



INTERNATIONAL SALES

Q - Is there a type of film that sells the most?

Carole - Yes, the action thriller. Ever since I've been in distribution since 1988 that has always been the tried and true genre. For independent filmmaking however, lots of action is very costly. So it tends to be a thriller with some action in it, and that's what we seem to have had a lot of success with over the years.

Q - What do you need from a producer to sell a movie?

Carole - A good film! With good production stills and quality sound. I welcome producers working with us because it all helps to build the movie for the buyer. For instance, if they're out there on the streets talking up their film, that only enhances what we're doing behind the scenes with the buyers. Also, with the screenings, we can only get so many distributors to fill the room, so filmmakers can help enhance it with their friends who will laugh or cry at the appropriate moments. A buyer doesn't know if it's another buyer or a friend. It's a matter of building heat. Fundamentally though, you have to have a good product.

Q - Do you find with low budget movies that sound is often ignored?

Carole - Sound is an area where I often find poor quality. You want people to be able to hear your actors. You can fix a lot of problems through ADR, but it costs more money to fix the sound after the movie is shot.

Q - Can a filmmaker come to you early on with their screenplay seeking finance?

Carole - Yes we do co-invest. If we do come on board as a producer, I find that other investors are more prone to put in money. I have either matched funds previously or I've put in a third and they put in two thirds. But we're talking about independent movies, so it's not huge amounts of money.

Q - Can filmmakers also come to you for pre-sales?

Carole - Yes, but we haven't done a lot of pre-sales. What the filmmakers usually do is show us their script, tell us who the director is and if there are any stars attached, and ask us if we can do a list of minimums and asking prices, and then ask us to come onboard. It's difficult to come onboard before the film is made because you don't know what your end product is going to be. It's easier to get onboard at with the principle photography done, or the finished film. Then you can make more accurate estimates.

Q - Is there a standard list of minimums?

Carole - There's a standard list, swinging from minimums to asking prices, territory by territory, but a lot of it will depend on if it's theatrical or not. So frequently they'll have theatrical prices and then another set of prices if it goes to video and television. Let's say that with a good thriller we'll know it's going to go for somewhere between X and Y in certain countries such as Malaysia, Singapore, Turkey etc., so, when we see a film, we take another film we have sold that we think it's comparable to and then we plug in those numbers and come up with an estimate of prices.

Q - What technical elements do you need for delivery?

Carole - If it is a theatrical release, you'll need your IP (inter-positive) and IN (inter-negative) and then your video master, your sound elements and your E&O insurance and of course your delivery stills, etc.. We have a list of delivery items.

Q - How expensive is it to obtain an E&O insurance policy?

Carole - Now it's about \$12k.

Q - Is there anything on the delivery list that regularly causes problems that the filmmaker never considers?

Carole - Stills are the one place where people don't spend much money. They're so anxious to get their film made, they're not thinking of the marketing side of it. Second time filmmakers are thinking of it but first time filmmakers are so in to getting their film made and making sure they survive, that stills can go by the wayside. But you can do photo shoots afterwards and catch up but then you're paying more.

Q - So filmmakers should be aware of the extra monies required for delivery expenses?

Carole - That's a common problem for a first time filmmaker. They have their budget to make their movie, they finish the film and they think their job is done. Then they find out they have \$50k delivery items that they didn't even budget for. If I really think the film is good, I will pay for the delivery costs, along with the distribution expenses and recoup it from sales. Often, when filmmakers see the royalty statements that show what's been earned, they don't realize that we as their distributor have to now recoup the \$50k for the delivery items, then the distribution expenses which is the trailer, the flyers, screenings, posters and then on top of that we have our distribution fee! So when they see what they end up with, they get a shock. It takes a lot of money to get your film out there. It's hard. Independent filmmakers have been very careful on how they've budgeted their money, so I try to be careful on how we budget ours, as ultimately, we're spending money that has to be recouped from them.

Q - Are the expenses capped?

Carole - Yes, distributors should definitely cap their distribution expenses.

Q - Do these expenses include going to the three major film markets?

Carole - Yes the three major film markets (Cannes, AFM and MIFED) and the two TV markets (MIPCOM and MIPTV). We take a major presence at those markets and only take market expenses for the first year. It's pro-rated with all the films that are in their first year cycle. So let's say you have three new films which we acquire for AFM, three for Cannes and three for MIFED. We'd try and make sure that they're not competitive, so you'd have a romantic comedy, a thriller and a drama, or say a romantic comedy, thriller and a family movie. There would be nine films in the first year cycle, so each film would pay a ninth of the market expense.

Q - How much could that end up being?

Carole - For those five markets for the year, it's usually around \$35k, and I try to keep it down and watch our costs. There are some companies who charge a set amount, like \$15k for each of the three film markets, well that's \$45k for the year for just 3 markets. We get five markets and the last time I looked, I don't know any case where it exceeded \$40k. These are approximations of course.

Q - Do you give any kind of guaranteed marketing expense commitment?

Carole - Filmmakers are more interested in me limiting my expenses than making me commit to putting up the money. We can put up to \$100k in marketing expenses but that's our lid. Sometimes if I see that the advertising isn't paying off, then it's not worth spending the money. I try not to get to that \$100k, but still try to get the same value, and it's usually closer to \$75k. That includes the \$40k market expenses, then your trailer and flyer (lean and mean) for say \$20k, and then you've got your screenings and

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advertising to do. We have the first double page ad in Variety and Hollywood Reporter, so they're usually taking a third of a page in each trade that costs \$7k in Hollywood Reporter, \$7k in Variety, and then some dailies in Screen and Moving Pictures. So the advertising works out to be about \$20k. Then you still have to do your screenings and any other special screenings during the year, and anything that's specifically devoted to your film. So the total comes up to somewhere between \$80k and \$100k. I find the better the picture is selling, the more you spend, because you have to do more. Ironically it's actually good news if you're spending more!

Q - Is there anything that a producer can do to help it be more economical?

Carole - I've thought a lot about this, and I've tried to be lean and mean. Sometimes the trailer turns out to be \$12k and the art \$8k. Yes we can probably get the art for \$5k but invariably you have to do reprints, which will cost \$1500 to do one reprint and then over the longevity, it's still about \$20k no matter how you slice it. It's very hard to get it down. You could probably stay closer to \$75k if you really limit your advertising by sharing a page with other films.

Q - What if the filmmaker wants to be involved in the trailer and artwork?

Carole - I like having the filmmaker involved in the trailer and artwork, because they've been living with it for years. It's their vision, their child, and you want to hear their thoughts. I like to hear their ideas first, then go and get some different choices, show them and listen to their feedback. The same goes with the trailer. We've managed to get some great trailers and flyers by working closely with the producer. However by the same token, I don't like them to do it, especially with the trailer, because they are too close to it and cutting a trailer is very different to cutting a movie.

Q - Is there a different type of trailer that you need for the markets than the one you'd generally see in the theaters?

Carole - Yes. Ours is more a promo reel and it goes for about two minutes, whereas the ones in the theater are much shorter. Sometimes you can use part of your promo reel for the domestic trailer but I find that because not everyone speaks English overseas, we have to hit the foreign market harder, faster and more to the point. Whereas the domestic trailer can be subtler, edgier, with maybe more writing than voices because people can read English quickly.

Q - What kind of a deal does a producer get with a sales agent?

Carole - Depending on the heat of the picture, the standard distribution fee for foreign is 25%. If there's a bidding war, you can go down to 20% depending on the term, advance etc. Sometimes it can be as low as 15% depending on other factors.

Q - You mention an advance, is there likelihood that producers can get an advance?

Carole - Yes. It can be in many forms. It could be that a distributor gives an advance to deal with delivery items, or it can be upon delivery that they're paid a certain amount. As a rule, advances are going down, because the economy is down and the prices we're getting are lower, so people aren't anxious to take a chance. If all delivery items are in order, you could be looking at a token advance of \$10k to \$300k, but that being said, I rarely give \$300k! But we have been close. Even if you have all the stars and planets lined up it's still difficult! You have to have the right genre. One of the films we acquired had the right genre, played in Sundance, had a fabulous title, had a fabulous domestic company releasing it, was a true story, had names - it's only then, with all these hooks, that the buyers started to get it. If you don't have like ten hooks to beat them over the head with, it's hard. I'm not talking about the little countries like Greece and Turkey. They will come to us as they know that they're going to get a certain type of film from us, and they know they're going to get it delivered correctly as they've been working with us for years. They'll buy our whole slate as a package and we have key countries that do that. But the bigger countries that pay the big money, they will want to screen the film as they don't want your whole slate, they just want to pick out one or two.

Q - How does packaging work?

Carole - Technically we sell each film on it's own. We don't cross-collateralize. But we have our standard buyers who need product and they come to us to buy all their films. We don't like to refer to it as a package. They will give us the prices, they'll say we want to pay this for that, and that for that. Or they'll say we want three films at \$10k each. They know our taste and each sales company has its own identity. Our identity over the years is that we've done a lot of romantic comedies, family films and thrillers, but we don't do anything that has too much drugs, eroticism or is too horroresque. A little horror and sci-fi is fine though.

Q - Generally, new filmmakers can't afford to get stars in their low budget movies.

Carole - More than ever, stars are important. I like to think that it's better to have a movie that works with no stars than having one that doesn't work with stars, but that being said, people really want stars. Your picture has to be really good to sell without stars.

Q - How long does it take to see returns on a film?

Carole - Distribution is a sluggish business and I try and tighten it up to make the money flow through as fast as possible. You sign your deal memos, then you come back and sign long form contracts and then theoretically, 20% is due, and then upon notice of delivery 80% is due. I have noticed that by the time we go to a market, a lot of times the filmmakers have been unable to fully deliver for about three months, so I say to filmmakers, the faster you can deliver to us, the quicker you'll get your money. The ideal scenario would be that if we took the film to the first market we could actually say to the buyer that we can give them notice of delivery immediately. The filmmakers don't understand that it's predicated sometimes on them delivering to us because we can't give notice of delivery to the buyers until the filmmaker delivers to us. And on top of that you've got to get it QC'd (quality controlled) and that takes time. I've had deliveries that took a year and the filmmaker then wonders where his money is.

Q - Territories pick up a license for a certain amount of time. How long is that usually for?

Carole - It can be all different things. Five to seven years is standard though a lot of the territories are now asking for more. It can be up to twenty five years. When the movie expires, they sometimes extend for an additional amount of time. They buy the rights they want, either theatrical, video and TV, or all. We try and get a backend deal where we get a portion of the theatrical, a video royalty and a split on television. But the smaller countries who aren't paying a lot of money will ask for flat deals, which we usually grant to them because it's very hard to track their accounting. How can you track what's going on in Singapore or Budapest?

Q - What is the shelf life of a film before you've exhausted everything?

Carole - That depends on the film because sometimes now, we're even selling older films. But if you're talking top dollar, I would say the first three years is where you're going to get the optimum price. First year really important, first two years very important, and then after three years you'll start getting smaller amounts.

Q - What else do you require from the producer to help you?

Carole - Their feedback to help with the trailer and flyers. Having them give us the delivery items right away. If they do come to the market, that they work the crowds. They go to the screenings, they make sure that the sound is nice and loud, that the film is in focus. We have someone doing that too, but the filmmaker is picky about things like that. I like having them there at the screenings, maybe introducing the picture, filling in the empty seats with appropriate people. Sometimes we hire people to hand out flyers on say Third Street Promenade during the AFM, or on the Croisette during Cannes. You've got to build the heat and the filmmaker working the crowds, while we're in the booth selling and showing the trailer and flyer, can be really important. Or over cocktails at night, talking about the film, telling anecdotes. Sometimes we do small dinners with key buyers who love to hear stories of the actors and actresses, and the trials and tribulations of making films. I think the filmmaker can be really instrumental.

Q - Having a filmmaker introducing the picture helps?

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Carole - I find that by having the director or the producer there to introduce it makes it special. The buyers might be less likely to leave early if the producer or director are sitting right there, because they feel maybe they should stay. I like that. But be aware that a buyer might be watching your movie and walk out after five minutes, and then he'll go and buy it! It's terrible because the other buyers might think he hates it, and sometimes a person will do it because he wants to cool down his competition. He walks out and everybody thinks it's no good, but he's actually only doing it to kill the competition. Your first impulse is to lock the doors!!!

Q - In between markets, do you send out tapes of the movies?

Carole - We're very proactive and you have to follow up and send out screeners (DVD), follow up calls, set screenings, send publicity, send what's happening in the United States, say if you've just closed with Blockbuster on a film. Quickly get that news over to video buyers all over the world. It all helps to build up your film. You can't let up after a market and come to a screeching halt and wait until the next market.

Q - Is there an even flow with the sales throughout the year?

Carole - No, you still get your kick at the markets. But, there's a lot of interim sales going on.

Q - What are pre-sales and how do they work?



Sales Agents Tips

1. Consider the viability of your film as a salesman - would I want this film, and if not, why not?
2. First films are usually the fruit of a long held dream. From that perspective, if you feel the desire to make it, don't worry about commercial viability. As long as the film isn't awful, and you don't spend too much money, you should get it screened somewhere. Plus you will learn sooooo much.
3. Sales agents are tough to deal with - they are professional hardcore negotiators. If they sign your film, they will more than likely want 15 years, 25% of sales, plus expenses and refuse a cash advance. The upshot is that you will probably never get paid. You **MUST** try to get a cash advance, and one large enough to cover your costs, but be aware that this is unlikely.
4. Keep some territories for yourself. If your sales agent messes you around, this will mean you can approach distributors in a different country and make a direct sale. You will get a lesser fee because you are not a sales agent, but it's better to get 100% of a \$10k than 100% of nothing.
5. Alongside your film, you will have to supply a huge amount of delivery items (see the Delivery List elsewhere in the book). These are important and often overlooked. Without these items, no sales agent will touch the film, or they will fulfil the delivery list and charge you for doing so. Take care of it yourself. Study this list and make sure you know what each thing is, how much it will cost, and where you will get it.
6. Think about whether you want to shout about how little you shot the film for. Other films have used this tactic successfully but it could damage sales. In the eyes of a buyer, a film is worth what it cost.
8. Attending one of the big film markets like Cannes, MIFED or the AFM will broaden your outlook of sales agents and of how films are marketed and sold. **GO TO THE NEXT ONE!**
9. Get a performance clause in your contract, if they don't do a certain amount of sales, you can get the film back.
10. Cap expenses so that they have to get written permission to spend more than you agreed initially. Otherwise they could be free to charge you whatever they want.
11. Be tough from day one. Insist on reports as agreed, prompt payment, accurate information. Make them understand that you will not tolerate complacency. If you make yourself a nuisance, which is well within your rights, they might actually give you what you want.
12. We are moving into a global marketplace. Consider very seriously selling your film yourself. You might not have the contacts or the budget, but ANY sales made will mean cash in your pocket and not the pocket of a sales agent.

Carole - Pre-sales are where you'd sell your movie to a buyer before it's even been made, and would go to the bank for a loan to provide the money to make your film until your movie was completed and delivery of the movie was made. This used to help a lot with the financing of movies. It can either be a pre-sale off a script, which I've virtually never done, or it can be a pre-sale off a picture in production. The only thing I have done pre-sales on, but it's not really a pre-sale, is if the film is already in the can and in post production, I've taken a flyer and a trailer to the markets and sold it. There's no screening, but they've seen the script, seen the trailer, seen the flyer, so they have a pretty good idea of what they're buying. I really don't like pre-sales because when the movie doesn't meet their expectations, they invariably come back and renegotiate. Whereas if it's better than their expectations, they're never going to come back and pay you more. I want to make sure that they want the picture and it's going to stick. I encourage people to see the movie before any deal is signed. People aren't pre-buying so it's hard to pre-sell. I'm amazed that filmmakers would actually go into production without all their financing in place and this is where problems can occur. Say they had to raise \$1.8 million for the total budget of the film but their pre-sales were \$1.5. They'd end up losing the picture to the bank because they couldn't sell that last \$300k. There would then be no territory left open as their profit margin. In addition to that, what if one of the countries reneges, are you going to go over there and sue them? What if they say their economy has taken a nose dive and they only want to pay half. Who comes up with the other half? I think that's why we've stayed in business all this time as we never did gap financing with pre-sales. If we went into production we had the money in the bank to complete the film, or we didn't go into production. And pre-sales only really happen with bankable stars and directors, and as I say, we've never done it.

Q - How does a first time filmmaker find a sales agent?

Carole - You do screenings and invite the various companies to come. Or you can call them and send screeners, and go and meet with them. There's a list of buyers. Usually you'd do a couple of screenings, one in NY and one in LA. Sometimes they get a producers rep, which is becoming more prevalent, because the producers rep will also help them negotiate the contract and field all the offers. I think filmmakers should have someone like that to work with.

Q - How important is it to launch a film at the film festivals?

Carole - If you can get one of the big festivals, like Sundance, Cannes, Venice or Toronto, that's magical. If you go into Sundance, and get good notices, and then go to a market such as AFM, that's heaven, because you're capitalizing on the exposure in January right into the AFM market in February. Or if you have a picture in the festival in Cannes in either Un Certain Regards, Critic's Week, Palm D'Or or Directors Fortnight, and then you are also selling it at the same time, then it's like a trump card, it's wonderful. If you're winning awards in the smaller ones, that can be meaningful. Anything you can do to build a portfolio, especially if the picture is not an obvious genre, or doesn't have stars. If you can build it through the festivals, people take note, but it's a slower build.

Q - Is there any kind of reference book where you're able to look for the right sales agent / distributor?

Carole - The trades bumper issues for the markets always carry a list. You should look at their ads and see what kind of films they're doing. If you see those that look like they're selling the same type of genre as your movie, then they might be right for you.

Q - Do you sit down with the producers and work out a strategy for their movie? How often do you report to producers?

Carole - I usually lay out what we're going to do, show them our advertising, show them the direction we're taking in order to sell it. We make sure that they like that idea because it is important how you launch a film. I wouldn't want to do it without laying it out as I wouldn't want them to be disappointed with what we're doing. I have an open door policy. I like to treat producers how I would like to be treated, so as soon as I'm back from the market, I call them and let them know what we've sold, who we're trying to close with who is interested, here's what I didn't think worked with the campaign, here's what I think did, maybe we can tweak the back of the flyer as now we've got some good reviews etc. We're constantly figuring this out, not only for the new films, but also for the ones from the last market. They've been building their portfolio so it's good to then do a quick sales sheet that announces all the things that have been happening since the last market, that they now have a US theatrical release, they now have this review, they now

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have this festival etc. I'll do an update blurb sheet that goes with the flyer to bring people up to date on the film that we sold at the last market. Just constantly keeping things alive and looking for opportunities. For instance, when DVD came in, all those pictures that we didn't have DVD releases become valuable again. Suddenly they were re-buying packages on DVD.

Q - What would you advise a new filmmaker to look for when seeking a distribution company?

Carole - I would attend the markets and go and watch the sales agents in action, see who's there, see if they take long lunches at the beach or if they're at their selling booth eating a sandwich. Get to know the person you're dealing with. Lots of times though, they might be taking lunches on the beach to sell a buyer so that's not necessarily bad, but just do as much due diligence as you can. Go to the market that's nearest you, look at them in action, listen to word of mouth and get references from other.

Q - Looking at a distribution contract, is there anything producers should really look out for?

Carole - I recommend everybody have a very knowledgeable producers rep do it, or an attorney. Sometimes producers are knowledgeable, but usually they're not. I'd prefer to negotiate with someone who knows the business because you can be fair then, and they know you're being fair, whereas someone who doesn't know the business wouldn't know when you're being fair or when you're not.

Q - What happens if nothing happens at any of the three markets?

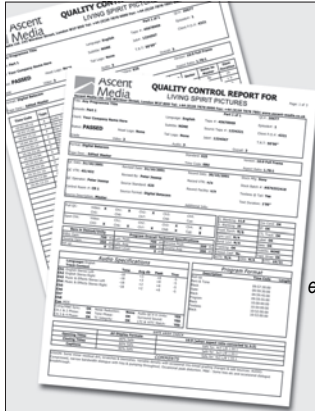
Carole - You have to either come to grips with the fact that your film is not good, or that your campaign is not good. The first thing you'd do is tweak your campaign and see if you can't go in with another slant. If I see a film that's not selling, then I say, how can we breathe some life into this? I try and see if either we or whoever is handling domestic, can close a domestic deal, because that helps enormously. If it's a drama see if you can make it a family drama, if it's a thriller, see if you can make it more an erotic thriller. Come to it with a different slant. We can get buyers in the screening room, we can send out screeners, we can pitch it over the phone, we can do amazing trailers and flyers but we can't put a gun to the buyer's head - the film has to sell itself. Sometimes the film is very good, but it's just it's not what they're looking for. They can't slot it on a television time period, it doesn't fit any of their slots, it's not a video title, because perhaps it's a little slow moving and doesn't have any stars, and it just misses being a theatrical because it doesn't have any names and it's a little bit too low budget. Sometimes you just miss and then you've got to try and put it together and sell it in packages with other films. Ultimately the filmmaker has to have confidence in their sales agent, see that they're advertising it on the first pages in the trades, that they have screenings when all the buyers are there, that they're sending out screening cassettes, and they've done a good campaign. Then if the picture doesn't sell then they have to take responsibility for it which is sometimes hard.

Q - How long would you take a film on for?

Carole - 15 to 25 years. People have done 10 to 12.

Q - Any advice for a new filmmaker?

Carole - Get a great story, develop it so it makes sense and then put the best cast you can get in it. I have seen so many films where I'm amazed that somebody has wanted to spend money on it. Develop your project so that all the questions are answered. Don't leave story ends unresolved, and make sure your story makes sense, not just to you, but to everybody. Keep it simple. You can do twists and turns but make it make sense. Don't be afraid to be mainstream and commercial. You can be independent and still be commercial, you don't have to be edgy. You CAN be corny! It doesn't matter because there's a variety of people out there.



The QC Report

Quality Control is used by sales agents, distributors and broadcasters, to ensure your film reaches the rigid technical standards required for international sales. The QC report (quality control) is usually two or even three sheets long. The first page is a very detailed list of what is on the tape, it's format and technical information in excruciating detail. It also lists problems in a summary... and it's these problems that you need to deal with. They will be detailed on the second sheet. Problems are listed, with timecodes, and they are rated in severity. 5 is considered Imperceptible, 1 is considered Very Annoying. Most frustrating is the fact that much of the QC process is subjective. With one company it could pass, yet with another it could fail. Only excellence all round will guarantee a pass. Not all companies use the same paperwork, although it's likely to be very similar to this example here.

QC Failure Reasons

Video blanking (rare)

Problem - this is where a border has been put on the master, either at the top and bottom or on the sides. If it extends too far into the picture area it will fail.

Solution - don't put any video bars on your master.

Crushed blacks (common)

Problem - the video levels drop below 0.3v and picture information is lost.

Solution - the video signal can be boosted, but this should never have happened if you had kept an eye on the waveform monitor.

Crushed whites (common)

Problem - the video signal has peaked over 1v and so picture information in the whites is lost.

Solution - the video signal can be clamped down, but this should never have happened if you'd kept an eye on the waveform monitor.

High error rates (rare)

Problem - the DigiBeta machine used to master the tape produced too many digital errors for it to play back on other machines, although it would play back the tape itself.

Solution - either clone onto a new tape from the original machine or re-master!

Picture drop-out (medium)

Problem - distortion & errors, caused by dust or tape problems.

Solution - most commonly this will mean transferring to a new tape and cleaning up the errors, either in a paint program or by going back to the source material for the problem shots.

Audio dropout / spikes etc. (common)

Problem - there can be errors on the sound which means it may spike or pop, or disappear all together.

Solution - go to the original mix and check it. If it's OK then re-lay onto master. If not, you may need to re-mix the audio for that part.

Audio peaking (medium)

Problem - the audio peaks and potentially distorts on transmission or duplication.

Solution - re-lay the sound pulling the levels down at that point, or pass the sound through a compressor / limiter box.

Weave (rare)

Problem - the image weaves from side to side. Only a problem on film, usually S16mm, and most noticeable on titles or static shots. Rare to be a real problem.

Solution - not much can be done, short of major digital stabilization. Get your checkbook out!

Joins kick in gate (rare)

Problem - the physical edit on film jumps on screen. Caused by a cheap neg cut and most common on S16mm.

Solution - do your neg cut with a good company in the first place!

Audio too low (medium)

Problem - the audio is too low. As well as a technical problem, this may also be because you have a very dynamic mix, or it may be a creative choice.

Solution - remix, or pass the mix through a compressor limiter to make the quieter bits louder.

Too dark (subjective)

Problem - the picture is deemed consistently too dark. Even if you have made a 'dark' film, this can be a problem.

Solution - re-grade the picture brighter.

Too grainy (common for S16mm without DVNR)

Problem - the picture contains too much grain, usually a problem from Super 16mm only.

Solution - re-telecine, passing the image through a DVNR box, which will dynamically process the image and reduce the effects of grain (as well as dust and sparkle).

Dust and sparkle (common)

Problem - Image contains dust & sparkle. Only a problem for film.

Solution - passing the telecine through DVNR may help, but most likely you will need a de-spotting session where a technician manually 'paints out' the blemishes.

Hairs in gate (medium)

Problem - a hair was trapped in the camera gate when shooting. Only a problem with film.

Solution - either replace the shot OR manually paint it out. Any foreign object can cause a similar problem (such as a boom in shot etc.)

Audio hiss (common)

Problem - the audio is poorly mixed and has a lot of hiss.

Solution - possible to filter some, but you may need to re-mix properly.