

# Film industry roles: Executive Producer

## What Is an Executive Producer?

The executive producer is the person who sources and secures the financing for a film production, either through an independent financing company, through a studio, or by financing it themselves. The executive producer's biggest priority is making sure there is enough money to complete the project.

Executive producers act as the liaison between the film's financiers and the producers who ultimately run production and oversee post-production. If a studio or production company is financing the film, the executive producer is usually a senior employee or an executive.

## Key Responsibilities of an Executive Producer During Pre-Production

Development is the first phase of the filmmaking process, during which time the executive producer(s) explore financing, secure talent, hire producers, and set a budget.

- **1. Secure funding:** The executive producer must secure funding for a feature film and can do so in several ways:
  - 1. Finance the film themselves.
  - 2. Seek out financing from other individuals or financial entities, like production companies or film investment firms.
  - 3. If the studios pays for a film, it is the EP's job to present the budget to the studio, with potential overage and projected profit, in order to get funding approval.
- **2. Attach talent:** The executive producer may pursue "marquee talent"—that is, A-list actors or an acclaimed director—to be a part of the film, making it more enticing to studio buyers or financiers. They also help negotiate the contracts for these stars.
- **3. Hire producers:** Once the executive producer has secured the funding, they hire producers. (Though bear in mind that in some cases, the producer actually comes on first and works to hire the executive producer). In either case, producers reports to the executive producer.
- **4. Approve the budget:** The line producer breaks down the script to create the budget. They then present it to the executive producer and producer for approval. Depending on the line producer's proposed budget, the executive producer may have to raise more funds or put up more of their own.

## Key Responsibilities of an Executive Producer During Production

How much an executive producer remains involved during the production process is completely up to the individual EP. Some executive producers might have zero involvement with the film after writing the check, while others maintain a bird's-eye view of the project from start to finish. An executive producer will rarely, if ever, get involved in the day-to-day of production and are not required to visit the set.

- 1. **Ensure the project is on-brand:** If the executive producer is an employee of a studio, they make sure that the film is adhering to the company's image and brand values.
- 2. **Visit the set:** If an executive producer visits the set, it is to field any high-level creative or budgetary questions. There is no requirement for an executive producer to visit the set and their contribution level is up to them.

### **What Do Executive Producers Do During Post-Production?**

The executive producer role is limited during post-production, and the EP may be already focused on another project. The executive producer usually watches the first cut of the film and provides feedback and notes to the director and editor alongside the other producers.

### **What Is the Difference Between an Executive Producer and a Producer?**

The executive producer is at the top of the producer hierarchy. They work closely with other kinds of producers but their job descriptions differ.

- 1. The executive producer may find a script or a book to option first and then hire the producer to execute the project. A producer may already be working on a script with a writer and will reach out to an executive producer to finance the project.
- 2. The producer answers to the executive producer about the film's budget.
- 3. The executive producer does not get involved with the day-to-day of a production like a producer does.

### **What Is the Difference Between Film Executive Producer Versus a TV Executive Producer?**

An executive producer on a TV show has a very different job than an executive producer in the film industry. Like a film executive producer, a TV executive producer is also a high level producer who oversees the production from the top. TV executive producers do not finance the series and focus almost exclusively on the television show's creative endeavors. A television executive producer is usually the creator, writer, and showrunner of the series, meaning that they not only created the show, they help write the script, and run the day-to-day production operations.

### **The 3 Essential Skills You Need to Become an Executive Producer**

1. **Market Insights:** A good executive producer has business acumen and insights into the film market to know how and where to make money. This is especially important when the executive producer is financing the film themselves.
2. **Network:** Executive producers have a good network of actors, directors, and agents to hire the best talent for every film.
3. **Management:** An executive producer has to make tough managerial and budgetary decisions to keep a project running.