

# How to Get Your Film into Festivals



Cameron Meier and TL Westgate discuss how to get your movie into festivals. You'll learn the best submission strategies, the best ways to market yourself, what selection committees and judges look for, submission mistakes to avoid and how to help your film get recognition once it has been accepted into a festival.

Cameron, Filmapalooza consulting judge, is a film critic, film historian and entertainment journalist whose reviews and other articles have appeared in *The Orlando Weekly* and other Euclid Media publications, and on [MeierMovies.com](http://MeierMovies.com). When not writing about film, Cameron serves as vice president of Paul Meier Dialect Services ([PaulMeier.com](http://PaulMeier.com)), a company devoted to teaching dialects and accents to actors, in addition to executive editor of the International Dialects of English Archive, or IDEA ([DialectsArchive.com](http://DialectsArchive.com)).

TL graduated from Florida State University with a degree in Media Production. He has worked in the video production industry for more than 25 years and won several industry awards (Emmy, Telly, Marcom). In 2010, he began getting serious about filmmaking, forming [Creative Inlet Films](http://CreativeInletFilms.com), and has traveled the world to support his films in festivals. They have played around the world in more than 450 festivals and won several awards, including the 48 Hour Film Project seven times. He enjoys photography and has two adult sons. He currently teaches at the Los Angeles Film School. He also runs the [FantaSci Short Film Festival](http://FantaSciShortFilmFestival.com), which caters to fantasy, science fiction and horror films under 20 minutes.

## Discussion

1. Stay up to date on the latest trends and styles in filmmaking while still being true to yourself.
2. Shorter is usually better.
3. Limit your opening credits so you're not wasting a juror's time. Don't put actor names in the opening credits unless you have a star.
4. Have a tiered plan (major, mid and small festivals).

5. For greater success, don't emphasize the required elements. Prominent elements are great for winning best prop, line and character, but bad for winning major Filmfestival awards and bad for success at other festivals.
6. Get permission for copyrighted elements and make it clear that you have permission.
7. Realize the limitations of and stigma associated with a timed filmmaking competition, and stay positive.
8. Don't publicly post your film but DO post a trailer online.
9. Have a timed plan. (Structure your applications over a one- or two-year period, giving yourself time to get rejections from major festivals.)
10. Know your festival's audience and sensibility. Research each festival before submitting.
11. Know which festivals are Oscar-accredited. See [https://www.oscars.org/sites/oscars/files/96\\_full\\_qualifying\\_festival\\_list-all\\_shorts.pdf](https://www.oscars.org/sites/oscars/files/96_full_qualifying_festival_list-all_shorts.pdf).
12. Use IMDB and IMDBPro, and make sure your film appears there. This is crucial for festival acceptance and publicity once your film has been accepted. IMDBPro is \$145/year.
13. Attend festivals as much as possible.
14. Use social media smartly and have a LinkTree.

## **Next Steps to Get Your Film into Festivals**

1. Fix your film.
2. Remove intro credits.
3. Pare it down – editing tips to make it shorter.
4. Set up your Film Freeway profile.
5. Upload your film project.
6. Avoid linking from YouTube or Vimeo.
7. Do not password-protect.
8. Change default settings.

Download the presentation at [www.linktr.ee/tlwestgate](http://www.linktr.ee/tlwestgate), available through the end of April.