
- 2. How can a producer influence the success of a film?**
- 3. What are the differences between the process of film production in the United States and Russia?**

The research structure was designed in a way that makes it possible to answer these questions. The structure of this research includes a theoretical framework that was established especially for the created objectives and purposes. Research methods were chosen by the researcher in a way that the combination of the theoretical framework and research content (data received from the interviews) could be employed. Elaboration of chosen research methods helped the author of the research to collect data, analyze and discuss findings, and come up with the conclusion. As a result, the author of the research could create a clear international understanding of the producer's profession, not only theoretically but also what it means in the real film business, outline features

of a good producer, and show us what Russian producers should take into consideration from the work of their Western colleagues.

4 Methods and data collection

The methodology chapter explains the choice of the research design, the process of data collection, and why the chosen techniques are relevant for this research. This chapter aims to describe and give reasons for selecting a particular research design and data collection methods.

4.1 Research design

The researcher chose a qualitative research approach for exploring the characteristics of a successful film producer, including his or her functions, and also to search for differences in film production in Russia and the U.S.A. According to Cresswell (1998) there are six main reasons to choose qualitative research: 1) research question starting with *a how* or *a what*, 2) difficulties of finding variables, 3) the need for a detailed view, 4) analysis of a lot of “text” information, 5) receptiveness of the audience, 6) researcher is an active learner.

- 1) There are three main questions in this study “What are the functions of a film producer?”, “How can a producer influence the success of a film?” and “What is the fundamental difference between the process of film production in the United States and Russia?”. Accordingly, all of these questions aim to study the nature and causes of what is happening in the film production experience.
- 2) Desk research was conducted across similar topics to determine the criteria for evaluation and comparison, but this review did not produce a lot of materials. Accordingly, variables were created according to the theoretical basis and the information obtained from the interviews.
- 3) Since the field for research was initially very wide, and film production and the responsibilities of the producer in this process are multifaceted; much effort was invested in choosing the perspectives from which the issues were examined. As a result, it was decided to focus on a detailed study of the personality of a successful producer and the fundamental differences in the production process in Russia and the United States.

- 4) Russian and American manuals on film production were examined, and sufficient texts were discovered that led to the decision to focus on gathering qualitative data.
- 5) This study is a critical look at the personality of the producer and the sphere of cinema. For the reader, it can be a kind of “introduction” to the process of a film producer and at the same time act as a hint for professionals.
- 6) The researcher is not a film producer at the moment, and in the course of the study, examining a range of literature and conducting interviews on the topic, knowledge was acquired.

The nature of this thesis is consistent with exploratory research. Dudovsky (2018, 3) writes that this type “intends to simply explore the research questions and does not intend to offer definitive and conclusive solutions to existing problems. This type of research is usually conducted to investigate a problem that has not yet been clearly defined.” A very broad field - film production – was examined, in which there are many challenges both in Russia and in the United States. Thus, it is likely that this study can only form the “beginning” of an attempt to discover essential competencies associated with a successful film-producing.

4.2 Philosophical stance

The philosophical stance for this research is interpretivism, also known as an interpretivist approach. Collins (2010, p. 23) identifies interpretivism as “associated with the philosophical position of idealism, and is used to group diverse approaches, including social constructivism, phenomenology, and hermeneutics; approaches that reject the objectivist view that meaning resides within the world independently of consciousness.” Accordingly, this study examines different interpretations of the producer’s profession, which have developed under the influence of various social factors, and two other models of film production, one that is common in Russia and one which is expected in the United States. Also, it should be noted that when an interpretive philosophical approach is chosen, the researcher becomes involved in the process based on his or her interest. Since the amount of information is large, the researcher has selected the variables to study in this work.

One of the goals of interpretivism is to understand phenomena, try to systematize information, and discover what is unique about a particular phenomenon. Thus, the present research attempts to understand the critical factors in the work of a producer and then systematically describe them.

The research combines the use of information obtained from desk research sources followed by interviewing producers in order to address the research questions. Thus secondary data is also an integral part of this approach.

4.3 Research approach

An inductive approach, also known as inductive reasoning, is employed in this research. Dudovskiy (2018) says that the inductive approach “involves the search for pattern from observation and the development of explanations – theories – for those patterns through series of hypotheses.”

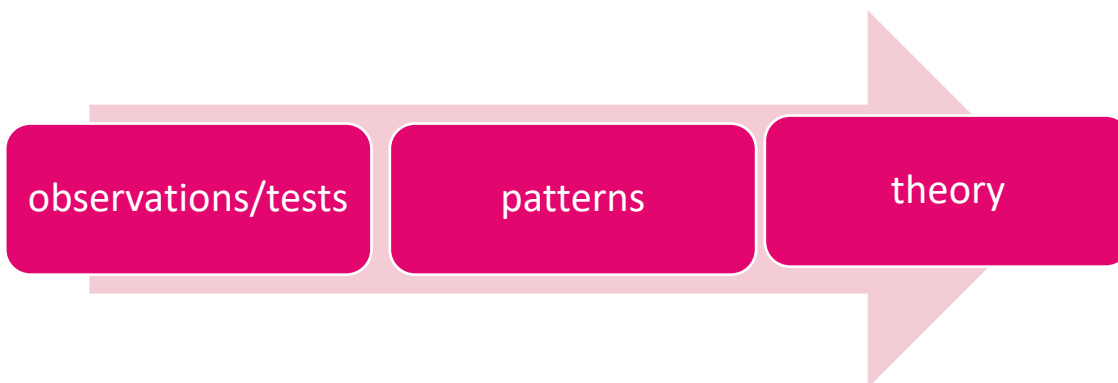


Figure 1 “bottom-up” approach of inductive theory

The inductive approach allows the researcher to independently find relationships and create theories according to the knowledge obtained from the literature or other sources. During inductive reasoning, the researcher moves from more to less and from observations/tests to patterns, ending with the theory called “bottom-up” theory (Figure 1).

As shown in Figure 1, the researcher moves from more to less during inductive reasoning, from observations/tests to patterns, ending with a theory, which is called a bottom-up theory. Inductive reasoning allowed the authors of the study to move from more to less, in a large amount of information from the literature and primary sources to find relationships, compare them and come to a theoretical conclusion.

4.4 Research strategy

A grounded theory approach was chosen because it responds to insufficient knowledge about phenomena needed to work with developed theories about that phenomena. A grounded theory approach deeply examines phenomena so that theories may emerge. A grounded theory approach consists of four stages: 1) codes, 2) concepts, 3) categories, 4) theory (Dudovskiy 2018.).

- 1) In this study, at the first stage, the keywords and phrases chosen were “producer” and “process of film production” and were studied separately for Russia and the U.S.A.
- 2) During the first stage, new cases were discovered that called for an investigation in order to advance the study and subsequent analysis.
- 3) At the third stage, having enough data, the formation of concepts consisting of similar ideas and characteristics arose for theory development.
- 4) Meanings, explanations, and potential theories formed in such a way that it becomes possible to address the research questions and to develop a more precise answer to the fundamental questions, e.g.,

4.5 Methods and data collection

There are two main sources of information that the researcher could use for conducting the study: primary and secondary sources. Primary sources refer to the raw data collected during the research (including interviews, transcripts, statistical data, and works of art). Secondary sources refer to second-hand information, data that was gathered previously in other research (journal articles, reviews, and academic books). Usually, researchers combine both of these types in their studies. Often, secondary sources inform the methods chosen to collect primary data (Phillips & Stawarski 2018, pp. 36-37.)

In this research, primary and secondary sources are used. Secondary sources such as articles, books, theories, e-books, etc., were collected (theoretical framework of this thesis) in such a way that the author of the study could establish the academic background of the research and come up with relevant questions for interviews with professionals in film-producing. Primary data was collected through semi-structured interviews organized on the phone, in Zoom, or face-to-face according to the situation and possibilities.

4.5.1 Semi-structured interviews

According to this study's philosophy, structure, strategy, and goals, the author decided to collect primary data through semi-structured interviews.

Dudovskiy (2018) says that structured interviews "consist of a series of pre-determined questions that all interviewees answer in the same order," and unstructured interviews "are usually the least reliable from a research viewpoint because no questions are prepared before the interview and data collection is conducted informally." A substantial advantage of structured interviews over unstructured interviews is a more accessible analysis of the information received since the first questions are always the same. Accordingly, it is easier to analyze between the answers received.

Semi-structured interviews were chosen for this research since this allows for additional questions to be asked in order to follow up on statements made by the participants during the conversation. This form of exploration allows for a much deeper investigation of the phenomena (ibid.).

Since the questions under study are comprehensive, the advantages of semi-structured interviews are apparent: it is possible to collect a large amount of descriptive information and ask additional questions during the conversation and follow the trails of evidence wherever they might lead.

4.6 Analysis

Dudovskiy (2018) states that "qualitative data refers to non-numeric information such as interview transcripts, notes, video, and audio recordings, images and text documents." In this research, text for the theoretical background and transcripts of interviews (before recorded with the participants' permissions) are analyzed.

Text coding will be used to analyze the collected information. During the collection of data for subsequent analysis, at each stage of the literature research or when taking interviews, key points were marked. When all the necessary information is collected, theories and categories are expected to appear in the process of comparing the pieces of the data. These categories consist of separate phenomena and relationships, so-called axial-coding. When the final code sheet is generated, the pieces of data will be compared several times: an interview with each interview, each interview with a theoretical base.

4.7 Timeline of the research

Table 1 Research Implementation Timeline

Time	Research implementation Matter	People involved
May 2019	Thesis Topic Formulation	Steven Crawford (Thesis Supervisor)
October 2019	Thesis Proposal Draft 1	Piotr Krawczyk, Steven Crawford
November 2019	Thesis Proposal Draft 2	Piotr Krawczyk, Steven Crawford
December 2019	Final Thesis Proposal	Steven Crawford
Spring 2020	Literature review writing Methodology draft 1	Steven Crawford
Autumn 2020	Development of literature review Final Methodology part Start of the data collection process	Steven Crawford, Interviewees
January and February 2021	Change of methodology part Editing literature review	Steven Crawford
March 2021	Continuing data collection process	Interviewees

April 2021	Continuing data collection process Data Analysis	Steven Crawford
May 2021	Development of discussion, conclusion, and abstract parts Thesis submission	Steven Crawford Thesis Committee

5 Results

Interviews for this study were conducted individually in the format of a personal meeting face-to-face, online meeting on Zoom, or by phone. The interviewees were informed that they are becoming participants of bachelor's thesis writing for JAMK University of Applied Sciences in 2021. All participants of the interviews gave their consent to participate and disclose their names and details of their biography in this study.

For this study, the interviewees needed to be working professionals (not students) and have a substantial amount of professional experience in film production. Since this study aims to answer research questions that correspond to the actual realities of the film business, not just the book understanding, a principal goal of this research is to produce practical information for young professionals who are interested in the film industry.

The coding method was used to analyze the received information and structure the "results" part of this research. During the process of combing through interviews, the following codes emerged: this is a strange word producer; defining film producer; the personality of a film producer; the role of education for a film producer; producer searching for an idea; producer and his or her crew; networks in film production; finding money for a film; drama crisis in Russia; film marketing; differences between Russian and American film producing models; Russian film market; American film market; advantages of American film education; principles of raising money for a film in the U.S.A.; film marketing in the U.S.A.; film distribution.

Table 2 Coding: categories and codes

Categories	Codes
The Film Producer	Defining a film producer The personality of a film producer
Becoming a Film Producer	Producer background Pros and cons of film education Challenges in Russian film education
“MUST HAVE” supporting team members	Searching for a crew Characteristics of team members Role of professional networks
Ideation	Where does the idea come from?
Fundraising	Public foundation Private investments Preselling the rights Film distribution Non-governmental funds

Marketing	Challenges in Russian film marketing Importance of market research
Differences between Russian and American film producing models	Different markets Education principles Distribution and marketing

5.1 Participants of the interview

5.1.1 Ilya Shemytov

Ilya Shemytov is a Russian producer, director. Ilya graduated from VGIK (Russian State Institute of Cinematography). His filmography includes such films as *What's My Name* (2014), *America Inside* (2016), *Palm* (2017), *Ad Libitum* (2020), *Look like Me* (2020).

5.1.2 Galina Sytsko

Galina Sytsko is a graduate of the VGIK Faculty of Economics. She worked as a production organizer on films by Nikita Mikhalkov (*12*, *Burnt by the Sun-2*), Sergei Solovyov (*Anna Karenina*), etc. From 2004 to 2012, she was the Head of the Program Department of the Moscow International Film Festival. From 2012 to 2020, she was the C.E.O. of Sputnik Vostok Production, the first Russian company to present its projects simultaneously on the Netflix platform in the Netflix Original (*Better than People*) and Amazon Prime (*Londongrad*) sections. Producer of the film *Land of Elsa* (directed by Yulia Kolesnik, starring Irina Pechernikova, Veniamin Smekhov).

5.1.3 Viktoria Lupik

Victoria Lupik is a Russian producer, a graduate of VGIK. Her filmography includes such works as *It's Not Me* (2012), *Territory* (2014), *Seagulls* (2015), *Pro Rock* (2017), *Hand-Made* (2020), etc.

5.1.4 Alexander Nazarov

Alexander Nazarov, Russian Actor, Director, Screenwriter, and Theater famous for the films *Dom, Mommies*, the T.V. series *Don't be born beautiful*. Alexander acted as a producer of the film *Atlantis* (2002) and the T.V. series *Losers.net* (2010), *Think like a woman* (2013).

5.1.5 Irina Savakova

Irina Savankova is an actress and producer. She played more than 30 roles in films, best known for the T.V. series *Doctor Preobrazhensky*, *Street* and *Witnesses*. Organizer and founder of the production company C.E.O. & founder Vice. Irina's production company is engaged in the production of advertising and T.V. series, works with such large companies as DomKlik, Ingrad, Polaris. She shot music videos for the band B.I. 2, Dead sea, etc.

5.2 This strange word - "PRODUCER."

5.2.1 Defining a film producer

In determining who a film producer is, all participants in the interviews noted that their area of responsibility and participation in the process lasts throughout the film's entire production: during pre-production, production, post-production, and distribution. One of the participants says that the producer must thoroughly know all the stages of film production; otherwise, if "*something falls out of his attention, the field of knowledge, then he loses control over the process*" (P1).

Participant 1 and Participant 2 noted that the producer takes initiative and responsibility for the process of film production in their responses. Both participants highlighted the words "initiative" and "*responsibility*" since, according to their opinions, the producer should not just find the idea of the film and implement it in the form of a film, but be responsible for the final result expressed in the fact that the audience will see the film and box office sales.

Participant 3 also emphasizes that the producer's work does not end at the post-production stage, and the producer must "successfully or not very successfully sell the film."

Another participant emphasizes that the producer must have a certain mindset, which allows to *"bring the idea to life in the form of a movie"* since not everyone looking at a good script will be able to make a movie out of it. From the moment the idea is found, the producer builds a whole series of actions in his mind to create an audio-visual product out of the text.

5.2.2 The personality of a film producer

As for the personal qualities that a producer should have, almost all the participants in the interview emphasized communication skills because they are essential in gathering a team to make a movie and negotiating with people necessary for the film production processes (investors, distributors, etc.):

"The producer must have high communication skills, as this is an opportunity to find a common language with anyone and anywhere" (P5).

"Producer should have the ability to assemble a good team, technical and creative, and inspire them" (P3).

"A producer should feel people and understand how they will work together" (P2).

"(...) for a producer, human decency is important. Cinema is not only a business, and it is a creative work related to people. If the producer saves and makes a profit at the forefront, this does not work in the long term" (P1).

Also, most of the participants in the interview said that the producer should have a rich life experience since he is the ideal leader of the film, and *"the more his life experience, the better it is"* (P1).

Moreover, participants say that the producer should believe in what he does since he has a great responsibility to the audience. Participant 3 claims that the producer can "change the world" with his statement in the cinema: *"maybe "change" sounds kind of pathetic but believing that produced movie can affect people's lives is important. This influence can be completely different – some movies help to have a fun evening and distract from problems, and some stories make you think"*.

In addition to the personal qualities of the producer, Participant 5 says: *“the producer must have the flexibility of the mind (...) be ready for experiments and risks (...) think strategically”*.

5.2.3 Role of education

Like any profession, producing can be learned at the university, but how much the knowledge gained correlates with real life is why all participants in the interview are asked.

Participant 2 did not deny the importance of film producer education, but at the same time notes:

“You can learn to be a producer, but you need to understand that this is not the profession that you will be taught directly in school. In Russia, there is an opportunity to become a cool producer. Still, the responsibility for education lies with the student, not with the teachers since education is a process within a person”.

Participants 3 and 5 say that there is the necessary basic knowledge that the producer can get at the university, and in the future will be helpful in his work:

“Producer, like any profession, implies the presence of mandatory knowledge, this knowledge may not be as fundamental as in the exact sciences, but they are quite specific” (P3),

“If you go to study at VGIK or GITIS, then for sure they will give you some basics of the profession that will not give you a project management course”(P5).*

** VGIK and GITIS are Russian film and theater universities.*

Regarding the possibility of getting a high-quality producer education in Russia, Participant 2 says that there are two problems: First, *“there is not such a wide choice of universities where to go to study”* and second, *“qualified professionals, mentors who are willing to share and teach the profession are much less than the demand for it.”*. However, (P2) also says that *“specialized film schools have now begun to appear in Russia, which is aimed at obtaining practical knowledge”*.

Even though a classical education at the university provides the knowledge necessary in the work of a producer, Participants 3, 2, 1 say that the primary skills and a real idea of the business of a producer are obtained exclusively in working on the site:

“(...) when the producer gets into real projects, he does not have many skills related to document management, process organization, etc. accordingly, he learns as he goes along” (P1).

“(...) when the producer gets into real projects, he does not have many skills related to document management, process organization, etc. accordingly, he learns as he goes along” (P3).

But despite the belief of participant 3 that a producer really acquires a profession in the process of work, he says that the market is changing very dynamically and the producer needs to update his knowledge regularly. And for these purposes now *“appear short courses of a year or two that can give a student or even a professional some relevant information and skills (...) For example, there are various foreign courses that our Russian producers can take remotely”*.

Several of the participants interviewed for this study did not study to become producers in a specialized institution and at the same time reached certain heights in the niche of the film business. Here is what they say:

“I learned everything during work.”,

“(...) then the best school is working on the set.”,

“producers can be anyone with a large number of contacts or able to find them, and, of course, but he must have financial literacy.”.

5.3 Producer searching for idea

All the participants in the interview said that ideas for a movie could come from anywhere. A producer can find them

"(..) in books read, magazines, news heard, movies watched, etc." (P2),

"(..) in a thrown scenario or from some case from life" (P1)

or *"someone from friends comes with an idea or recommendation. We are all human beings, and we tend to search among our surroundings" (P5).*

But Participant 3 also highlights the Russian producer's specific way of choosing an idea for the film:

"...in my opinion, the producers find their ideas in two ways: "one that hurts" on sore" or frankly topical themes (e.g., the ideas associated with some historical dates, personalities, etc.). Our producers are more likely to look for ideas in themselves, based on topics that concern them personally, rather than focusing on topics that are important to the audience."

As mentioned earlier, the idea for a movie can come from anywhere. But about choosing an idea for a SUCCESSFUL film, Participant 1 says:

"Ideas of successful films come from producers as if you give the full ideation to the directors, and then it is difficult to sell the project later."

In addition, Participant 1 says that Russian film drama is experiencing a crisis, thus *"It is easier to order a script from a screenwriter after spending a substantial amount of time with them. In the main mass, what is sent to me is either bad or very bad"*.

Also, Participant 5 says that there is no system or clue how to find an idea for a film: *"Oh, if you only knew from what rubbish poems are born..."*.

5.4 “Must have” supporting team members

5.4.1 Searching for a crew

On the set, you need everyone, members of the creative team, administrative, technical, etc. Participant 1 says this about it: *“At a minimum, a producer needs 120 people in the production and post-production team, and all of them must be professionals. When I am asked this question, I answer like this: “What is the main thing in the cinema?” and everything is important in the cinema. Because if everything is good, and one thing is bad, then everything will fall apart. For example, if there is great camerawork, but there is bad makeup – it will be hard to watch, etc.”*

When we talk about the participants of the shooting process (omitting technical specialists) without which the producer will not survive and will not be able to do his direct duties, the interview participants say:

“The producer needs a circle of directors and screenwriters, perhaps even an editorial one (...) directors and editors are the main people without whom the director cannot start working and will not cope in the process” (P3).

“...screenwriters and marketers” (P4).

“Creatives. First, the producer needs creative people” and “(...) executive producer because the head producer needs help, and the executive producer is the person to whom you can delegate” (P5).

When it comes to the quality of the people on the set and the principle of their selection, the participants say:

“(...) a person from my team should BE ABLE and WILLING, and if he can, but does not want to – this is not my person. As I evaluate what a person can do, I can take him to some small project (advertising for example), where I can see how a person works” (P1).

“It is important to recruit people to whom you can delegate and be confident that they will do their job” (P2).

“producer needs people interested in modern Russian and international film production, interested in trends, flexible” (P3).

Also, the Participant 1 says that due to the underdevelopment of the Russian film industry and particular challenges in education, *“We need to look for people for a long time. Sometimes, we also have to educate or train them directly on the set.”*

5.4.2 Professional Networks

All participants of the interview noted the importance of networking in the film business. Someone gave it more importance, someone smaller. But absolutely everyone talks about networking helpfulness for solving this or that issue:

“Without networks, the producer loses his power since people is one of the capitals. At the same time, the qualities and presence of these networks are tied to the personality of the producer since one person accumulates this capital around himself, and the other does not” (P1).

Participant 2 says that the producer needs networks with such people *“with whom he can consult and whom he trust”* as *“getting competent advice sometimes needed to solve a particular challenge”*.

In addition, Participant 3 says that the additional power of *“networking is making some ways of solving problems significantly shorter*. Participant 4 adds, *“The closer you are to the people who make decisions in this area, the closer you are to success”*.

“There is a need for a lobbyist in government agencies who can help the producer get budgets or permits” (P5).

Also, all the participants of the interview noted the importance of networking in terms of finding investemnts for the film, for example, Participant 2 says:

“If we are talking about projects that need a fairly large amount of extra-budgetary money (money not from film funds), then we are not talking about film contacts, but private investments, which, of course, are needed, and having these networks can make it somewhat easier to find the money.”

Participant 3 comments:

“(...) a producer with a wide range of contacts may find it easier to find funding for his film due to his charisma”.

In addition, Participant 3 also speaks that networks can help reduce production costs for a producer, for example: *“Having networks with the actors makes it is possible to try to negotiate with them for lower fees. Or, for example, there is a "capricious star" with whom it is difficult to agree on participation in the project, in this case, the personality of the producer or his connections can influence the adoption of a positive decision on the part of the "star.”*

5.5 The biggest challenge “Where and how to get money for your film?”

All the participants of the interview expressed the opinion that the biggest challenge for the producer is to find funding for the production of the film.

The very traditional first possibility that a producer should consider as a way to finance his film is public money and funds:

“First, the producer goes to the Ministry of Culture and the Film Foundation to present his project” (P1).

“(...) I am proud to say that we have funding at the federal level, the Ministry of Culture and the Cinema Fund, and regional subsidies, this applies to films that somehow popularize the region and, in the future, attract tourists” (P3).

Getting money from the state is a time-consuming process, and it is not always possible to apply for money from there. And even if it turned out, additional investments are still needed. Where to get them? Participant 2 replies:

“(...) this is the most difficult question. Since traditionally, large investors are ready to enter the project only on the condition that the money will be returned, and in today's realities of Russian cinema, this can rarely be guaranteed, except for projects with an obvious high box office.”

In addition, Participant 1 shares his experience taking private investments:

“I took private money for my last film and was severely burned, as the film did not bring the expected collection at the box office for many reasons. However, I do not know of a single film, fully funded with private money, that would have fought back in Russia. I know that private investment is discouraged when a large amount of public money is still invested in the project”.

If the producer is unable to get money from state funds and organizations, then his next step is to pre-sell the rights to show and distribute the film:

“The producer at the stage of pre-production can sell the rights in advance, now internet platforms actively buying the rights for promising projects, make a movie with the proceeds” (P2).

“(...) distribution in cinemas is another possibility of the financing the film by the selling of the rights” (P3).

and Participant 1 also proves that internet platforms after the pandemic of coronavirus are actively developing and investing in film projects: *“Internet platforms have begun to play a huge role in financing projects.”*

Moreover, Participant 2 outlines two different methods for a producer to finance his film:

“Russia also has non-governmental funds, the most popular of which is KINOPRIME, which give money for the production of films” and “interaction with brands or businesses could bring sponsors money by marketing partnership.”

5.6 Film script crisis:

Almost all participants noted that due to the specifics of film education, the film market, and the lack of specialists in Russia, very few decent scripts are written. This can happen for such reasons as the unpopularity of the screenwriting profession. As a result, in a year, compared to the United States, in Russia, in principle, there are few scenarios from which to choose. Participant 1 responds to this challenge like:

“The difficulties in being a producer begin with the condition of film drama, as we have an absolute failure in a film drama in Russia. I read at least 120 screenplays a year, and since 2015, I have not come across scripts that would capture me as a producer”.

5.7 Marketing

Marketing is now one of the essential sciences in any business, all the participants with whom the interview was conducted are aware of this, but they say that this is a weak point in the Russian film business:

“In Russia, there are very few producers-marketers who understand how to sell movies” (P1).

“In Russia, there are options when the producer at the production stage does not understand the further distribution, the potential audience” (P3).

Participant 3 suggests that this might happen since *“in Russia, producers are more suited to cinema as an art.”*

However, despite what was said above, every participant states that the picture is changing:

“Russian producers have begun to realize the importance of such a component in the process of bringing a film to the market as audience design; already at the pre-production stage, the producer must think about the marketing strategy of the film, understand who its audience is and what it wants to see” (P3).

Speaking about marketing in the film business, the producer should set the tone in advertising a particular film since he generates the strategy and promotes the film. A look at marketing in the Russian film business:

“Producer must think about film marketing constantly as it is insanely important. The film package is significant, consisting of a trailer, space, and other complementary materials. The viewer by it understands whether it is worth going to the cinema for this movie. Then the producer needs to develop a solution to promote this package, while the tone of promotion should be thought up before creating this package, subtly feeling modern trends” (P1).

“(..) It is essential to assess the needs of the audience correctly, what they want to see and hear. Producer while designing marketing strategy should consider audience needs and wants” (P5).

“(...) Since there are a lot of films being shot, it is vital to get the project on the market as early as possible, which is why there are now a lot of festival projects where there is an opportunity to present your project at the idea stage” (P3).

5.8 Differences between Russian and American film producing models

5.8.1 Different markets

All the participants of the study say that the film industry in the United States is more developed than in Russia, as evidenced by the quantitative superiority of studios, the popularity of American cinema in the world market, and large revenues at the box office:

“In the United States, the film market is more developed, the number of studio studios there exceeds ours by dozens of times” (P2).

“The Russian film market and the American film market are heaven and earth in terms of money turnover. As a percentage of the entire market, the American film market is not subsidized by the state. We have the same amount of non-refundable money that the Ministry of Culture and the Cinema Fund allocate to the Russian film business as an industry is unprofitable” (P1).

In addition, Participant 2 said that *“Hollywood projects in 99.8% of cases, the production of a film always meets the specified deadlines and budget”*, while in Russia, a lot of films “die” during the pre-production stage or even after the project had been filmed, but it became not possible to distribute it due to economical reasons.

According to participants opinions, this visible difference might happen because:

“In the United States, producers are more business-oriented” (P2).

“In the West, the cinema is much more producer-oriented than in our country” (P3), which means that approach to film production is focused on business rather than on art.

What is more, Participant 1 says that the environment of film production is more competitive there that makes people work harder on film success in terms of money collections in the box office:

“As far as I know, the Hollywood practice is that one person works and ninety-nine stand behind him in line to take his place.”

Moreover, every participant talking about the way film production functions in the United States mentions that in the west, work is more organized and structuralized. For example, Participant 2 says:

“It is obvious that the film production model works like a factory in the USA, there are developed methods of how to organize the shooting, how to plan the most complex process, how to shoot it, observing all the requirements related to the organization of work and attitude to people.”

5.8.2 Advantages of film education in the USA

Since the film industry in the United States is more developed, respectively, and the level of education of film specialists is different. The interview participants note that some Russian colleagues even go to the United States to get up-to-date knowledge in the industry and return to Russia:

“Regarding the American film school, it seems to me that since the industry is more developed in the United States, there is a correspondingly more relevant and progressive education” (P3).

It was also noted that in the United States, there is a more comprehensive approach to the education of future film producers. In addition to theoretical knowledge at the university, they are allowed to participate in film production as students actively. Respectively, they leave universities as ready-made specialists when our graduates do not know where to go.

“I know that in the United States they give a more comprehensive approach-they teach the articulation of economics and creativity” (P1),

“Education in the United States focuses on working on the site, on practice, and it seems that this helps future specialists. Plus, the teachers who teach in the West are often successful acting producers; in Russia, they are mostly theorists” (P5).

5.8.3 Funding

In the world of cinema, the American and Russian models are entirely different. For example, in the United States, there is no opportunity to receive investment from government agencies:

“In the West, there is no state financing of cinema. Cinema in the West is exclusively commercial” (P3).

But even though Russian film producers have the opportunity to ask for funding from the state, they are deprived of another chance that their American colleagues have:

“In the states, if you have 30% of the budget, you can take out a bank loan with the remaining money, and the number of cinemas there guarantee a minimum amount of box office receipts. Accordingly, relative to the average cost of production, the producer can almost always return the amount borrowed from the bank” (P2).

Moreover, returning to the fact that the film industry is more developed, it is much more realistic for American producers to get private investments, since investors there understand their possible benefits, while in Russia, it is almost impossible without very close contacts:

“In the United States, since the industry is more developed, it is much more realistic for a producer to find a private investor, explain to him how the money will be returned to him, since again in the West there are more ways of distribution. Moreover, in America, producers have the opportunity to apply to banks for a loan if they have a partial budget” (P3).

5.8.4 Marketing is crucial!

Again, since the approach to film production in the United States is initially business-oriented, accordingly, American producers devote much more attention to film marketing.

American producers are savvier in their approach to market research, and their culture understands the importance of market research. In the United States, cinema is initially made for the viewer, in Russia, the moment of getting into the viewer is more spontaneous. It occurs due to the "flair" of the producer, rather than systematic research:

“In the United States, in my opinion, there is a tradition of conducting research, tracking current topics to achieve an understanding of what it is important for the audience right now. Among our Western colleagues, the search for the current fresh and "breakthrough" is more developed” (P2).

“In America, the producer from the moment the idea appears must continuously think and take steps to promote the project” (P3).

5.8.5 Distribution

Regarding the distribution of the film, the participants of this study again note that this process is more established among their Western colleagues due to the development of the market. In the United States, the number of film studios is ten times higher than in Russia, so more people can offer the film.

Another point that complicates the distribution of films in Russia compared to the states, according to the participants of the interview, is that in the United States, the audience is accustomed to paying, and in Russia, there is still a high level of piracy:

“(...) in the United States, the consumer is brought up to pay for everything, for discs with movies, for subscriptions to Internet platforms” (P1).

“(...) in Russia there is still a very high level of piracy, which significantly complicates the process of financially profitable distribution” (P2).

6 Discussion

The discussion part of this thesis aims to summarize the main findings from the analysis of primary data and the theoretical framework, show their interrelationships, and prove their relevance for the exploring subject and answer the questions under study.

Initially, in this study, it was planned that interviews would be taken not only from professionals from Russia but also from Americans, but due to insufficient resources, this did not happen. Accordingly, in this chapter, despite the limitations, it is shown that it was possible to answer the research question. In this part, the concepts and theories demonstrated are created from a combination of the analysis of interviews and the theoretical framework; so, when considering the profession of a film producer, his role in the success of the film from an American perspective, the researcher had books and articles and the view of the interviewees on the principles of American film production.

6.1 Findings

In the process of exploring the profession of a film producer and his responsibilities in film production, the first step was to give a brief and succinct definition of this "mysterious" profession. Why "mysterious"? In the literature collected for this study, Russian and American authors say that it is difficult to give an unambiguous answer to the question "Who is a producer?" since everything is individual and depends on the circumstances of the film production. Nevertheless, still, from the literature read and the responses of the interview participants, the general **definition of a producer** internationally can be as follows:

A producer is a person with high organizational and communication skills who can recognize a promising idea for a film and take the initiative and responsibility for its implementation in the form of a movie, which the viewer will later see, thanks to his or her actions. In short, the producer is the person who, by his actions, can make an audiovisual product for the audience out of just an idea.

However, even this definition is not complete enough, since in the process of transforming an idea into a movie, the producer carries out and controls many processes related to film production. During the collection of literature review and interviews, the processes of film production were highlighted, participation in which is vital for the producer: *ideation, team building, finding money, professional networking, marketing, distribution.*

Nevertheless, before proceeding to these processes, it is essential to consider the **producer's personality** and the process of its formation in more detail. According to the extensive responsibilities on the shoulders of the producer, not everyone can become one. What personal characteristics should a producer have?

In this study, the following traits of the producer were identified:

- Producer is not afraid of challenges,
- He or she likes solving challenges and can do it creatively (flexibility of mind),
- Producing should become a lifestyle,

- He or she is not afraid of responsibility,
- He or she can make decisions (think strategically),
- He or she has great communication skills,
- He or she can assemble a good team around.

In addition to the personal qualities that a producer should possess or that can make it easier to become one, a particular set of skills a producer should learn as in any profession. In this study, whether it is possible **to learn to be a producer** was considered closely. As for classical education in universities, different opinions were opened in the process of studying this issue.

According to the collected information, it was possible to identify two beliefs. First, professional education at the university is necessary since it gives the necessary basic knowledge. Second, it is possible to become a producer without education if a person has personal inclinations.

The existing education of a film producer in Russia is very ambiguous. According to the analysis of articles and collected interviews, obvious advantages and apparent disadvantages of existing Russian film schools have been identified. The university can give the student the basic knowledge related to the profession, but the Russian film universities do not provide enough practice; accordingly, it can be said that the graduating students are not ready to work on the set.

Since in this study we consider the profession of a film producer from two perspectives: Russian and American, the interview participants were asked what they think about **Western education**. All the interviewees said that they see the advantages of organizing American education over Russian. As already mentioned, the main drawback of film education in Russia was the lack of good practice in the course of study, while in the West, the work of students on the site pays more. Also, there is a more comprehensive training of producers; economics is taught together with the humanities in an equal ratio, while the main focus in Russia is on the latter. The reason that in Russia, the education of a producer is more theoretical than practical and related to actual business may be the lack of specialists/mentors who currently work in the film business, while in the United States, universities are trying to recruit working professionals to their staff.

Despite the difference in approaches to education, it was revealed that in Russia and the United States, it is possible to become a producer without special education. Thus, we return to the second belief.

It was said that a producer is an entrepreneur with a certain level of creative expertise who has a broad outlook. In history, there are many cases when people without specialized education became producers, but they were interested in the world of cinema. In one way or another, these people got into the industry and learned everything in the course of their work. Moreover, two of the five participants in the interview, who are acting producers, did not study for this profession but became producers: Irina Savaka, an actress of theater and cinema by education, and Alexander Nazarov, a director by education, who decided at a particular moment to promote their projects independently.

Accordingly, we can conclude that despite the presence or absence of a specialized education of a film producer, the profession is really acquired when working on the site. In this case, the presence of film education helps to create an idea of the profession and expand the horizons necessary for work. In the absence of this education, a person who wants to become a producer needs to make some effort to master the knowledge necessary to work in the film industry independently.

Moving from the personality and background of the producer to his direct work, it begins with the process of finding or choosing an **idea** for the film. There is no single and correct answer to how a producer can create, choose or find an idea for a film. However, there is a relatively standard algorithm of actions that should become a familiar routine for the producer. As already mentioned, the producer should have a broad outlook and preferably a rich life experience, and the larger it is, the better since ideas can be hidden in it. However, life experience is not something that a person can directly influence; he can expand his knowledge base - read books and scripts, be interested in history and news. Also, the lack of life experience can be compensated by being more attentive to the stories of friends and their acquaintances. Ultimately, to sum up, no matter where the idea comes from, it is impossible to know, the secret of an idea that will turn into a successful one is that it must be close to the producer and in the future worked out carefully to interest the potential audience of the movie.

In the approach to finding an idea for a film, according to the information that was found or obtained, **American producers are not very different from the Russians**. But there is one point that complicates the process of ideation for Russian specialists - an insufficient number of high-quality scenarios. In the United States, the film industry is much more developed than in Russia, so we can conclude that more films are produced, and more scripts are written. Moreover, here we again return to the issue of education. In Russia, there are not so many (although they appear) specialized film schools where they teach screenwriting. Therefore, there are few professionals in this field. We can conclude that the Russian producer has much more to create ideas and then order their design in the script than the American one.

As the idea for the film was formulated and developed, the next step for the producer is to assemble a **team**. Here we are not talking about technical specialists, such as cameramen or artists; here, we pay more attention to the approximate circle of people without whom the producer will not be able to work. According to the collected primary data, such groups of professionals without a producer could not survive during the film production process were allocated: creatives, directors, administrative staff, screenwriters, editors, and executive producer. Creatives constantly generate ideas on how to solve a particular problem related to a creative solution or an organizational one. Directors and administrative staff help solve small organizational issues, which are mostly very many, as well as financial, economic, and accounting. The role that screenwriters and editors play in creating a movie does not end with the development of the script; the work of screenwriters lasts almost the entire film production, as it is necessary to make changes for a particular artist or due to other circumstances. Furthermore, the last person, but not the least, vital to the producer is the executive producer, who acts as his right hand since he solves issues related to managerial accounting and law. Without these two things, the movie will not take place.

How does a producer choose people for his team? It was revealed that the work of the producer involves the control of a sufficiently large number of tasks; respectively, one person cannot cope with their implementation. We can conclude that the producer in the team needs people who can delegate tasks and be sure that they will be completed. Moreover, the work in the cinema is creative, and often the people in the team must be ready to solve issues creatively. In addition, since the film industry is constantly changing and developing, the person involved in film production should be interested in modern trends and approaches. Again, the qualities that team members

should possess have been listed, but how to make sure that they possess them, especially in creative work? According to the experience shared by the interviewees, before the producer takes a person to work on a large film, he can try to invite a possible candidate to work on a small project (short films or shooting ads) to make sure that the person really can and wants.

Speaking about the difference in **team selection in Russia and the United States**, according to the answers received in the interview, we can say that the difference, if there is one, is again in the challenges of Russian education and the different level of competitiveness. In the United States, there are more specialized film universities, respectively, more graduates, who are more mobile and flexible due to the high level of competition. In Russia, there is a certain lack of highly specialized specialists, and as the participants of this study said, the members of the film crew have to search for a long time and sometimes even educate and train in the process.

The next stage of work for the producer on the films after gathering the team's backbone is the search for **funding**. According to the analysis of the results of this study, this stage is marked as the most difficult since, in Russia, the film business is considered risky and unrecoverable. Therefore, it is not easy to attract investments. What are the main ways to finance a movie? There are five primary methods that a producer could consider to finance the film production: a) ministry of culture and state funds, b) non-government funds, c) preselling the rights, d) private investments, e) product placement (Figure 2).

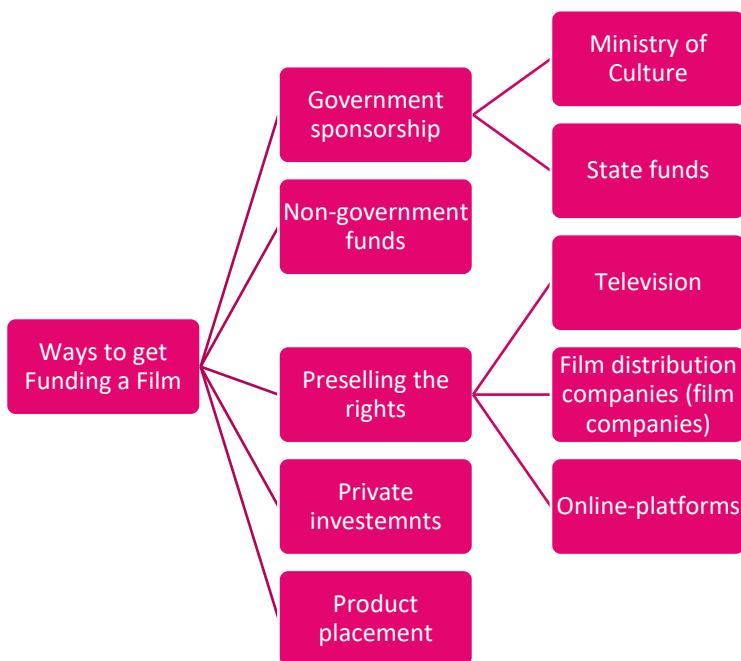


Figure 2 Ways to get Funding for a Film Production in Russia

a) Ministry of culture and state funds

Russia is a country where cinema is rarely entirely commercial but is actively supported by the state. However, according to the interviewees, who have been spinning in this system for several years, it is tough to get the state to give you money for filming a movie. A competitive selection accompanies the process of selection by the state of projects to be financed. As the interviewees say, to receive money from state cinema funds, it is necessary to have connections (about networks importance it will be said below) in these structures or be useful in one way or another.

b) Non-government funds

In Russia, recently, non-state film funds began to appear. The principle of selecting films for financing is also competitive; according to the participants of this study, networks also play an important role there, although perhaps less compared with state funds since they work with less money.

c) Preselling the rights (distributors, online platforms, TV, etc.)

At the stage of pre-production or production of the film, it is possible to pre-sell the rights to the **film's distribution**. The producer can sell the rights to specialized distribution companies (film studios). Usually, each large distribution company has its agents looking for potential successful ideas or films to buy. As a producer of a project, it is essential, already at the pre-production stage, to prepare a presentation or film package for demonstration at specialized workshops and festivals, where there may be agents. Television and online platforms (which have gained popularity over the past year) are also potential distributors. Resale of rights greatly simplifies the producer's life since the distributor, in this case, fully pays all production costs, is engaged in the marketing campaign and the subsequent sale of the film. However, there are also significant disadvantages: the producer has less power in resolving all issues from organizational to creative tasks, and the producer and his team earn less as the costs are all on the distributor.

d) Private investments

The following possible method of film financing that a producer may consider is private investment. However, private investment is not well developed in the Russian film business. Since it has already been said that Russian cinema as an industry is considered risky and, accordingly, potential investors do not understand how the money will be returned to them as a result.

e) Product placement

Product placement or ad integration is another possible way to fund a movie. Various companies can sponsor a film for mentioning it verbally or visually. To receive such funding, the producer needs to outline to the possible partner companies the project's attractiveness, how many viewers will see it, and where.

If we **compare *the American and Russian models of film financing, they are both similar and very different at the same time.*** The main difference between the American cinema market and the Russian one is that the cinema is exclusively commercial and is not supported by the state in the USA. Also, the states do not have government funds supporting cinema, but there is grant support from non-profit organizations, festivals, and institutes; films must pass a competitive selection and meet the criteria of the grant program to apply for a grant. In addition, there is the possibility of borrowing money from banks on the USA if there is already 30% of the budget of the entire film. Russian filmmakers are deprived of this opportunity. Private investment is more developed in the states since cinema is perceived there much more like a business due to the corresponding development of the industry, and the principle of money back is more or less clear to potential investors. Furthermore, the crowdfunding method (it is possible in Russia too, but as practice shows, it is not effective).

The next process in film production under the control of the producer and directly related to the success of the film at the box office is the **marketing strategy**. According to the information collected during the research process from academic publications, books, articles, marketing in the Russian film industry is formulated as a system with specific steps that must be taken for successful film distribution. Moreover, this system actually does not differ from the American one. However, as we can see from the performance of the industries and answers of interview participants, film marketing is either not used or does not work in Russia. The reasons why marketing in the film

business does not work according to those interviewed, were as follows: a) in Russia, there are almost no producers-marketers who know how to sell movies, b) at the production stage, producers do not understand how they will implement the distribution process, c) in Russia, they treat movies more like art than business, d) in Russia, the culture of constant non-stop market research is not developed, e) too much fragmentation of the market. Accordingly, we can draw a logical conclusion that due to the excessive approach in Russia to cinema as an art, the desire to please the audience for whom the product should be shot is neglected. There is an opinion that in the United States, a key role in film production is played by the producer, while in Russia, the director, respectively, this may also be why not all marketing methods cannot be used in Russia. The first thing producer needs to think about when building a marketing company is already at the ideation stage. Who might be interested in it and, according to the subsequent market segmentation, convert the idea into a script (or just develop the script). It is essential to think about who the film's story is for, what the audience wants to see at all stages of the film production (Figure 3).

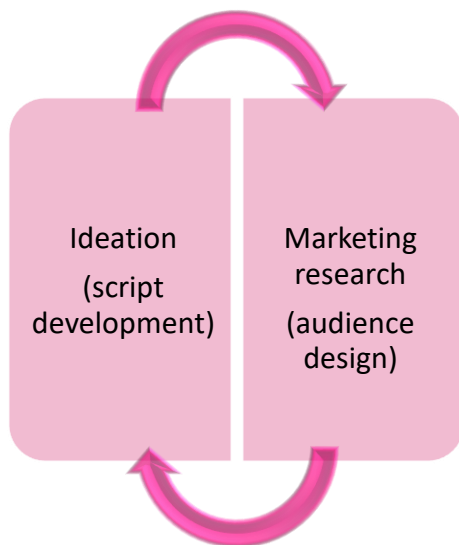


Figure 3 the relationship between an idea and market research

Next, a producer needs to assemble a film package consisting of a trailer, posters, photos, and other promotional products that present the film. Despite the shortcomings of Russian marketing in cinema, the participants of this study, who are active professionals in the industry, noticed that at the moment, positive changes in this direction have begun to occur.

Another important point about film production is the importance of **networking**. In film production, networking is as important as in any other business, if not more so, as one of the interview participants said: "Without networking, the producer loses his power." Networking can be helpful in several cases: to get advice, to shorten the process of solving a particular problem, to get investment, to attract people who might be interesting for the project. The producer must collect valuable contacts bit by bit throughout his work, especially in Russia, since the market is tiny.

7 Conclusions

In addition to exploring the profession of a producer, this study focused on such film production processes for which the producer is responsible: ideation, the process of finding a team, marketing and promotion, distribution, establishing networks and the search for money. These processes do not have a specific order maintained throughout the entire film production, as the producer thinks about them at the stage of pre-production, production, post-production, and distribution. Accordingly, it is impossible to single out which of them is most important, since as one of the participants in the interview said, "everything is important in the cinema". The producer can influence the film's success only when all the processes are interconnected, and one does not work to the detriment of the other. At the stage of developing an idea (ideation), the producer must think about the audience (marketing research) and how to sell it to them (distribution). To transform the idea into a movie, money is needed (fundraising), and for the process to work, you need people (team) and connections to solve issues (networks). The producer can see from the above and combine and control all these six processes - this is his or her power and how the success of a film could be influenced (Figure 4).

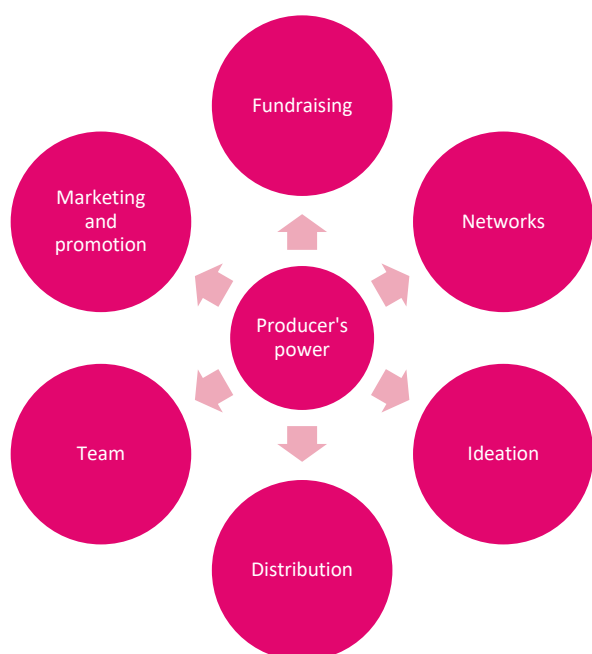


Figure 4 Producer's power

In the minds of people today, the idea that the Russian film business and, in particular, the Russian film production is immeasurably inferior in technological and professional terms to the American film production system has become entrenched. To some extent, this view reflects the actual state of affairs: historically, it is in the United States that the most robust production model of film creation is. Russian film industry lacks professionals who meet the new time demands; Russian producers lack specialized education and skills to attract funding; many film projects are unprofitable in Russia. Of course, there are specific difficulties that the Russian film business is going through now. However, it is essential to understand that the film industry in Russia has been approached as a business relatively recently, and at the moment, there is active development.

7.1 Study limits

Despite the attempt to minimize research limitations, several in this study should be taken into account as they affected the quality of research findings. When examining the film producer profession from an American and Russian perspective and the differences in the approach to film production, the two main factors limiting the study were: 1) lack of previous research in the area under study, 2) no American interviewees.

In this study, the complexity in determining the sample size, variables, and implementation of data collection methods was due to a lack of previous studies in the research area. In no case is the existence of these studies denied; perhaps it was simply not possible to find them due to time and resource constraints in the form of access to literature and research.

One of the goals of this study (in addition to just exploring the profession of a film producer) was to look at it from two points of view - Russian and American. Initially, this study was planned to interview both Russian and American producers about their work and the process of film production. However, due to a lack of resources in the form of time and contacts, it was not possible to organize an interview with American producers. Attempts were made to get an interview from the American perspective; the researcher sent open letters to film companies in the United States (large and small) and wrote to several acting producers on Facebook, but did not respond. When it became clear that it became not possible to get interviews with working Americans, the researcher found contacts of two graduates from American Film Schools with a Ph.D.; prior consent for the interview was obtained, but after the interviewees did not appear at online meetings in zoom and stopped responding to emails. When it became finally clear that it was not possible to collect primary data from the American side, it was decided to add questions to the questionnaire for Russian specialists concerning their opinions about colleagues' work from the West.

7.2 Suggestions for further research

According to the limitations that occur during this study, it remains possible for further more profound research. The profession of a film producer is quite extensive and covers many different aspects not disclosed in this study since it is only a primary view of this profession. In this study, a sufficient number of challenges in the issues of Russian film production were identified, and exact reasons for their appearance and solutions for them were not provided due to existing limitations in the form of lack of theoretical and primary data collected.

In the subsequent study, in addition to the fact that it will be necessary to interview American producers, it will be suitable for a better and deeper study to increase the number of interview participants to look at the question from more different perspectives.

Moreover, as already mentioned before, this study revealed a number of challenges that a Russian producer goes through in the course of his work, and recommendations that were given how to act in a particular situation based on a Western example from the literature are more of a hypothesis than a guide to action. Also, for a number of these challenges, possible causes were identified, the nature of which could be investigated in a future study in terms of cultural characteristics.

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