

Elevating & Expanding the
Experience of Films™

Insight: What we do and why we love doing it

01

With the expense of modern filmmaking, too much focus is placed on avoiding mistakes and minimizing risk. The result: formulaic, low quality projects in a competitive, crowded and fragmented marketplace. The same can be said of special features: It's an echo chamber. Despite best intentions, company cultures invariably produce a "Group Think". The result is insularity. The focus narrows. The universe of possibilities contracts to the familiar. And innovation is the first casualty.

At **Insight**, we see all this as an opportunity for new direction, innovation and leadership. We know feature production. We know how to bridge the filmmakers vision with the marketing needs of the studio. And we know how to connect with audiences.

We reach for the unique narrative of every project, to bring to life the experience and the people who create it. In addition, we create custom pieces to extend the world of the film and connect with audiences in exciting ways.

The world of film is full of creative people, enthusiastic for new ideas and creative vision to market and expand their projects.

We find those ideas.

And we have fun doing it.

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Insight: How we do it

At **Insight**, we craft content to be modular, multi-purposed, and utilized across studio departments including Home Entertainment, Publicity, and Interactive. This allows departments to reduce costs by sharing budgets.

In this new world of “The Long Tail” and “The Wisdom of Crowds”, audiences today are discovering, interacting, utilizing, sharing and participating in films today as never before. The success of user reviews in companies like Netflix, Amazon, and iTunes is overwhelming. **Few cultural activities are as sensitive to peer-to-peer recommendations and feedback as movies.**

The surge of web and mobile markets also create a need for bite-size content that hits the magic “two minute” window these markets demand. Viewers will share material that makes them appear hip, funny, caring, or intelligent. At **Insight**, we design and create content to serve these aims. This “push” of content is a less expensive way to reach both larger and targeted audiences.

Social Networks

MySpace, del.icio.us

User Reviews

Netflix, Amazon, iTunes

TV 2.0

Joost, Brightcove

P2P

BitTorrent

Remix Culture

Mash-ups, Fan Fiction

Virtual

MTV's Leapfrog

The Netflix Effect: Amazingly, with 55,000 titles in over 200 genres, customers rent 98% of all titles every quarter. _____

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Insight: The Creative Use of Humor

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In terms of pure entertainment value, the creative use of humor is often underutilized and can greatly enhance one's enjoyment and appreciation. Even heavy, poignant dramas often use humor effectively without cheapening or demeaning the subject matter:

Marie Antoinette

Jason Schwartzman, as Louis XVI, takes the audience on a parody of **MTV's Cribs** at Versailles.

Advantages:

- + Quick, cost-effective and easy to produce
- + Non-invasive for the film crew.
- + Not overly-revealing of the film and it's subject matter.
- + It's in keeping with the youth-culture take on the film's subject matter and target audience.

Tropic Thunder - Rain of Madness:

Ben Stiller's writing partner, Justin Theroux created a brilliant send-up of **Hearts of Darkness** for the film **Tropic Thunder**, entitled **Rain of Madness**. Justin plays a Werner Herzog-esque documentary filmmaker capturing brilliant "verite" moments with cast & crew throughout.



Insight: Interviews—Play With Expectations

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EPK interviews are standard on every project and the backbone for creating material. At **Insight** we look for creative new ways to conduct these interviews while still serving the end-purpose:

Running Scared

During an EPK interview, a hilarious moment occurs when a crew member walks directly in front of an actor being interviewed; not once, but twice. The actor's reaction is priceless.

GQ

GQ magazine has been exploring some intriguing interview techniques. Given actor Will Ferrell's quick mind and wit, they fashioned a typical formulaic interview framework with fill-in-the-blanks to allow Ferrell's imagination to run wild.

Another interview with Lindsay Lohan was conducted over Blackberry text messages (the way kids talk these days). The results were much more candid, revealing and interesting than a formal sit-down interview.

With the right films, cast and subject matter, we at **Insight** continue to push for new concepts in this arena:

An idea we're keen to try is filming the standard EPK interviews, then drafting scripts and ideas for the actor's inner monologues. These inner thoughts would be played over the final interview edit while answering questions that the actors (and audiences) have heard a thousand times before.

This could quickly, easily, and cheaply be recorded wild with a soundman at a later date by playing back the interviews for the actor similar to a looping session. An added advantage is we still have both options to be utilized as needed.

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Insight: Improving The Traditional Approach



Story

We start with the story of the film. It's the fundamental platform for organizing ideas, and connecting to emotion. We do heavy research into the key cast and crew, story, themes, characters, origins, genre, location, and unique properties. It's this deep dive into the material that allows for real creativity to emerge.



Interviews

We have a passion for the interview, because it's the source of everything, from content to marketing positioning. Think of master interviewers—Bill Moyers, Charlie Rose, or Elvis Mitchell. They draw out more interest and depth through skilled lines of questioning, direction of the conversation flow, and follow-up questions. These create more interesting bites and added flexibility to craft engaging material and better generate interest in the project.

That's why we place such importance on this step, instead of simply going through the motions.



Storytelling

We began in development, studying with Chris Vogler, famed Development Executive and author of **The Writer's Journey**. From there we spent two years at Geena Davis' production company learning the process firsthand and in-depth. Add that to fifteen years in the heart of feature film production, and we *know firsthand what an amazing journey goes into each project.*

Our feeling is too many behind-the-scenes pieces come across to the viewer as all hype and little substance. Everything is overwhelmingly positive, denying the opportunity to add dramatic weight that is so much a part of the process. As Kubrick said, "If everything is beautiful, then nothing is beautiful."

Production is incredibly demanding, with long hours and no end of problems to solve. Of course we don't wish to portray anyone in the wrong light, but we also don't want to disrespect the intelligence of the audience. Gripping behind-the-scenes documentaries such as **Hearts of Darkness**, **Under Pressure: The Making-of The Abyss**, **Open Range: Director's Journal**, and **Lost in La Mancha** all serve to give audiences a true look into the difficulties faced. This in turn heightens the audiences' level of respect, appreciation, and interest.

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Insight: Improving The Traditional Approach

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Intrigue

Keep mystery and intrigue alive. Create the desire to know more. Offering everything up so readily and openly, tends to create disinterest.

Include

Include the audience, don't just present to them. Find ways to personalize the experience and make it more relatable to audiences:

Jarhead

Behind-the-scenes producer Laura Nix gave cameras to the actors to record diaries, and set-up a video confession booth on set for anyone to utilize. The resulting footage was both revealing and immediate—complete with fun inside jokes, real life tensions bleeding into scenes and resolutions.

Instead of trying to cover the full spectrum, Laura also chose to dive into aspects which held promise; in particular, a documentary on the film's extras who were war vets and another on soldiers returning from Iraq and trying to assimilate back into civilian life. These pieces support and amplify the film; this is a reality which is going on right now.

Technology

Unless it's something genuinely new and exciting, we need to avoid drilling-down into aspects seen over and over again like bluescreen, wireframe animations, and rotoscoping, etc. It dilutes the impact of more deserving techniques. To name a few:

Avatar

To realize his vision for photorealism in creating the extremely complex worlds, creatures, environments, and characters, James Cameron co-developed 3D Fusion Cameras with WETA.

Insight: Improving The Traditional Approach

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Technology—Cont.**The Fountain**

Without the budget to realize the extensive ethereal nebula effects with CGI, director Darren Aronofsky found Peter Parks. Parks created organic effects using a microzoom optical bench along with secret recipes, sprinkling yeast, dyes, solvents, baby oil, etc. into water to create organic effects in fluid dynamics. Parks can make a dash of curry powder cascading toward the lens look like an onslaught of flaming meteorites.

The Curious Case of Benjamin Button

F/X company **Reardon** came up with a new phosphorescent powder (as opposed to previous dot systems) to create more nuanced facial motion capture. This allowed performance subtleties and detail to come through in creating Brad Pitt as an octogenarian.

Oblique Strategies

At **Insight**, we believe in taking new routes to material that we can integrate back into storyline. For example:

Lighting

Director Sam Mendes told of packing a Jackson Pollack painting at the **Guggenheim** museum where he used to work. Having always seen the painting in the darker museum lighting, it wasn't until this moment that Sam got to see the painting in natural light, the way Pollack had while creating it. In this new setting, the painting changed dramatically and came to life.

How did this experience of Sam's contribute to his approach to lighting, moods, and color palettes for his films? (Two of which won the Oscar for Best Cinematography.) Through such stories, things become less abstract philosophy or tired retellings.



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Collaboration

Most people involved in film are already creative and visionary, and as such are more inclined to truly embrace and have fun with something different.

Colin Farrell on **The New World** told his sister before her EPK interview, “You gotta take the bad with the good.” Many of the creative talents in film feel this way about the interview and marketing process after having done it awhile.

If new ways are presented to help market and expand the world of the film, it will revitalize enthusiasm for these types of projects; one just has to be willing to explore them.