

First Light Movies

Second Light Think Tank meeting – 17 September 2008

Notes

Questions:

- How do we describe type of young person we are looking to support? BME and/or disadvantaged. Not mutually exclusive and have to be careful in how we talk about this. Marc said semantics aside we are ultimately looking to increase the number of professional BME people in the film industry.
- Age range 16-25 is quite wide in terms of level of maturity/engagement/development of young people organisations will need to address. Morinade said that this is where the Personal Development Plans which will be tailored to each young person's needs can come to the fore to deal with this issue.

Barriers to entry:

- Nature of the industry – erratic, anti-social, freelance, etc puts many people off. Not understanding puts people at a disadvantage
- Who you know rather than being talented
- Lack of social/professional contacts often mean lack of knowledge of jobs as they aren't always advertised, word of mouth, etc
- Not knowing the full breadth of jobs, particularly craft/technical
- Economic /social barriers – if you can't drive can be problematic to get to set (FT2 gave licenses and driving lessons)
- Lack of self confidence/drive that this is a job for them
- Lack of regional opportunities/infrastructure
- Young people impatient to get good jobs straight away, not often prepared to work unsocial, long, low paid/no pay jobs, not ready to accept difficulties
- resilience
- Realistic career advice/relevant signposting – which course to enrol on?
- Educational background - lack of qualifications/experiences
- Stigma attached to programmes – quality of the scheme/s
- Poor attitude by industry, not understanding nature of schemes, joined up thinking within companies lacking. Top down approach where it should be striped throughout.
- Having funds to sustain "break" into the industry
- Support for young people in placements – can be poor as company not aware of pastoral needs or more general support to nurture/grow young person's confidence, etc.
- Industry is increasing becoming accessible only to graduates
- Not being work ready – interview techniques, public/presentation skills, etc
- No showreels – cost implication for young person
- Lack of role models, diverse companies
- Industry perception/attitudes to schemes

Knowledge of other pre/new entrant schemes:

- Many exist but patchy quality/experience for young people
- Schemes don't last - piecemeal
- People come out and don't go into industry straightaway and can get disillusioned
- Why do we have all these schemes? What is their value?
- Need heavy dose of realism

Experience of these schemes:

- Pastoral care very important
- Company buy-in essential – at department level as well as from the top
- Ensure solid preparation for the workplace

Features/characteristics lacking from schemes:

- Clear outcomes
- Quality
- Plugged into industry contacts
- Demonstration of breadth of jobs
- Clear articulation that skills being developed are transferable to other industries
- Demonstrating contact and engagement at grassroots
- How to build/develop opportunities/portfolios
- How to signpost to future opportunities/support networks
- Closeness between schemes and employer opportunities
- New channels for distribution/exhibition of content
- Industry predicated on working as a freelancer – how prepared are talent to survive and thrive in this environment

Features/characteristics that should be incorporated into schemes:

- Ensuring that most talented/creative young people are not being pitched into unfriendly companies – surround them with supportive people, coaching/mentoring, etc
- Cultural alignment, tracking
- Building opportunities/portfolios
- Signposting to other schemes which may lead to developing another layer of stakeholders to be involved

Other areas discussed:

- Is the ambition of Second Light too broad?
- What are our expectations
- Are/can we be pragmatic
- How are we developing the ecosystem? Talent, industry and hosts?
- Don't forget quality of any product
- Content is king and new talent can provide new voices that will interest television
- Is the scheme about talent development or developing new content/new stories?
- Broad range of skills, would show reel be useful
- SMART links to existing schemes/opps to help achieve objectives
- Excellence matters as does being entrepreneurial
- How do we support producers?
- Bring up participants to same level

- Be flexible
- Two different approaches – in terms of exhibition/distribution mainstreaming the young people into the current industry and/or creating a new model
- Ensuring there isn't a mismatch of expectation/preparedness between young people and host organisations/placement companies
- How can we be sure that the films will be as strong, if not more, than those that get screened at the awards?
- What is the creative assessment of the scheme? Conventional techniques/genres or new art forms?
- Think about a 360 degree view of issues that will/may effect design of Second Light
- If we are training for technical jobs, films/product is not important
- Young people at this stage of their lives not sure about what careers they want
- Perhaps to think about creating opportunities for progression routes, so if gifted can signpost to next rung
- Wider recruitment drive – seminars/workshops to draw widely like Big Screen Science model and then to whittle down to fewer. Have a pre-entrant project to aid selection? Work in partnership with different organisations in a region to deliver different aspects, cluster
- Above can then be a rich selection process, that is more beneficiaries, not to be guillotine experience, sharing benefits more widely
- Get industry involved in different stages of process (ideas/support/selection) therefore continue to get their engagement, be champions
- How do the non FLM/MB alumni demonstrate their skills/talent? Showreels? Testimonials? How to show commitment? Former can be costly
- Ensure that work isn't too "shiny", i.e. influenced by adults.
- Expectations, experiences can vary amongst the age range we are supporting
- There is a spectrum of barriers/talent development that means have to provide bespoke service
- Not a "one size fits all" approach

