

STEPS TO GETTING A SHOW CREATED AND SOLD

TRADITIONAL “HOLLYWOOD” WAY

Pitching Season Starts in July and goes through September. Development of pilot scripts go from July until December. In January they choose the pilot scripts by giving them a “Greenlight” so they can go into production. Then from all the pilots that get produced and shot, only a few are selected in May. Even if your pilot is amazing, the Network/Studio may favor those that the Advertisers like best. It’s about selling stuff on TV not necessarily the content. Late May the shows that are selected are announced. The Shows air on TV starting in September and if they do well they get renewed for another season. If you can run for at least 100 episodes you can go into syndication and syndication makes writer and producers involved into millionaires from the royalties of the shows.

Most writers need an agent or at the very least a manager to get you in the door to pitch/sell your idea, but you can also have an Entertainment Lawyer possibly get you in. You must have a writing sample of an original TV Pilot in order to be considered to write a TV pilot. If you can have an original pilot and a Spec script based on a popular show your chances of getting representation improve and being taken seriously as a writer.

- 1. HAVE A GREAT IDEA:** Write it down as a one person show, play, book, or article so it can become a “brand” and be more attractive and commercial to Producers looking to develop content. OR Write down the idea as a TV idea.
- 2. WRITE A POWERFUL LOGLINE WITH A STRONG EMOTIONAL HOOK:** Write 1 - 3 sentence to describe story with a twist or hook. The shorter and more compelling the better.
- 3. WRITE A SYNOPSIS OF YOUR IDEA:** Write down the general idea, who the characters are and what the show will be about, the central conflict or if it’s an ensemble show, how the ensemble will work together - one page.

4. **SHOW YOUR AGENT YOUR SYNOPSIS** - if your agent loves it and they think they can sell it - go ahead and write a mini “Bible”/ Treatment.
5. **WRITE SHOW CONCEPT/TREATMENT/BIBLE:** It contains: Title, Logline at the top, Concept, The World of the Story, The Characters, The Story for Pilot, the Tone and the Arcs of the Characters and what’s going to happen more or less in Season One and Season Two and where the story can go for Season Three and Season Four. Have this be no more than 10 pages.
6. **SHOW IT TO YOUR AGENT WHO WILL GIVE YOU FEEDBACK:** Take the feedback and improve it and answer the unanswered questions. Once you rewrite it and you feel it is ready, send it back to your agent.
7. **YOUR AGENT WILL PITCH IT TO PRODUCTION COMPANIES AND NETWORKS/ STREAMING SERVICES LOOKING FOR MATERIAL LIKE YOURS:** If any of these entities like your idea they will invite you to pitch it to them. Production Companies are more likely to hear it than a Studio or Network because they prefer to have you come in already “Packaged” - meaning they want you to have a Showrunner and Production Company and if possible “Star” attached so that it’s easier for them to see if the “formula” is going to work which will be a better guarantee that will be successful.
8. **A PRODUCTION COMPANY WILL TAKE YOUR PITCH:** You go pitch your story to a Development Executive or Assistant to hear it. If they love it they will tell your Agent. If they don’t you keep trying different production companies until one does. If after 10 pitches or as many as you feel necessary tell you “No”. It might be the idea is ahead of it’s time. If it’s a stale idea, your agent will tell you why production companies are not interested in it.
9. **IF YOU STILL BELIEVE IN YOUR IDEA:** Keep going - keep trying to pitch it. However, if you can’t get anymore people interested in it, maybe you can turn it into a web series, play, or art installation or anything exciting that will get people to write about your project and then production companies can approach you. OR/AND you can approach a “hot” SHOWRUNNER who might be interested in your idea who can champion it to a

Network who they have a good relationship with or existing TV deal.

- 10. A PRODUCTION COMPANY LIKES YOUR IDEA:** They approach a network/Studio to hear the pitch. If you do get a meeting, the Producer of the Production Company will work with you on getting the pitch ready and making it solid so a Network/Studio will want to say yes.
- 11. YOU AND THE PROD. CO. PITCH IT TO A STUDIO/NETWORK:** You pitch it to the Development Director or the head of the Studio if they think it's a great idea. If they love it they might tell you in the room that they love it and want to develop it with you. Most of the time they will consider it and say they will get back to you. Usually you can tell if they love your idea. If their body language gets contained or they cross their arms it may not be a good sign.
- 12. IF THE STUDIO PASSES YOU GO TO ANOTHER ONE UNTIL YOU FIND ONE THAT WANTS TO MAKE IT:** If you've tried every studio and everyone passes then hold on to the idea for a few years until the "consciousness" is ready and try again with a different title if it helps or come up with another idea and start again. Or recycle some of your characters and idea and revamp it in a different way.
- 13. IF THE STUDIO/NETWORK LOVES IT THEY WILL BUY THE IDEA AND PAY YOU TO WRITE THE PILOT.** The Producer and the Studio/Network Executive will give you notes as to how to improve/change/clarify your pilot. They will give you three months to write the pilot. The production company will try to get you to do as many rewrites (for free) as possible before you turn in drafts to Network/Studio. By December/early January you must turn in your last draft.
- 14. IF THE STUDIO/NETWORK LOVES YOUR PILOT THEY WILL "GREENLIGHT IT" AND IT GET MADE INTO A TV PILOT.** They always order way too many just so they can choose from the best ones that work for the advertisers.
- 15. IF THE STUDIO/NETWORK & ADVERTISERS LOVE IT - IT WILL BE BOUGHT AND GIVEN A GUARANTEE OF SO MANY EPISODES AND IT WILL AIR STARTING IN SEPTEMBER.**

NON-TRADITIONAL WAY OF GETTING A SHOW SOLD

- They may love your material so much because it's a big "brand" and you get to call the shots because they really want it.
 - You make your own web series and it's a hit - a producer/ Studio/Network will approach you - then you can negotiate your terms if they want you.
 - A Producer who is guaranteed a pilot commitment is looking for a POC Writer and he/she finds you.
 - A Showrunner sees your play/show/book and approaches you about writing a show together or with your help or them helping you.
 - A Studio/Network Executive sees your work on stage, reads about you, or hears an interview with you or hears you give a speech approaches you about your work, passion, project, etc and hires you to write a pilot.
 - If a Network loves your idea and wants to work with you they may take a pitch straight from you.
 - You do a stand up comedy show/One Person Show and someone loves it and helps you develop it to pitch it to a production company/ network/studio.
- * There are Production Companies, and there are Network and there are Studios. Netflix, Amazon, HBO, STARZ and some others do all three, and have different in-house divisions to produce their own content.

The goal is always to find allies and people who love your work and are passionate enough to fight for your work, whether they be an agent, manager, producer, executive or the relative of any of those

people. Being a writer is about letting people see your bare heart so others may feel connected to you. Executives hear so many pitches so they will most likely remember people who make them feel something - because emotions sink into a person's subconscious faster than facts or thoughts. Make an impression by being absolutely authentic about why you love your idea. They may not buy your idea this time, but they may bring you back or establish a professional relationship with you.

WHY PEOPLE MAY SAY NO TO YOUR IDEA FOR A SHOW:

- It's predictable and not current or in touch with the "Zeitgeist"
- They did a show like yours already and it failed
- Another Studio is already developing something similar
- They won't do content with sex, violence, or for an older or younger demographic - wrong demographic.
- It's too controversial and Advertisers will not like it
- You pitched it to a room full of men and the show is about women - wrong people- wrong network, etc.
- It triggers people because of the subject matter - sex therapy
- They can't identify a star who can play the protagonist and they only hire stars for their shows to get a Greenlight."
- They think the audience is too small for it - not commercial
- Their imagination is too limited
- They may just be racist or sexist and there's nothing you can do to change their mind.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- * Always choose an idea that you are absolutely passionate about which will keep your interest for at least two years.
- * Always choose an idea that you have real life experience and expertise in or know more than anyone else.

- * Never give Producers Writing Credit - their job is to produce - not write - unless you sign a Writing Agreement first, don't share credit with them.
- * Never Give a free option - they have to pay you at least one dollar! :))
- * Never sell your copyright! Ever - (unless they're offering thousands of dollars or you're desperate for money.)
- * Never assume anything. It's better to ask for clarification than to assume you know something that later "bites you in the ass" or gets you in legal or financial trouble.
- * There is no shame in admitting you don't understand something. Shame will be the one way you will sabotage yourself, a deal, a friendship, or anything worth having in your life. No one can know everything about this business or life. So the person who can admit they need clarification or more information is a healthy person. Anyone that shames you is trying to take advantage of you. Predators will always strike you at your achilles heel where you have shame.