

Why should you pay for crews? Here are 12 solid reasons why!

The DV revolution has been one of the single greatest things to happen in film. Because the entry-level cost has come down substantially, more and more would-be directors and producers are creating their content, and putting it out for the world to see. New content producers whom most would have had no chance to show their work, can now compete on an equal play field. Unfortunately, the DV revolution is one of the worst things to happen to the film industry, as the market of actors, crew, and would-be directors is simply flooded with sub par talents, and even more shoddy production companies taking advantage of every person with stars in their eyes stepping off the incoming bus from Iowa.

This mentality of shoot on a dime, has simply just ravaged the crew communities. And with each passing year, more and more would be actors just keep pouring into LA looking to hit it in the big time, it would seem that there is no shortage of people willing to work for nothing.

Combine this with the promises of cheaper and cheaper cameras that just keep showing up, and most new directors simply believe that all they need to make movies is a camera and a few actors. Unfortunately, the school of hard knocks will be the ultimate enlightenment.

Now, don't get me wrong, I'm all for the rebels without a clue, but at some point someone has to bring to light a few simple facts that won't change. It takes more than just a few items to make a movie. It takes equipment, and an army of technical people to run that equipment. This equipment doesn't come cheap, but for some reason you're simply expected to just magically have it when you come to the set.

But I digress. I too wouldn't mind working on a professional set as a 'real' intern, as long as I feel that I can learn something from seasoned crew people. Unfortunately on these kind of sets, everyone else is hoping the same thing, and finding anyone with 5 days plus of real world experience is hard pressed.

So, with this, I can NOT stress the fact that you should PAY near everyone working on that set. And here's a list of my 12 reasons why everyone should be paid to work on a set.

- 1) People who are NOT paid, don't take your production seriously. They are only there for collecting the credit (or the food), and don't go above and beyond.
- 2) At any time, you can lose someone. Since they are not getting paid for their work, they are actively seeking the next job. So, if the next job just happens to come right in the middle of your production, it's "see ya later" time. Leaving you high and dry. What do you think happens when you lose your DP half way in the middle of your shoot. You and everyone else on your crew is screwed that's what.
- 3) You get what you pay for. Need I say more.

- 4) You can't screen people. Since you're getting people for free, you can't really screen for the people that you want getting your back. These are people you're going to have to get intimate with on the set and because you'll be spending more time with them for those weeks of production than with your family you have no idea what you're getting. If you have name actors on your set, you'll see how the screening thing becomes a problem.
- 5) Since you can't expect the crew to show up AND bring equipment, then that means that you're going to have to buy/rent everything! Here's a hint for new directors and producers. It's cheaper and easier to have an experienced crew take care of certain aspects of "the small stuff". It's way easier to get totally bogged down with a list of equipment. When you hire professionals, they take care of these things for you. You can then concentrate on your job, and not "crap, I forgot the c-stands".
- 6) Litigation. Anyone who works on your set for free, ultimately sues if they even get wind that you make any money on your film. Human nature. If you pay your guys, they won't feel like they were abused because they "worked" on a paying set.. nothing more.
- 7) Walk off's/No shows. Unpaid sets have a very high rate of no shows, and people simply leaving. Let's face it, no commitments. Money motivates. You can do all the interviewing you want, when it comes down to it.. no one cares. How well do you think a production goes when people start leaving. A production is a joint effort, try doing it yourself.
- 8) Believe it or not, raising the cash needed to pay your crew is far easier to do than spinning endless amounts of your time trying to convince people to work on your film. New directors and producers will unfortunately learn this the hard way.
- 9) Paying no money doesn't allow you the luxury of firing someone. I personally have never been on a set where a producer has been in the situation that they had to fire someone. But should this situation have come up, you can't really fire someone who needs to go.
- 10) Pitch your movie idea to investors only. If you don't pay anyone, you are now placing yourself into the roll of "pitching" your movie to every single person that walks into your door! Good god, believe me that sucks. You have no energy left to work on your film.
- 11) It places you into a corner, and you now have to beg for what you can get instead of choosing that you want.
- 12) It produces a level of confidence in your crew, and insolently raises the level of professional look to your picture. Oddly enough, the best jobs I've ever worked, were

the ones that people get paid more. People take on a totally new attitude, there's less stress for the director, and your film reflects that professionally.

I hope this helps you out, see you on the set.