

FUTURE LEADERS

in sales and acquisitions

It is to those buyers and sellers working in the trenches at Cannes that *Screen* turned as inspiration for its special May 2012 feature. The notion was not to address the CEOs, managing directors or veterans known by everyone and quoted by *Screen* during every market. This time we wanted to shine a light on the next generation of leaders in this small but crucial piece of the financing and distribution puzzle — the younger executives who take the meetings, mill around the screenings and often close the deals.

The business of independent distribution and international sales is an unconventional, sometimes mysterious one. Unlike film-making, there are few courses you can attend to learn the ropes or get a foot in the door. Most sellers have worked hard getting to know the buyers, filmmakers and deal structures over several years under the mentorship of their first or second bosses. Buyers owe the same debt to their mentors, whether they be

sons or daughters learning the trade of the family business, or youngsters who have lucked into the acquisitions game.

We decided to focus on 50 of these “future leaders”, but this is not some provocative power list, nor were the subjects selected by a spurious scientific process. We contacted company chiefs and current leaders in the field, asking who they thought was on the up and up. Sellers selected their own staff, young buyers that impressed them and other young sales executives. Buyers selected young sales, marketing and business affairs execs, some of their own staff or buyers in other territories whose performance they rate. As in the film business in general, this list was put together based on the unscientific methods of word of mouth, good experiences and strong reputations.

Many names came up over and over again, so I’m sure we have captured some incredible talent in this feature. No doubt we’ve missed others, in which case we

will do another focus at another market. The idea was not to offend or exclude, but to shine a light on the highly skilled and often uncredited base of young talent in the independent world.

A word on some of the criteria. Age is not the principal measure of inclusion here, but rather years spent in a particular discipline. Emil Elmer has only just started in sales, having spent years in acquisitions; Peter Kujawski has just switched from sales to acquisitions; Laird Adamson had a background in production before sales. We are not celebrating youth so much as the journeys of these executives towards becoming leaders in their respective fields under different mentors and territorial influences.

We at *Screen* hope you enjoy reading the backgrounds and comments of our 50 Future Leaders In Sales & Acquisitions as much as we did. Here’s to the next 50.

Mike Goodridge, editor

KEY: ● AGE ● S SELLER ● B BUYER

Laird Adamson



39 S

Laird Adamson
Head of international sales
Magnolia Pictures (US)

- Attended The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania, and Amherst College (Economics).
- Started out interning for Merchant Ivory and Universal Pictures.
- First job was with Miramax International, then worked in production with Killer Films.
- Joined HDNet Films in 2006 and moved to international sales in sister company Magnolia Pictures in 2007 where he has represented films from directors such as Brian De Palma, Steven Soderbergh and Hal Hartley.

“I was very fortunate in that my first job was at Miramax, with one of the most interesting teams in international distribution, and that my second was with one of the savviest and most internationally attuned producers working today. It was a great foundation, one that informed and, in Christine Vachon’s case, really nurtured my interest in the international marketplace.

“Now at Magnolia, Eamonn Bowles, Mark Cuban and Todd Wagner have created a tremendously innovative and inspiring environment. It is about always looking for a better approach and embracing new ideas.

“Moving forward I expect to work closely with all rights distributors on alternative release strategies which cater to the evolving and unique needs of each territory.

The expansion of partnerships with digital distribution platforms is also very significant.”

Jeremy Baxter
Head of acquisitions
Protagonist Pictures (UK)

- Studied film and literature at Warwick University.
- Started in acquisitions with Focus Features in 2005.
- Served as worldwide acquisitions manager at Universal Pictures International from 2006.
- Joined Protagonist Pictures in 2008.

“My initial route into film was as a script reader and via post-production, which provided a good overview of the industry and insights into the challenges films face as they leave the creative realm and enter the market.

“An internship at Focus helped me progress with the acquisitions team at Universal where I first worked with Ben Roberts. Ben has been an incredible guide and mentor — it will be fantastic to watch what he achieves heading the BFI Film Fund.

“At Protagonist I enjoy working across a broad range of speciality, genre and commercial projects, and the excitement of launching emerging talent. The aim has to be ensuring films reach the right audiences, and with the advancement of digital it’s more important than ever for film-makers to form strong sales and distribution partnerships in order to stand out from the crowd.”

Henry Beattie



28 B

Henry Beattie
Acquisitions manager worldwide
Momentum Pictures/Alliance Films (UK)

- Studied French and Italian at Oxford University.
- In 2006, joined New Line’s London acquisitions and development office.
- In 2008, joined Momentum Pictures and was promoted to acquisitions manager in early 2011. Responsible for bringing in titles including *The Raid*, *Headhunters*, *Trollhunter* and George Lucas’ *Red Tails*.

“As an obsessive film fan, I knew I had to try and get a foothold in the industry after graduating. I was lucky to land an internship at New Line despite having no knowledge of the business and no contacts.

“I have to acknowledge Alexandra Rossi who taught me all the basics, and then at Momentum Robert Walak who has been a fantastic mentor in terms of my next steps. I really enjoy the search for exciting projects and the chance to help film-makers’ visions reach audiences. I’d love to work even more closely with talent, either within distribution or moving more actively into production.

“It’s a tricky time for distributors, given the technological advances impacting the industry, but if you have good taste and the right films, there will be an audience.”

Dori Begley



36 B

Dori Begley
Senior vice-president of acquisitions
Magnolia Pictures (US)

- Began at Sony Pictures Classics in 2000, as manager of acquisitions, working on titles from directors such as Pedro Almodovar, David Gordon Green, Spike Lee and Robert Altman.
- After a stint as associate programmer for the 2007 Tribeca Film Festival, she joined Magnolia Pictures where she is senior vice-president of acquisitions.

“Reflecting on the changing independent distribution landscape drives home how fortunate I am to have spent the bulk of my career with two very distinct industry leaders.

“At the start, there was no better place for fundamental education than Sony Pictures Classics — learning about the business in that unique universe rivals the most robust graduate film programmes. Years later, joining Magnolia sharply expanded that education. While bloated production budgets, irresponsible p&a spends and box-office misfires left the industry littered with failed distribution companies, the team at Magnolia worked tirelessly on an innovative, hybrid releasing strategy to help fix the broken model.

Jeremy Baxter



31 S

Stephanie Bermann



29 B

Jason Buckley



28 S

Yohann Comte



31 S

“It is immensely gratifying to continue growing with a company that remains committed to traditional distribution while pioneering the most demonstrably successful model for a growing on-demand, digital world.”

Stephanie Bermann

Head of acquisitions

Mars Films (Fr)

- Joined StudioCanal (France) as junior acquisitions manager in 2006.
 - Became head of acquisitions at Mars Films in 2007.
- “I have always been fascinated by cinema. Every time the lights turn off in the movie theatre, it’s the same magic. I was very lucky to join the Mars team back in 2007 when they were starting off as an independent company. Mars chairman Stéphane Célérier is very passionate about films and has a great energy. It is fun and stimulating to work for such a dynamic company. My ambition is to work with talented directors, and moreover to discover a new generation of great film-makers.
- “The marketplace is really picking up, and as an independent company we have access to terrific material.”

Jason Buckley

Director of international sales
Lakeshore Entertainment (US)

- Graduated from Bowling Green State University, Ohio, with a bachelor of arts and sciences in film studies and film production.
 - Joined Lakeshore Entertainment in 2006 and began working for the president of worldwide marketing and distribution in 2007.
 - Moved to Lakeshore’s sales department in third quarter of 2007.
- “I began my career as an assistant in marketing and distribution. Over time my interests steered me towards foreign sales. I’ve been privileged to work with talented executives like Jonathan Deckter who have challenged me at every turn and left lasting impressions on how I conduct myself on a professional level. Above all, Elisabeth Costa de Beauregard’s passion for the industry has made me strive to become more instrumental to the development and financing of quality entertainment.

“The industry is ever-changing, and in many markets the demand for their domestic films is larger than ever before. As the global marketplace continues to become more competitive, we must produce, market and distribute content that caters to more

diversified audiences. Even though several economies have weakened, others have strengthened and the fact remains the same — people love to be entertained.”

Yohann Comte

Deputy head of sales
Gaumont (Fr)

- Started at Gaumont as financial controller.
 - Moved into sales at ARP Selection, followed by four years as head of international sales at Roissy Film and a further one-and-a-half years at EuropaCorp when it bought Roissy.
 - Returned to Gaumont as deputy head of sales in late 2010.
- “There are several people I’ve learned from or I owe a lot to: Laurent Pétrin for taking the risk of hiring a newbie and making me insensitive to yelling, Raphael Berdugo for teaching me how to do business with elegance, the EuropaCorp family for the inheritance of a certain international marketing sense. I also want to thank my dear Cécile Gaget, for showing me the importance of being close to the talent we defend, in order to fuel our pitch and energy.
- “Our job leads me to be involved in co-productions, being creative in finding sources of financing, being in constant con-

nection with the directors, so I guess the natural step in two or three years is production... but right now I’m enjoying being in the right place at the right time.”

Christine D’Souza

Vice-president content sales and project finance
Preferred Content (US)

- Graduated from the University of Arizona in 2006.
 - Started as an intern at Jerry Bruckheimer Films and became an assistant at Paradigm Talent Agency.
 - Started in international sales at Katapult Film Sales, the LA-based outfit owned by Joni Sighvatsson and Jeff Levy-Hinte, moved on to become manager of international sales at T&C Pictures handling films such as *Black Dynamite* and *Teenage Paparazzo*.
 - Joined Preferred Content to handle acquisition, sales and financing of the project slate; also served as US-based acquisitions consultant for Icon Entertainment International in 2011.
- “Growing up I was fascinated by the film industry. As sales co-ordinator at Katapult Films I learned the indie film financing and international sales process and was hooked.

Christian
De Gallegos



30 S

Christine D'Souza



27 S

Jeff
Deutchman



29 B

Emil
Elmer



40 S

“Over the years I’ve had meaningful guidance from producer Joni Sighvatsson and indie sales guru Kevin Iwashina. Independent film continues to shift towards efficient distribution models allowing more lucrative opportunities for talented film-makers outside the studio system. It gives me joy to connect filmed entertainment to the markets and audiences that most appreciate it.”

Christian De Gallegos
Director of international sales
Voltage Pictures (US)

- Earned a degree in international business from the University of Arizona in 2004.
- Worked in the feature/TV talent and music departments at Paradigm from 2004-07.
- Joined Voltage Pictures in 2008 in International Film & TV Distribution.

“Starting in the agency world gave me an overview of the entertainment industry and it was where I discovered foreign sales, which coming from an international background, was an exciting fit.

“I was soon fortunate to work alongside Nicolas Chartier and Nadine de Barros in Voltage’s early days, sharing the success of the past few years, from action movies to Oscars. It has inspired me to strive towards my goal of strengthening partnerships and relationships, while pushing to elevate content for the global marketplace.

“With the distribution landscape changing, there is potential for emerging markets to power our financing models, creating opportunities for the right projects to flourish.

Weighing budget and material with supply and demand will be key to a prosperous future in our field.”

Jeff Deutchman
Director of acquisitions
IFC Films/Sundance Selects (US)

- Graduate of Northwestern University in film history and theory.
- Started in distribution for Samuel Goldwyn Films and then the marketing department at IFC Films.
- As director of acquisitions for Sundance Selects/IFC Films, he has discovered and acquired films including *Cave Of Forgotten Dreams*, *The Art Of The Steal*, genre films *The Human Centipede*, *Valhalla Rising* and *Kill List*, and indie breakthroughs *Medicine For Melancholy*, *Cold Weather* and *Weekend*.
- He was also director and producer of documentary *11/4/08* — a vérité collage of footage shot worldwide on the day Barack Obama was elected. The film had its world premiere at the 2010 SXSW Film Festival.

“I got into this business because I love everything about movies, from their ability to make ghosts out of mortals to their power to shape ideas on a massive scale. My own ideas about film have been shaped by extremely generous mentors, including [my father] Ira Deutchman, who taught me how to ride a bike among other things; Will Schmenner who curated my college art-house; Ryan Werner, Arianna Bocco, Jonathan Sehring and John Vanco from IFC; and the late Bingham Ray with whom

I had the good fortune to work for a year.

“Right now, I’m excited by the prospect of on-demand as a platform that could increase the breadth of films publicly available to a point never seen before, if we all play our cards right. An ambition of mine is to be involved with the effort to overcome any hurdles in the way of that cinephile dream.”

Emil Elmer
Senior vice-president of international sales
Focus Features (US)

- Began at Miramax Films, where he spent over eight years in acquisitions, production, marketing and publicity.
- Became head of acquisitions for Pathé Distribution, where he tracked projects worldwide for distribution in the UK. Was a full-time consultant for a film financing company, working on projects from the production phase through the world sales process.

“I’ve been fortunate to gain valuable experience at Miramax, where I spent enough time to see how the company operated, and at Pathé being part of the team that helped greenlight *Slumdog Millionaire*.

“I spent a significant amount of time in acquisitions and thinking like a buyer, so I think I have a unique perspective now that I have joined the other side.

“The industry is coming out of a lull and while there are still a few distressed territories, things are beginning to even out with VoD — for example players like Netflix and

LoveFilm are becoming active in the UK. It’s crucial to know your product, talent, buyers and observe what’s working and what’s not. It’s a very exciting time at Focus with *Moonrise Kingdom* opening the Cannes Film Festival and the company celebrating its tenth anniversary.”

Clay Epstein
Vice-president of sales and acquisitions
Arclight Films (US)

- Graduated from Cal State Northridge Film School in 1999.
- Worked as co-ordinator in international sales at Kushner-Locke.
- In 2003, joined First Look Media as director of operations.
- Worked at the Little Film Company as VP of sales acquisitions from 2006.
- Two-term board member of IFTA from 2008 up to the present.
- From 2010, served as an instructor at New York Film Academy.

“Kushner-Locke was my graduate school, exposing me to the real world while preparing me for First Look Media and meeting Robbie Little for the first time. Knowing I had studied in Italy, he asked in Italian who my favourite soccer team was. When I replied in Italian, he looked at Liz Mackiewicz and said, ‘Well, he can speak Italian, how bad can he be?’ I treasure his advice: ‘Stick to doing business with like-minded, trustworthy people... or try to.’ Reputation and good taste is his trademark and he’s

Clay Epstein



37 S

Tara Erer



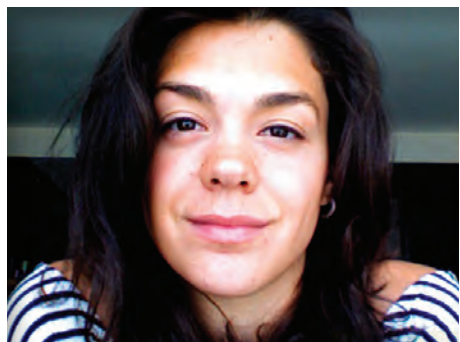
27 S

Ailsa Ferrier



30 B

Cristina Garza



28 B

Jeffrey Greenstein



24 S

passed that down to me.

“The industry is truly international now, and Arlight is perfectly positioned for this. Success is survival of the fittest. The fittest are films made for the right price that audiences want to see; conventional yet cloaked in freshness. Raising money is key and an art form often more creative than the film itself. I want to collaborate with film-makers worldwide to bring movies to the marketplace that distributors will jump up and down about... all in good taste, of course.”

Mathilde Epstein
Vice-president of international sales
Lightning Entertainment (US)

- Studied international business at the European Business School.
- Following graduation moved to Los Angeles in October 2001 and found work in marketing at a law firm.
- Became director of international sales & marketing at Hannibal Pictures in 2003.
- In July 2006 moved to Lightning Entertainment as international sales director, then promoted in 2009 to VP.

“I was offered an interview at Hannibal Pictures, arranged through a mutual acquaintance. Two years later I took an opportunity at Lightning Entertainment. Working in an environment that encourages growth and rewards ambition has inspired me to work successfully with a team of valued colleagues.

“I thank Richard Guardian for being at

the forefront of that encouragement — he is generous with advice and is a treasured friend. Beyond the intricacies of ‘the deal’, he taught me a great reputation is the ultimate reward for success.

“As the business has changed, it is vital to stay realistic. As distributors become increasingly selective, there is no room for error. Film-makers must deliver the right genre with the right cast in order to stay in the game. I look forward to playing an important role in the continued growth of Lightning to become the ‘go to’ company.”

Tara Erer
Vice-president of international sales
FilmNation (US)

- Graduated from Columbia University with a degree in film studies and creative writing in 2007.
 - Interned at Tribeca Productions, *The Hollywood Reporter*, Esperanto Filmoj, The Weinstein Company.
 - Started as Glen Basner’s assistant, then became head of international at The Weinstein Company in 2007.
 - Moved over to FilmNation when it was launched in 2008 as sales co-ordinator; became director of international sales in 2010; became VP of international sales in 2012.
- “Growing up in Turkey and studying film at Columbia, I was always fascinated by the creative side and the film-making process. However, I quickly learned the importance of

sales and distribution to the financing of independent films.

“Glen Basner has been my mentor since day one. When FilmNation launched in 2008, Glen immediately adapted to the way he saw the future of the business and FilmNation has since grown to become one of the leading international distribution and production companies.

“Independent films have a much larger arena than they did five years ago. Producers are now more creative in putting films together, which allows for companies like FilmNation to board projects that would’ve been lost in the studio system.

“Although I’ve adapted my goals and ambitions, the desire to work with film-makers such as Almodovar, Malick and Soderbergh has remained consistent and I’m extremely fortunate to work on their films every day.”

Ailsa Ferrier
Content and acquisitions manager
Curzon On Demand Curzon
Artificial Eye (UK)

- Completed a BA in fine art sculpture from 2002-06.
- Worked in various roles within Curzon Cinemas.
- In 2008, became acquisitions executive at Artificial Eye.
- Joined Curzon as content and acquisitions manager in June 2011.

“I worked at Curzon Cinemas during my final years at university and decided after that to get into distribution — mainly due to the slightly naive and romantic notion I had of the Artificial Eye company, which merged with the Curzon Group around the same time.

“I moved into acquisitions when Louisa [Dent] joined the company. I can safely say that anything I know about acquisitions comes from Louisa, and what I know about programming I know solely because of Jason Wood. The beauty of the film industry lies in its volatile nature and fluidity, and I feel that more than ever now I am acquiring and programming the Curzon On Demand site.

“What the company I work for is doing is genuinely innovative, and yet true to what both Curzon Cinemas and Artificial Eye has always represented. I have a strong sense of responsibility towards that history, as well as staying at the forefront of the uncharted distribution landscape of VoD, whose future path is still very much up for debate.”

Kristen Figeroid
Senior vice-president of sales
Sierra / Affinity (US)

- Started at Franchise Pictures in 1998 where she worked for four years and was post-production supervisor for *City By The Sea*.
- Subsequently Figeroid held the titles of VP of international for Media 8 Entertainment and director of international for Mainline Releasing

Mathilde Epstein



32 S

Kristen Figeroid



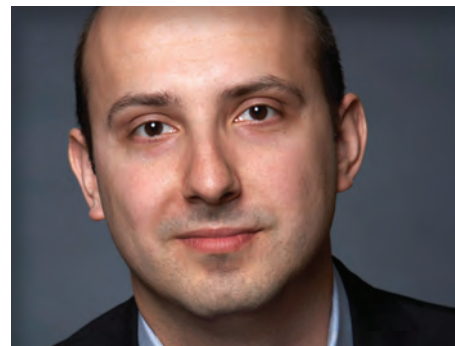
34 S

Calum Gray



30 S

Peter Kujawski



34 B

and Lightning Entertainment.

- Moved to The Film Department where she was VP of international.
- Joined Sierra / Affinity in 2010. As SVP, Figeroid handles half the world for Sierra / Affinity's sales, and oversees the company's distribution in those territories. She also brings in projects for sales, and evaluates finished projects for acquisitions.
- "I was essentially raised by HBO and I always wanted to be involved with movies. I dabbled in every bit of the industry before finding my passion in international sales, which shouldn't have been a surprise considering my dad and grandfather were in sales. I love the element of risk involved in this industry — it is like no other business, for better and worse. I am a movie lover first and foremost, and feel grateful for being able to spend every day talking about and being a part of film."

Cristina Garza
Head of distribution
Canana (Mex)

- Graduated from NYU in 2006 with a BA in economics, three minors (including film production) and a certificate in entertainment media management.
- Co-founded FilmCatcher.com, an online film distributor, video magazine and social platform at the age of 23.
- Served as manager of international sales at FiGa Films in the US.
- Appointed US delegate for Critics' Week at Cannes. This will be her third year with the Semaine.
- Head of distribution at Canana, an indie

production and distribution company founded in 2005 by Gael Garcia Bernal, Diego Luna and Pablo Cruz.

"My interest turned from economics to film when I started producing Tisch student shorts during my undergraduate years at NYU. I loved everything about being on the other side of the camera.

"During my senior year I interned at This Is That with the ever-supportive Ted Hope and later at Focus Features in international sales for my now good friend and colleague Ryan Kampe. I've had the support of Marie Therese Guirgis, Sandro Fiorin and many others thereafter.

"Every job for me has been built upon the past one. I like reaching for a better understanding of how this big thing works and inventing ways to have fun with it. Every territory, window, market, presents a new challenge and new opportunities for growth, experimentation and ingenuity. I don't see the death of cinema, distribution or the art-house, I see reinvention and a new generation of creativity."

Calum Gray
Sales and marketing executive
Independent (UK)

- Worked in television production before moving into features with his first break at ContentFilm working under Jamie Carmichael.
- Trained under Thierry Wase-Bailey at Celsius Entertainment.
- Was head of sales and acquisitions at documentary company Mercury Media where he handled a catalogue of more than 100 docs.
- Moved to Independent in 2011.

■ Has sold worldwide three Sundance-winning docs, *Paris Je T'Aime*, *We Need To Talk About Kevin*, *Exit Through The Gift Shop* and many other award-winning films.

"I started in TV but always felt more aligned with features. After an internship at ContentFilm, I landed an assistant role with Thierry Wase-Bailey at Celsius. Thierry taught me the nuts and bolts of the business and is a great mentor. Likewise Tim Sparke at Mercury Media who gave me a granular insight into the international TV market.

"My ambition is to become the best sales agent I can be. That means listening and understanding buyers' needs but also having a strong commitment to bringing quality to the market. It's inspiring to work with Luc [Roeg], Andrew [Orr] and the many talented executives at Independent, since that is the credo they live by.

"I see the advent of 4G as a force that will liberate the mobile window and counterbalance dwindling DVD numbers. Last year's annus mirabilis for independents proved that daring films can enjoy robust returns."

Jeffrey Greenstein
Vice-president of international sales and distribution
Nu Image / Millennium Films (US)

- Studied marketing and sales at the University of Central Florida.
- Was an assistant trainer for troubled teenagers at the Anthony Robbins Foundation.
- An avid entrepreneur who founded a carpet cleaning company at 19 years old, he has started and invested in several other ventures. One such start-up, a professional development

magazine, was the catalyst for his transition to the film business.

"Working with Avi [Lerner], Danny [Dim-bort] and John Fremes, I have received the ultimate crash course in the business of making movies from the industry's best. Their phenomenal mentoring has taught me that films are investments and the key is mitigating risk through better scripts, directors and cast, ultimately producing movies that excite and entertain worldwide."

Lisa Gutberlet
Senior vice-president of distribution
Myriad Pictures (US)

- Gutberlet was born and raised in Heidelberg, Germany.
- Fluent in German, French and English, she attended the European Business School in Germany and France where she received her MA in business administration.
- Before moving to Los Angeles in 2005, she worked at the World Bank in Washington DC and was an account manager for Turner Broadcasting System International in Frankfurt.
- Her first job in the film business was at The Weinstein Company, where she worked for two years in the business affairs department.
- She joined Myriad Pictures as director of sales and administration in 2007, and was recently promoted to SVP of distribution, to oversee Myriad's distribution activities across all platforms.
- In 2011 Gutberlet oversaw the international distribution of the worldwide hit *Margin Call*. "When I took a big chance and moved to Los Angeles on a whim, I was a European

Or Handelsman



28 S

girl with a finance background and a huge passion for movies. I wasn't sure how my skillset fitted into Hollywood, but I was lucky to learn from some of the best minds at The Weinstein Company which prepared me for the terrific opportunity of working with Kirk D'Amico at Myriad Pictures.

"It's an exciting and challenging time to work in the independent sector. Financing and selling films during the 2008 crash made me realise we have to be creative throughout the entire process: finding relevant material with a hook international markets respond to, and finding innovative ways to market and distribute, so that wonderful, relevant films like *Margin Call* can find their way to the screen."

Or Handelsman
Head of business affairs
6 Sales (Sp)

- Earned a BA in media from Australia's Macquarie University in 2007, majoring in screen production.
- Completed the MEDIA Business School's MEGA PLUS European master of audiovisual management in 2009.
- Interned at Spain's Morena Films during its release of Daniel Monzon's Goya-winning film *Cell 211* and production of Iciar Bollain's *Even The Rain*.
- Worked at KanZaman as development co-ordinator under producers Denis O'Dell and Mark Albela.
- Joined Marina Fuentes at 6 Sales in November 2011.

"Attending MEGA PLUS was what really got my foot in the door. It was a great induction into the business and introduced me to people who have been extremely generous with their knowledge and experience and who became great colleagues, peers and mentors. From there it was a matter of seizing the opportunities as they arose, which led me to sales.

"In sales you're involved with projects at all stages, from paper to third cycle, so you're exposed to trends and changes in consumption as well as production. For example the cuts in Spanish subsidies, which potentially mean fewer films for agents to sell due to a drop in production levels, also mean agents will be called upon to bridge the gap through international sales. I love that dynamic. Every challenge

Cynthia Kim



33 S

Florian Leupin



29 B

inherently has an opportunity, and you have to roll with the punches. My ambition is to keep on rolling."

Cynthia Kim
International sales executive
Exclusive Media (US)

- Started out as an investment banking analyst at Credit Suisse First Boston.
- Became director of corporate development at Sony Pictures involved in strategic planning and business development activities across multiple business lines.
- Joined CAA in 2006 as assistant to Ken

Afolabi Kuti



30 S

Nicolai Korsgaard



30 S

- Stovitz, Motion Picture Literary Department.
- Assistant to Bruna Papandrea, president of production, at Groundswell Productions in 2007. Production assistant on films including *Smart People* and *The Visitor*.
- International sales co-ordinator at Paramount Vantage (2008-10).
- Joined Exclusive Media in May 2010 overseeing sales for Asia, Turkey, Israel, Portugal and Iceland.
- Plays an active role in securing third-party film acquisitions.
- "I've always loved independent film and television, so in 2006 I decided to make a career switch from finance and business develop-

ment and joined CAA. It was a great move and since then each opportunity has showed me a different facet of the industry from working with film-makers to international distribution.

"I've been blessed to work with seasoned and well-respected executives including the incomparable Alex Walton, who I've worked with since Paramount Vantage. He is a stalwart supporter of his team and is enormously well respected not only in the international space but also with producers, film-makers and financiers. I've always admired how calm and sharp he remains under pressure.

Lisa Gutberlet



34 S

“My immediate ambitions are to play a pivotal role in the distribution and marketing of entertainment on the different emerging platforms, which are currently transforming the traditional business model in dynamic foreign territories like Russia, Latin America, China and India. It’s very exciting.”

Nicolai Korsgaard

Sales manager
TrustNordisk (Den)

- Worked as PR and marketing co-ordinator at Trust Film Sales from 2003 until 2006.
- Moved to Nordisk Film International Sales in 2006 as PR and marketing manager.
- In 2008 became sales manager at TrustNordisk ApS.

“When I started working for Zentropa I thought I was going to be a producer, but I quickly learned that sales and marketing was the right way for me.

“I have met and worked with great people and many have become close friends. To pick out a few — Fusun Eriksen introduced me to the business and taught me the ‘art’ of PR and marketing; Tine Klint and Susan Wendt have helped me on the sales side, and have been and still are my mentors.

“Business today will keep stable, I am sure, especially with the whole digital movement that allows films to be seen by more people in more ways, not to mention the increasing numbers of paid-for and satellite channels programming foreign titles. I see the opportunities along with the obstacles but as long as the production quality stays high, there will be a market. The ambition is to represent that.”

Peter Kujawski

Executive vice-president
worldwide acquisitions
Universal Pictures (US)

- Began his career as assistant to Good Machine co-founder and co-president James Schamus.
- When Good Machine was absorbed into Focus Features in 2002, he joined Focus as director of international sales. Later named executive vice-president of international sales; sales credits included *Volver*, *Eternal Sunshine Of The Spotless Mind*, *Lost In Translation*, *Milk* and *The Constant Gardener*.

Elisa Martin de Blas



36 B

Anna Marsh



33 S

Melissa Martinez



36 S

- Moved to Focus parent Universal Pictures as executive vice-president of worldwide acquisitions in 2011.

“I approach acquisitions as someone reared in the trenches of international sales, so evaluating projects on a nuanced territory by territory basis is second nature. I’m fortunate to have spent my time in sales learning from supremely smart and passionate people like James Schamus, David Linde, Andrew Karpen and Alison Thompson, so the primary focus was always on the films and the film-makers.

“My job was about fighting to make sure the films had the chance to be seen by as many people as possible. Now I sit on the other side of the table as a buyer, the impulses are still the same — aligning film-makers with one of the most powerful distribution apparatuses in the world in a way that is, hopefully, financially beneficial to us and to them.”

Afolabi Kuti

Acquisitions manager
Salt (UK)

- Started out working for Sundance and the BFI London Film Festival.
- Worked for producers Elizabeth Karlsen and Stephen Woolley at Number 9 Films.
- While at Number 9, Kuti was selected for the National Film & TV School Compass Point programme, funded by Skillset.
- Joined Samantha Horley’s Salt team as its acquisitions manager in February 2011.

“Volunteering for the Sundance Film Festival was my first adventure into the film world. There’s nothing that says, ‘Welcome to the film industry’ more than a snowball in your face.

“I have many mentors working in different fields within the industry who I beg, borrow and steal advice from; peers and old wise heads alike. Writer-director Tony

Aranka Matits



35 B

Grisoni is currently burdened with the majority of the responsibility.

“Working in the industry is more of a marathon than a sprint. I hope to make it to the end successfully having worked on films that I enjoy being part of and hopefully will have a chance to head up my own outfit.

“There’s grumbling about how tough the industry is at the moment, and it is. But it’s great to see the business and creative folk working more closely together to create films that can find an audience. There’s nothing like a good storm to bring people closer to their neighbour... no matter how ugly they are.”

Florian Leupin

Head of legal & business affairs
Ascot Elite Entertainment Group (Switz)

- Studied social studies at University of Zurich in 2006.
- Taking a degree in business administration, 2009-13.
- Head of legal and business affairs and assistant CEO at Elite Film AG since 2009. Also in acquisitions since 2010.

“Thanks to my mentors CEO Ralph Dietrich and Karin Dietrich, as well as COO Stephan Giger, I have learned everything about the industry. When they recognised my movie knowledge and my eagerness to cover scripts and screen movies, I started getting into acquisitions and began to accompany them to international markets.

“What I’ve noticed at markets in recent years is that business is accelerating in terms of pace and numbers of products being offered as well as digital distribution — aka VoD/EST — becoming more important, although it is still not a clearly defined and tangible market. Since worldwide consumption is decreasing, everyone is getting nervous. But it may also be a chance to redefine the movie business: allowing it to be more independent, more creative and active, creating more alternative chances to produce and distribute movies to the audience.”

Yuuki
Matsuzawa



34 B

David
Mitjans



30 B

Camille
Neel



34 S

Alison
Meese



31 B

Eric
Min



33 S

Jennifer
Nguyen



27 S

Anna Marsh
Senior vice-president, international sales
StudioCanal (Fr)

- Graduated from University of Otago/HEC Paris in 2001.
- Became international sales executive, Télé Images, Paris in 2002.
- International sales manager, TF1 International from 2005.
- In 2008 joined StudioCanal as VP international sales, promoted to SVP in 2012. “After a final year internship with animation producer Philippe Alessandri, Marie-Laure Montironi took me on as part of the international sales team at Télé Images. It was thanks to both of their support and belief that my dream of working in media in Paris became a reality.

“I see the international market today as volatile, and the business evolving at a vertiginous speed. New media is at the forefront of change, and the consumer has and will become more demanding than ever in the future. As a result, our traditional business practices are forever under scrutiny, and the film-maker’s formula is constantly put to the test.

“It is particularly motivating to work at StudioCanal for Harold van Lier with whom I share an optimistic approach to business while able to have fun in the process.”

Elisa Martin de Blas
Head of international
Tripictures (Sp)

- Started in Italy in 2002 overseeing acquisitions for the Italian market and international sales at CDI.
- Moved back to Spain in 2004 to help set up

On Pictures (Grupo Zeta) as head of acquisition with notable pickups including *Match Point*, *Hotel Rwanda* and *The Reader*.

- Finished an MBA in 2007 and in 2009 switched to international sales and business development for television at Zed Worldwide, selling and co-producing television formats with broadcasters in more than 15 countries.
- Joined Tripictures in June 2011 as head of international and acquired films such as *Flight I*, *Frankenstein*; and *The Company You Keep*. “I am glad I can do a job that combines both the passion for film and business that I had growing up. As someone said to me once, ‘This is not a business, it’s a way of life.’

“The challenge I face now is to help grow a healthy business in a complicated economic environment like the Spanish market right now. The risk level in this business is high but it can also be very rewarding if you are able to combine a solid business model with the right innovative material. I think our main challenge is to adjust our business model at all levels, from production to distribution, to diversify the revenue sources while keeping an eye on the traditional ones and be able to find the material that will attract audience interest.”

Melissa Martinez
Vice-president, international marketing & publicity
Summit Entertainment (US)

- Graduated from UCLA in 1999.
- Studied Japanese at Waseda University, Tokyo.
- First job in 2000 supporting the acquisitions and marketing teams at Gaga America, subsidiary to Gaga Communications in Tokyo.
- First international tour in 2003 with *Kill Bill*.
- Joined Summit Entertainment in 2005.

- Promoted to VP in 2008 after touring widely with first *Twilight* film.

- Key campaigns: *The Twilight Saga* franchise, Terrence Malick’s *The Tree Of Life*, Roman Polanski’s *The Ghost Writer*. Helped launch five of the top six independent releases around the world in 2010: *Eclipse*, *Resident Evil: Afterlife* (with Sony), *The Book Of Eli*, *Red* and *Step Up 3D* (with Disney).

“Just having returned from my studies in Japan, I applied for a position at a Japanese distribution company. It was the perfect opportunity not only to work on films but also to indulge my passion for Japanese while getting paid. Nothing could be better. Assisting the acquisitions and marketing departments at Gaga, I was introduced to all types of films and how campaigns had to be altered for local audiences.

“With my move to Summit, I learned from some of the best marketing executives — including Nancy Kirkpatrick and Jill Jones — how to tailor campaigns for a worldwide perspective. Information is now so readily available that a campaign has to be thought out on a global level. It was with this approach that we were able to achieve huge success. I hope to take what I’ve learned and continue to streamline the creative process with our international partners so we can brand our product while still letting them make it their own.”

Aranka Matits
Head of acquisitions
Pretty Pictures (Fr)

- Studied literature and art history at University College London and earned a PhD in German and film studies at The Graduate Center of The City University of New York.
- Worked with production and finance outfit

Thema Production on a number of features, and was involved in executive producing *Rescue Dawn* by Werner Herzog and *Goodbye Bafana* by Bille August among others.

- Worked as sales executive for London-based ThinkFilm International from 2007-08, working on films by directors including Derek Cianfrance, Nigel Cole, Alex de la Iglesia, Hector Babenco and Michael Radford.

- Moved to Pretty Pictures in November 2008. Acquisitions include *The Secret In Their Eyes*, *Winter’s Bone*, *The Housemaid*, *Goodbye* and Cannes Competition entry *The Hunt*.

“After completing a PhD in German literature and film, I knew I wanted to be more involved in film in a hands-on way and went to work in production and financing. It was actually while selling films next that I realised discovering films and sharing them with audiences is what I really wanted to do. I was fortunate to meet people who shared my vision and three years later James Velaise continues to encourage me to factor a film’s creative merits into my buying decisions. It’s not always easy to balance economic demands and passion but inspired film-making deserves an audience. Navigating the technological innovations in production and distribution will make for some of the most exciting challenges in the years to come.”

Yuuki Matsuzawa
Head of international
Parco Co Ltd (Jap)

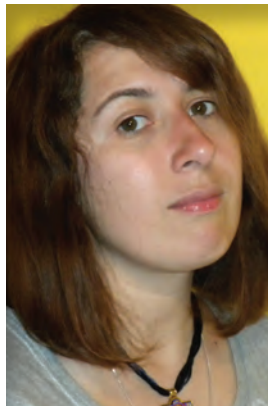
- March 2000, graduated Chuo University, bachelor of policy studies.
- June 2003, graduated University of Arizona, MA media arts.
- October 2003, joined Presidio Corporation as senior vice-president.

Tunc Sahin



33 B

Mila Rozanova



30 B

Ingrid Pittana



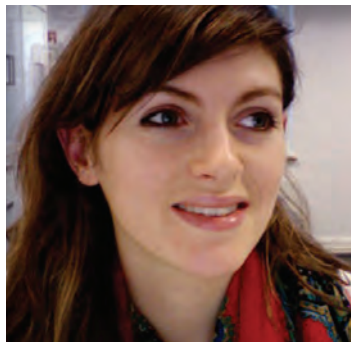
32 B

Bianca Obermaier



29 B

Ann Phillips



26 S

■ June 2010, became head of international at Parco Co, Ltd.

“Presidio Corporation gave me my very first opportunity. My mentors are Yasutaka Hanada of Presidio, who inspired my professional aspirations with the business values he demanded, and Tetsu Negami of The Klockworx who has provided me with the motivation and, when needed, the guidance in starting up and maintaining a foreign film operation at my current position at Parco. What we do in terms of acquisitions is in my mind, still very much territorial and thus one-dimensional, and ideally, in order to enhance our business, we could be looking beyond just our lone domestic market.”

Alison Meese
Head of UK acquisitions
StudioCanal (UK)

- Studied French at Leeds University, graduated in 2003.
 - Joined Optimum Releasing (now StudioCanal) in 2003 as office assistant. Promoted to acquisitions assistant in October 2004; to acquisitions manager in May 2007; and became head of acquisitions in August 2011.
 - Involved in the acquisition of titles including *Gomorra*, *Animal Kingdom*, *Sarah's Key*, *Your Sister's Sister*, *The Double* and *Beasts Of The Southern Wild*.
- “I was fortunate enough to start my career at Optimum Releasing, a young, dynamic company already experiencing rapid growth, in 2003. Being part of a small team expertly led by Will Clarke and Danny Perkins provided me with the perfect environment in which to learn quickly on my feet and encourage everyday exposure to all aspects of distribution. Our acquisitions process has always involved

backing talent, identifying an audience and trusting one's instincts.

“Working at StudioCanal provides me with the resources and flexibility to buy movies for a wider audience in conjunction with our partners in France and Germany, and yet still feel like I could discover and champion a new film-making voice each time I travel to a festival.

“While cautious of the state of flux in the home-entertainment market, I think buyers continue to seek out reasonably priced, original films with strong storytelling, spectacle or just something to surprise audiences.”

Eric Min
Director of international sales & distribution
Aldamisa International (US)

- Graduated from the University of California, Santa Barbara with a degree in film and media.
 - Worked in production, development and distribution before landing a job in sales and acquisitions in 2004.
 - Joined Aldamisa International as director of international sales and distribution when the company first opened its doors in April 2011.
- “I love film. I'm passionate about it. As much as I try to be the shark in a suit, I'm also the long-haired creative type at heart. I got into the sales and acquisitions business by blind luck; I sent my resumé to an interesting job posting online and a few months later I was an international sales assistant navigating through the chaos of what was my first Cannes. I've learned a lot over the years and have witnessed how rapidly the business is changing; buyers change with the times and sellers adapt, but every deal remains a commitment and a partnership.

My COO at Aldamisa International, Jere Hausfater, often tells stories about how a film that sold for \$500,000 today would have sold for three or four times that amount back in the good old days... The times are always changing and I'm excited to see the shape of things to come.”

David Mitjans
Head of acquisitions
A Contracorriente Films (Sp)

- Graduated with degrees in chemistry and audiovisual communication.
- Producer and broadcaster of a radio programme about cinema for Radio Martorell for eight years.
- Acquisitions executive at Notro Films/Vertice Cine for four years.
- Head of acquisitions for A Contracorriente Films since 2011.

“I am a lucky guy — my job is my hobby. I left my job as a chemist, and after studying for an audiovisual communication degree, Adolfo Blanco gave me the chance to work in distribution company Notro Films in Barcelona.

“Now, as head of acquisitions at Contracorriente, I enjoy the relationships and friendships with some sellers... and I love to have the opportunity to discover and buy some small jewels such as *Monsieur Lazhar*, and then see how these movies begin to grow up, win prizes, become crowd pleasers and how they can be a really good business. So, quality and business can live together and my challenge is to find them.”

Camille Neel
Head of international sales
Le Pacte (Fr)

- After 10 years at Bac Films as sales

executive and then head of international sales, moved to Le Pacte in early 2011.

“I was introduced by chance to this amazing and addictive job by Silvere Moreau, who has since left this business, and more than anyone else by Jean Labadie who trusted me at Bac and renewed this trust now at Le Pacte. There are now many more films available on the market, which makes choices and sales harder but on the other hand, each film is a real crush for which I am glad to fight for for years. It is a real privilege to be on the front line to discover films from all over the world. So even if business is tougher and has changed a lot in the past few years, I cannot see myself doing another job for the years to come.”

Jennifer Nguyen
Manager, marketing and operations
Foresight Unlimited (US)

- Graduate of California State University, Long Beach with a BA in film and electronic arts and a minor in business entrepreneurship.
 - Started as a development intern for Bic Tran at Lakeshore Entertainment.
 - Joined Foresight Unlimited in 2007 as executive assistant to the company's CEO, Mark Damon and rose to current position of manager, marketing and operations.
- “Mark [Damon] has taught me everything I know about this business, and there is much more to learn from him. I aim to one day reach the same level of expertise and success in the world of film sales and distribution.
- “The industry is always changing and facing new challenges as movie market trends and audience tastes evolve. It's all about taking the right risks, being more innovative than the next company, and having a little foresight. While no-one can predict the

Antonio Salas



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future, I want to keep establishing and implementing innovative strategies, whatever that may be a few years from now.”

Bianca Obermaier
International acquisitions
StudioCanal (Ger)

- Studied film theory in Frankfurt and Paris from 2003-07.
- Intern at Starhaus Filmproduktion (formerly Kinowelt) from 2007.
- Working in acquisitions for StudioCanal (then Kinowelt) since July 2008.

“I started out as an intern at Starhaus and there discovered the world of acquisitions. I was hooked from the start. Thanks to my mentor Daniel Guckau as well as the team at Kinowelt/StudioCanal, I had the chance of being 100% immersed in the business. Being able to experience the conversion from a German independent to part of a European studio at StudioCanal is great luck and very rewarding as it’s representative of the challenges the business nowadays faces as well as the new opportunities it offers everyone involved.”

Ann Phillips
Head of acquisitions
WestEnd Films

- Graduated with a BA in philosophy from University College, London.
 - Interned in development with independent producer Norma Heyman, and began working in development and acquisitions at Capitol Films in 2006, working with WestEnd partners Eve Schoukroun and Maya Amsellem.
 - Joined sales and financing company WestEnd in 2008 as the company launched, heading acquisitions and development. The company’s slate includes the Oscar-nominated *Footnote* by Joseph Cedar, Neil Jordan’s upcoming *Byzantium*, Ralph Fiennes’ upcoming *The Invisible Woman* and Gabriele Salvatores’ upcoming *Siberian Education*.
- “I owe a lot to producer Daisy Allsop for helping me get a foothold in the industry — with her help and advice I was able to gain development experience with Norma Heyman and then Capitol Films. I now relish working for a company as dynamic as West-End, and watching it grow has been a won-

Christopher Seidein



33 B

John Short



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derfully rewarding, exciting experience. Working on projects ranging from *Tamara Drewe* and *The Invisible Woman* to *Footnote* and *Siberian Education* has meant interacting with some of the industry’s most stimulating creative talent and key producers and financiers. The sales sector is an exciting place with more companies financing films and working vertically. Responding to the market while preserving our company identity is a key challenge, and one that I enjoy. Eve Schoukroun, Sharon Harel and Maya Amsellem bring a real wealth of experience, business acumen and creativity. I continue to learn so much from working with them.”

Ingrid Pittana
Head of acquisitions
SquareOne Entertainment (Ger)

- Graduated in economics and international relations from McGill University, Montreal.
 - Career started in TV production and co-ordination with Rome-based TV production company Sitcom SpA.
 - Worked for five years supporting the London-based financial team of Grosvenor Park while co-ordinating production for Fernando Ghia’s Pixit and foreign film distribution in Italy for Solo Entertainment Group.
 - In 2007, joined the international sales team for Ancona-based animation company Rainbow to launch its first feature film, *Winx Club: The Secret Of The Lost Kingdom*.
 - In 2008, joined the acquisitions team of SquareOne Entertainment.
- “Having worked for companies located in Italy, Germany and the UK across film financing, theatrical and TV sales, acquisi-

tions and distribution, I’m still amazed that I feel the same excitement now reading a script, discussing casting, arguing over marketing plans and campaigns as in my first day on the job.

“I have been very fortunate to have worked with some great professionals. My first mentor was Christian Solomon, at Grosvenor Park, who really showed me the industry ropes. I learnt some invaluable lessons about the mechanisms of the industry from him and most importantly he taught me to listen, listen and, when you think you have understood everything, listen even harder!

“My experience working for Al Munteanu of Square One Entertainment has really opened my eyes to sales, acquisitions and distribution and it’s been a rewarding, ongoing learning curve. The ever-changing marketplace both in Europe and internationally has really put distribution and its prior models to the test. Currently we are starting to see how VoD is and will continue to shape those changes. How the audience watches, as opposed to just what an audience chooses to watch, is becoming more and more relevant.”

Mila Rozanova
Vice-president, acquisitions and co-productions
Carmen Film Group (Rus)

- Graduated with a masters in literature from the Russian State University in Moscow and later with a JD from USC Law School.
- Co founded kinolzm.ru, one of the first Russian websites about cinema, in the late 1990s.
- In 2001, joined Carmen Film as PR manager, later working in international acquisitions.

Sophie Seifried



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- Co-produced Russian feature films including *Playing The Victim* (International Rome Film Festival winner), *Yuri’s Day* (Locarno competition selection), *My Father Is Baryshnikov* (Busan selection), *Land Of Good Children* (in production).

“I studied literature and the basics of storytelling in college, but was always interested in the combination of art and creativity with business, strategic planning and negotiations. The film distribution business that I got into is a perfect mix of both.

“I love our industry because, in the very end of this long profit-oriented buyer-seller-financier chain, the core of what we deal with is people and their emotions. When you see a film released, read people’s opinions, see them laugh or cry in the movie theatre — this is when you truly get rewarded for your long work hours.

“This industry is full of amazing and inspiring stories and people. Our own Russian industry that has jumped from 84 screens in 2000 to 2000-plus in 2011 is an inspiring and dynamic market.”

Tunc Sahin
Head of acquisitions and sales
Bir Film (Tur)

- Studied electrical engineering and attained MBA.
 - Started working at Bir Film in 2002 in the marketing department.
 - Moved to acquisitions in 2004 and was named head of acquisitions and sales in 2008.
 - He has produced one feature and three shorts.
- “Ten years ago, while studying engineering, I came across a bunch of film buffs. This

Jo Sweby



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group of people was, like me, craving to do something related to cinema. After giving long thought to whether we should start an internet site or a movie magazine, we decided on a film distribution company. As we had only one shot, we named it Bir Film, meaning 'one film'. For this one film we worked with amazing enthusiasm. Fortunately our efforts paid off and one film led to hundreds of others. Each day I feel blessed to be part of this business. This is a dynamic industry and the rules of the game change rapidly. But the challenge makes you addicted to the game. There's always something new to learn or adapt to. I am hoping to grow old running up and down the Croisette."

Antonio Salas
Sales manager
Bankside Films (UK)

- Graduated in contemporary media from the University of Westminster, London, in 2005.
- Joined Beyond Films as sales and acquisitions assistant in 2006.
- Became sales and acquisitions assistant at Bankside Films in 2007.
- Promoted to sales executive in 2009.
- Named sales manager in 2011.

"I got into the business through Hilary Davis and Stephen Kelliher at Beyond Films. It was important to start as a sales and acquisitions assistant as I got to know the ins and outs of an industry that was new for me. Stephen and Hilary have been my mentors from day one and have allowed me to grow professionally in our new company, Bankside Films. I have always been encouraged to attend meetings with them, listen to their telephone conversations, and even share a drink with senior colleagues after a hard day in Cannes. It is really important to be introduced to industry people by your seniors.

"It is as much a difficult moment for the film industry as it is an exciting one. Technology is providing new possibilities for generating revenue but it is still far from an ideal marriage. My goal is to lead a company which understands the needs of both. Contrary to the opinion of many others, I believe the role of international distributors will become stronger and broader with many opportunities for diversification in the digital world."

Martina Ternstrom



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amazing community of people we work with pulled me in.

"Although I haven't been with Hyde Park for long, my boss Ashok Amritraj is proving to be an important mentor. I must also mention Julie Kroll — she has been a friend and teacher to me as long as anyone in this industry and I probably wouldn't be where I am today without her.

"One day, I would like to start my own sales company as well as produce projects of my own. The business today, with the extreme drop in DVD revenue, leaves much less room for error when choosing projects. The successful producers and investors will make films with the international audience in mind."

Jo Sweby
Manager, worldwide acquisitions, film
Entertainment One (UK)

- Started career as an assistant in the programming department of TCM/ Cartoon Network Europe.
- Worked her way up to become director of acquisitions, EMEA.
- Made the transition into film, joining Contender Entertainment in 2004.
- Initial focus was Asian cinema. Remit shifted to more mainstream product when Contender was acquired by Entertainment One in 2007.
- Key deals negotiated include *Gnomeo & Juliet*, *Dead Snow* and *The Ides Of March*.
- Now working with acquisitions team and territory heads to acquire theatrical and home entertainment product for the UK, North America, Australia, Benelux, France, Germany, Scandinavia and South Africa.

"I knew I wanted to work in film or television but was unsure which area of the business I wanted to go into. Knowing that I'd have to spend time learning about the industry, I quit university, joined a media temping agency and immediately started work at Turner Entertainment. As assistant to a busy programming department, I enjoyed learning about all aspects of broadcasting (and watching endless cartoons).

"In both film and television, I've been lucky to work with many dynamic and inspiring people and the sheer variety of interaction I have on a daily basis means that no two days are ever the same.

"Looking to the future, the key challenge is to be able to secure the right product to help eOne grow its business — by increasing market share in our territories, getting involved earlier in UK productions and helping build our US theatrical slate. A personal goal outside work is to set up Flicks In The Sticks, a cinema club in the village I grew up in."

Martina Ternstrom
Acquisitions executive
Revolver Entertainment (UK)

- Attended film school in New York, 2005-06.
 - Worked at Magnolia Pictures from 2006-08.
 - Joined The Works, London, in 2008.
 - Went to Metrodome Group in 2010.
 - Started work at Revolver Entertainment in 2012.
- "I was lucky enough to start my career in film

Marcin Was



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Christopher Seidelin
Acquisition manager
Nordisk Film (Den)

- MA in film studies, University of Copenhagen.
- Writer of numerous articles about film style, directors and genre in film magazines and encyclopedias.
- Interned at Nordisk Film in 2006.
- Moved into TV sales at Nordisk in 2006 and into acquisitions in 2008.

"I came to Nordisk as an intern from university and was then offered a job in TV sales. A spot opened in acquisitions, and Peter Philipsen took me in as his right-hand man. His immense experience and knowledge of the film business has meant a lot, as has watching him navigate the hectic markets.

"For Nordisk, I aspire to buy the big films — the genre and concept-driven titles that help consolidate Nordisk as the Nordic major.

"With prices going up, and video and TV windows under increasing pressure, however, more and more pressure is put on finding those few truly invaluable titles, more than just the steady earners, that in recent years are less steady."

Sophie Seifried
Director of international sales & acquisitions
Inferno Entertainment (US)

- Born in Berlin, finished school in France,

then studied journalism, economics and Middle East science.

- Started career in development and acquisitions at MTV Networks in Europe.
- Then started working for Inferno Entertainment; moved to Los Angeles.

"I started my career at MTV Networks in Berlin. I loved working in the music industry and acquiring and developing shows for the channel but after a few years I felt the need for a new challenge.

"I joined Inferno's Berlin office with the idea that this would actually be a short stop-over to something more permanent outside of entertainment entirely.

"After a few months, however, I was asked to move to Los Angeles to work with the company's head of sales at the time, Kim Fox. Kim and owner Jim Seibel quickly became mentors to me, and showed me there is an interesting, creative and fun career in international distribution. Recently, I was promoted to run the company's genre label, Ember Films."

John Short
Vice-president
Hyde Park International (US)

- Attended the University of Texas in Austin.
 - First job in entertainment was at Paradigm Talent Agency.
 - First Cannes Film Festival in 2009.
- "I started in the international distribution world at Yari Film Group in 2008. Initially, I didn't plan on remaining but the travel and

at Magnolia Pictures in New York City. I got to work with and learn from Tom Quinn, Eamonn Bowles and Jason Janego, all extremely knowledgeable and talented people who were always very generous with their time and who to this day inspire me.

"I have since gone on to work for some of the most exciting and creative independent film distributors in the UK. They all have at least one thing in common, a drive and ambition to adapt to the rapidly changing climate in the film industry and find a way to make the numbers work again. This is also what drives me — I want to keep building bridges between film-makers, sales agents, distributors and consumers and hopefully contribute to a blossoming film industry where there is room and appetite for an eclectic range of films from companies both small and large."

Marcin Was
Head of acquisition
 Best Film Co, and **co-founder**
 M2 Films (Pol)

- Head of programming at Camerimage International Film Festival from 1999-2000.
- In 2001 earned a diploma in sociology from Nicolaus Copernicus University in Torun, Poland.
- Became head of international operations at Best Film Co in 2001.
- Promoted to head of acquisition and distribution in 2006.
- Co-founder and CEO of M2 Films.

"Like most people in the film business I started life as a film buff whilst remaining completely oblivious to the very nature of the industry behind it. I was lucky that from the very beginning of my career people I've worked with, on both the sales and distribution side, have had a collaborative approach to business, always sharing with me their wealth of knowledge and experience.

"Throughout a decade, little has changed regarding the absolute importance of forging and nurturing key relationships in the industry. More than ever, with film distribution in a constant state of flux, its models turning upside down, I aspire to always change with it, remaining courageous in my choices, growing ever smarter on budgets whilst becoming wiser on how to market more effectively."

Lucas Webb
Director, production and acquisitions
 Ingenious/Fox Searchlight (UK)

- Started out as production assistant at Disney/Buena Vista International Films.
- Went on to be director, production and acquisitions at Miramax Films.
- Became VP, production and acquisitions at The Weinstein Co.
- Moved to Ingenious/Fox in 2011, responsible for identifying British features for production or distribution under the Fox Searchlight banner.

"My way into the business was through the mail room at The Endeavor Agency (now WME) in Los Angeles.


"Since leaving LA, I've had a foot in the British and European independent world as

Negeen Yazdi



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Lucas Webb



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Jimmy Yang



35 B

well as the global studio system. I work across development, production and acquisitions. This has afforded me a broad overview of the film business from different business models, budget ranges, audience segments, talent levels, personal relationships and types of leadership.

"Mentors have included Daniel Battsek (Disney and Miramax), Harvey Weinstein (TWC), and now Fox Searchlight under co-presidents Steve Gilula and Nancy Utley, and head of production Claudia Lewis.

"Despite the complex and rapidly changing face of the business, of which we must remain aware, my personal ambition is to find the perfect marriage of pedigree material made for the right price — that magical balance of critical and commercial filmmaking. Quality is king and audiences, changing as they may be, remind us of this on a daily basis."

Jimmy Yang
General manager
 Serenity Entertainment International (Tai)

- Earned a BA in drama from National Taiwan University of Arts.

- Industry experiences include working in Buena Vista International Taiwan, Zeus International Productions and Spring International, with extensive and successful marketing experiences of a variety of films, from blockbusters to quality arthouse movies.

■ Founded Serenity Entertainment International in 2005. Successful releases include Academy award-winner, *Slumdog Millionaire*, Chinese martial-arts blockbuster *Ip Man 2*, Hollywood blockbuster *Transporter 3*, and romantic drama *One Day*. Most recent release is Hong Kong movie *A Simple Life*.

■ Set up an office in Beijing in 2007 and the first China co-production is *Love In Disguise*, the directorial debut of musician Leehom Wang. The second co-production *Double Trouble* is scheduled for release in Greater China this summer.

■ In 2012, ventured into a new field as a theatrical exhibitor by acquiring the cineplex CINEMA 7 in Taipei.

"I entered this industry because I want to share what I love with the audience. Profits are important, yet what's even more important is to bring films that give people hope, strength and passion. Now everyone sees the seemingly booming China market — with

our international market experiences and cultural link to China, we hope we can be the bridge, bringing a variety of quality films to our audience and present Chinese culture to the world."

Negeen Yazdi
Senior vice-president, acquisitions
and co-productions
 The Weinstein Company (UK)

- Graduated from Cambridge University with a BA hons in modern languages. Attended NYU for a masters in cinema studies.
- Spent five years at Duncan Heath's Independent Talent in the UK in the literary department. Repped film and TV writers and directors including Yann Demange, Nathan Parker, James Marsh and Mark Tonderai.
- Spent three years at Universal Pictures International as director of acquisitions in London. Acquisitions included *A Dangerous Method*, *Trollhunter*, *Step Up 3D* and *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy*.

"I was all set to hop on the milk round and take a graduate position at L'Oréal marketing until a surprise scholarship from NYU diverted my path from Hammersmith to the West Village where I discovered that, by some miracle, I could actually find a job doing what I love.

"Interning with David Linde at Good Machine International kickstarted my career, while my other two mentors are the stalwarts of Oxford House, Duncan Heath and David Kosse, who both taught me the value of relationships and of daring to think a little differently. And of course Harvey Weinstein is proving to be quite a mentor!

"My ambitions are to work on great material with talented film-makers, but it's more than that: memories of growing up watching *The Godfather*, *The Apartment*, *Cinema Paradiso* and Spaghetti westerns on late-night TV with my dad drive me to do my little bit in creating some good old-fashioned movie magic." **E**