

Grizzly Adams walking through field



# Making Money In Movies

Making movies are not just about finding the perfect actors and storylines. Using sophisticated research techniques, Grizzly Adams® Productions describes how they create movies and television specials crafted to succeed.



For more than three decades, Charles Sellier has written and produced dozens of feature films and hundreds of hours of television programming for worldwide distribution. The founder and CEO of Grizzly Adams® Productions (GAP), Sellier believes that the 2009 global economy favours investment in film and DVD entertainment projects, specifically those targeted to the family market.

“The key to investment success,” Sellier believes, “is doing everything possible to assure that there is a market for an entertainment project before you spend a dime of the production budget.”

Started in the early 1970s, Sellier created a series of successful independent films, including *The Life and Times of Grizzly Adams*, one of NBC’s long running television series. Sellier’s company had since gone on to earn a reputation for producing film and television projects that audiences around the world want to see. GAP has developed several proprietary research protocols that they employ throughout the production process to protect investors.

#### GAP’s Research Philosophy

“There are many artistic aspects to filmmaking, but the entertainment industry is a business,” points out Dr David W Balsiger, chief operating officer and senior producer at GAP. “To make money for our investors, our task is to provide products that consumers want to see at theatres, on TV, or watch as a DVD at home. The best way to do that is to ask them what they want to see.”

He goes on to explain that “Hollywood studios and the major television networks regularly miscalculate the appeal of their

products. That’s why it’s no surprise that millions of dollars in production costs are never recouped and investors lose their money.”

Sellier adds, “At GAP, we don’t guess. No matter how enthusiastically people inside our company lobby to make a show, if there’s no quantifiable audience interest, it doesn’t get made. The reason no investor has ever lost their principal on a GAP production over our 35-year history can be summed up in one word: Research.”

#### State-Of-The-Art Research Used

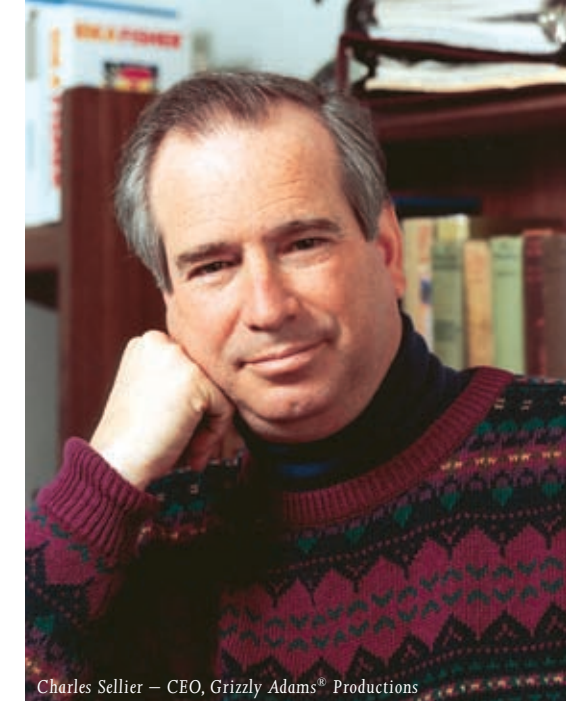
Prior to production, GAP utilises three separate research disciplines to determine the market viability of every project.

##### Statistical Polling

Common in political campaigns and market research, statistical surveys collect opinions and quantitative information about human populations and institutions.

Using proven polling techniques, GAP tests dozens of 100-word descriptions of programming ideas before it creates a treatment for the best received show concepts. The company then creates treatments of the highest scoring ideas and tests them. The next step is to turn the few remaining survivors into full screenplays. Finally, the company produces a television commercial or movie trailer based on the screenplays of the highest scoring projects. After three rounds of statistical polling, about one in every hundred ideas of the initial group will ultimately be produced.

Sellier describes the process, “We have trained polling administrators contact typical audience members and present 100-word descriptions



Charles Sellier – CEO, Grizzly Adams® Productions

of proposed television documentaries or feature films. The way the questions are worded and the manner in which the poll is structured and evaluated are strictly controlled by our staff. We have honed this process over decades. Our history of top grossing independent movies and consistently high television ratings has demonstrated the validity, reliability, and statistical significance of the results.”

##### Generational Research

Generational research has replaced the 20<sup>th</sup> Century marketing research tool known as demographics. Researcher Darryl Howard explains, “Previously, we looked at demographic groups – men and women (12-18, 18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, and 65+). As you aged, you graduated to the next demographic division.

“Now, we group individuals into generational clusters,” Howard states. “By understanding specific generational traits and characteristics, we are now able to predict marketing decision-making – as well as types of behaviour – typical of members of each generational cluster.

“Someone who is 27 today, for example, is part of the Millennial Generation, while men and women who are 28 fall into the generation dubbed Gen-X. Next year, today’s 27-year-old doesn’t join the Gen-Xers; instead, the entire generation of Millennials get a year older. When they’re in their sixties, the Millennials will still be Millennials.”

The significance of the new generational research is that chronological age is far less important than studying the reactions of people who experience the same societal, cultural, and historical events and phenomena. Interestingly, researchers have found that the generations have repeated themselves every four generations since the year 1431.

Howard and other generational researchers expect the same behaviours from people born since the autumn of 2001 – the Homeland Generation, as observed with the Silent Generation – people who are now in their late-sixties through mid-eighties. Generations repeat themselves every 80 to 100 years.

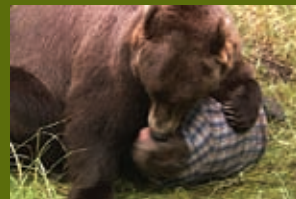
“When our researchers look at a movie or documentary idea, they examine whether it will appeal to the target generation of decision-makers,” Sellier concludes. “It’s an amazingly accurate tool.”

**Brain Chemical Response**

In the human brain there are more than a hundred billion nerve cells connected to each other through an infinitely complex network of nerve processes. The message from one nerve cell to another is transmitted through different chemical transmitters. Science has determined that certain neurotransmitter

**FRIENDS FOR LIFE PRODUCTION STILL: BEAR ATTACK**

Veteran animal trainer Doug Seus doubling for actor Michael Flynn in the film Friends for Life, a new family-oriented feature film from GAP in association with Flynn-Daines Productions. The climatic scene of the film has Flynn’s character, Jim, attacked by a grizzly bear. He’s saved by a pack of wolves he rescued earlier in the story when they were pups. The film was released in March 2009 and will be licenced worldwide during the next five years.



chemicals can quantify emotions more accurately than personal interviews.

By knowing normal levels of each chemical, researchers can record increases or decreases as a subject interacts with a specific stimulus, such as a movie concept or TV spot. Three chemicals in the brain are measured in brain chemical research: serotonin, which increases as you feel better about something; dopamine, which increases with pleasurable experiences; and, norepinephrine, which decreases as you withdraw or flee from something to which you react negatively.

“People have been known to censor their verbal responses,” GAP’s Balsiger observes. “The reaction of their brain chemistry, however, is involuntary and can be gauged quite precisely.”

**GAP’s Business Model**

In more than 35 years of producing television programmes and feature films, every investor has recouped their principal in a GAP project.

“We test to find encouraging topics for the entire family and we test to identify our audience,” says Sellier. “We want to tell redeeming, up-lifting stories and use every tool available to protect the capital people entrust to us.”

**Looking For Stories Passed Over By Studios**

“We test to find subjects and we test to identify our audience,” says Sellier. “Our objective is to produce stories of

encouragement for audiences that are ignored or under-served by the major studios and television networks.”

GAP, named after its long-running NBC Network TV series *The Life and Times of Grizzly Adams*, produces network Sweeps TV specials and series for ION Television (formerly the PAX-TV Network) and other major cable channels.

During the past 35 years, GAP has produced more than 1,000 family friendly TV specials and series for NBC, CBS, PAX, Discovery, SciFi, The Learning Channel and other networks worldwide. Eleven of their theatrical films are still among the top 100 all-time independent grossing films (non-studio), with six of those releases ranking in the top 25.

GAP funds its shows through private- or direct-placement offerings which allow discerning and qualifying investors to diversify and participate in a package of movies and TV shows – where investment amounts might vary and where, based on historical performance data, projected internal rates of returns are exceptional. ■

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