

The Balancing Act



Building the Balance

Filmmaking is a medium in which to tell a story, but it is also a uniquely collective effort where many diverse skills, specialties and personalities must be brought together and expected to work at some level of harmony to succeed. This brings us to the person we usually identify as "The Producer".*

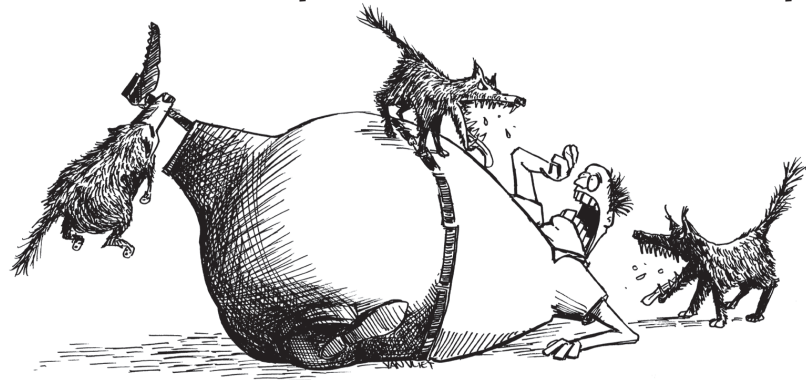
A producer is generally the who is ultimately responsible for selecting the right combination of art, business and technology and making it all balance. Being able to understand and manage the process, plus organize the diverse group of people that make it all work, is a special skill and talent in itself. Unfortunately, far too many wannabees assume these unique skills just come with their position and end up bludgeoning their way through a production. They tend to rely more on power than wisdom and seem to employ all the sensitive perception of a hungry piranha.

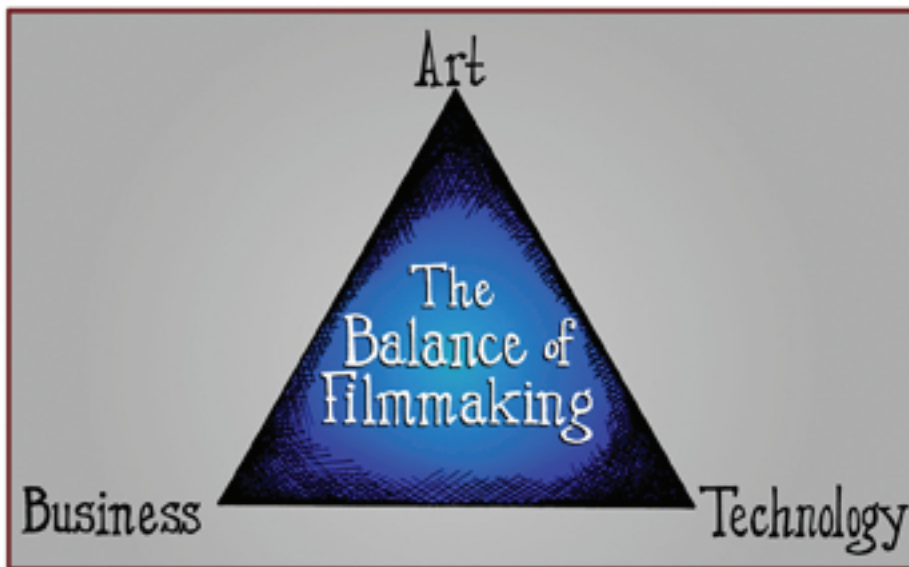
For many up and coming producers, a business school degree, greed, and a willingness to eat their young are considered the main requirements to be successful, with balance not even a remote part of the production equation. In some studios** those same unpleasant qualifications are often considered extremely desirable virtues.

But there are producers that do not follow that line of thought and they manage to make movies that reflect their passion for the film-making process. A truly successful producer not only understands the balance, but is also the one who makes and maintains the balance. People working for these producers will generally go the extra mile and that effort usually shows up in the final product.

I wanted to bring this up now, as some people will accuse me of using this book to bash producers unfairly, which is not my intention at all. I do, however, intend to enthusiastically bash bad producers, who like hack artists and incompetent technicians, deserve to be set upon by packs of very annoying small dogs.

* They are called other things as well, but not in polite circles.





On paper, a good balance in the filmmaking process should look something like this.



Even with all parts in correct proportion, the basic relationship between these camps often looks something like this.