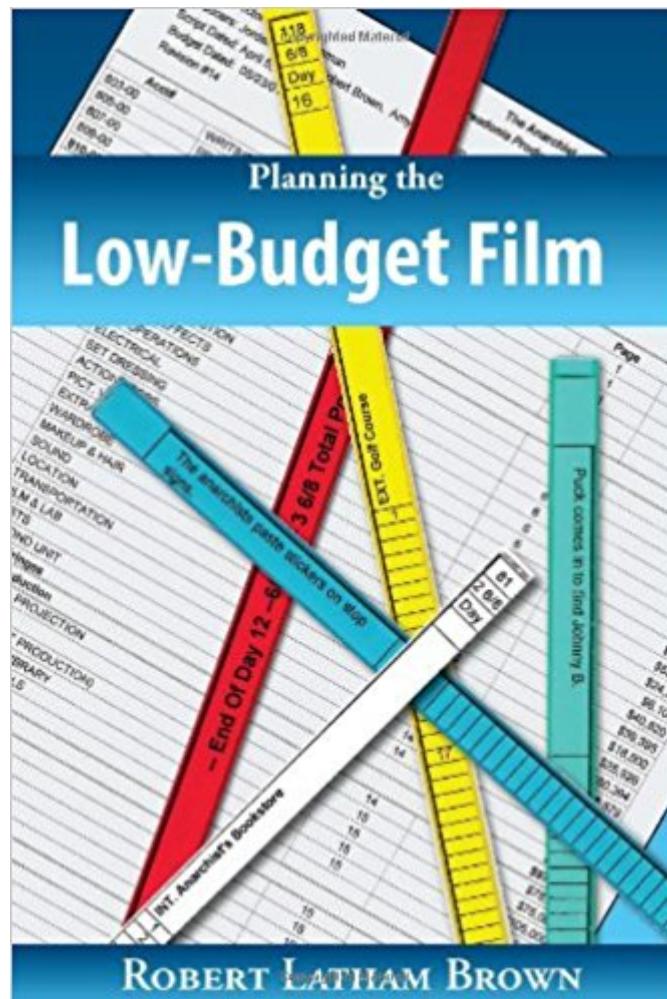


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# Planning The Low-Budget Film



## **Synopsis**

Finalist, 2007 Benjamin Franklin Awards, for Best New Voice Nonfiction and Professional/Technical Novice and aspiring filmmakers seeking to learn how to develop a feature film will find a step-by-step blueprint in this guide. Drawing upon the more than 30-years experience of an industry professional, the book examines how to identify and break down shooting sequences in scripts, scout locations, create a production board and shooting schedule, deal with unions, budget a film, and rebound when it all goes wrong. Along the way, readers learn how to economize to get the most value from limited funds and what to look for in a prospective crew. To facilitate an understanding of the concepts, a real-life example of a complete budget and production board for an independent low-budget feature film, *The Anarchist Cookbook*, is provided. The guide's concise list of contacts&#151;film commissions in all 50 states, Canada, Mexico, Australia, and England; payroll companies; and vendors of supplies&#151;along with a directory of unions and guides will simplify sourcing. Other supplementary aids include a complete glossary of industry terms, a list of all safety bulletins issued by the Industry Wide Labor/Management Safety committee, and a comprehensive index.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

"On all the movies [Bob Brown] worked on with me, he never failed to bring a film in on time and on budget. This book is a must read for anybody who is even thinking of producing a film!"  
"This comprehensive book . . . can apply to films of any sized budget. I wish all

film schools used it." Gary Martin, president of production, Columbia/Tristar Motion Picture Group" You will make a better movie for less money using this book . . . the ultimate guide to budgeting and scheduling the low-budget movie." Bruce Block, producer, Father of the Bride, Something's Gotta Give, and What Women Want" An invaluable resource for anyone who wants to make a movie; essential for students and professionals alike." Brenda Goodman, senior lecturer and head of the production track at the University of Southern California School of Cinema-Television.

Robert Latham Brown teaches production planning at the University of Southern California School of Cinema-Television. His credits include producer, line producer, production manager, and second-unit director on films such as The Anarchist Cookbook; Child's Play; Child's Play 2: Chucky's Back; Child's Play 3: Look Who's Stalking; Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom; Local Color; Robin Hood: Men in Tights; S.W.A.T.; and Star Wars: Return of the Jedi. He lives in Los Angeles.

This is an entertaining discussion of how to prepare a budget for making a low-budget (less than \$2 million) movie by a producer with experience making low-budget and high budget films going back decades. If you are making a student film, this is a lot more detail than you'll probably need. If you are looking at making a real movie, something that isn't three of you with a nice camera, this is the book you need. My only regret is that I ordered the Kindle edition, instead of the paperback. There are a number of places where the paperback would actually be preferable because of the examples in the back.

As a screenwriter preparing to shoot his first major motion picture, I found this book to be incredibly helpful. The depth and detail at which it delivers its information is fantastic, but never leaves you shaking your head and feeling like you should be reading one of those "...For Dummies!" books. It does exactly what you would think the title implies; helps you plan your low-budget film, and it contains applicable templates for a myriad of situations; leaving no proverbial stone unturned in the process.

This is a required textbook of mine for Film Business class. I find it very detailed and informative. This is a book that I can always refer back to when needed.

This is an outstanding piece of work. It is an entire course in Pre-Production Management all in one handy package. I have used it as a text for classes in Pre-Production a number of times and wouldn't teach my course without it.

This book is very readable - the author uses several anecdotes to engage the reader, and also provides lots of hard facts, and excellent suggestions. If you are planning a film - buy this book.

I found out about this book quite by accident on Wikipedia, as so many people rely on expensive computer budgeting programs now. I refuse to shell out more big cash on programs and books. The D.I.Y. film information industry has become so bloated, you could spend so much money on materials, you could've made a feature film instead of buying more books on HOW to do it. But this is a really good book from an actual teacher who knows how to communicate. It's a secret self-published book that I'm glad I stumbled upon. As word-of-mouth spreads, I imagine many more people will find out about it. Anyway, now that the script is done five years later, I've been avoiding the idea of all this real work, hoping I could run a cute photo and a personal ad for a knight to ride in and save me. I didn't care if the knight was white or black or even abusive. But no dice. And since I have to do this anyway, I wanted to really learn the logic of how and why to break down and budget a script. It's a surprisingly easy read for such a dry subject and I'm carrying my copy around like a newly dog-eared pet, reading a little bit more each time. Good luck to both you and me! Update: I broke down and not only had to buy a program (which I still can't figure out six months later--if only Scott Billups would write every manual!!--but I also took a pre-production class with Debbie Brubaker, the line producer. Man, she is rock n' roll.

I am enjoying Robert Latham Brown's *Planning the Low-Budget Film*. The first half introduces one to basic considerations in budgeting and scheduling a movie, with many anecdotes taken from Brown's experiences making movies for a variety of studios over the last thirty years. The second half is a virtual encyclopedia of film-making, organized according to the budget's chart of accounts. Brown educates the reader about each account, about the considerations involving that expense, in order to project how much money needs to be budgeted for it. A film production manager's job involves interfacing with so many aspects of the world that there is a lot to learn about reality from Brown's anecdotes and discussion of each budget account. He does not appear to hold anything back and is generous with his hard-won experience. For example, in a section titled Lindsley's Method in chapter 22 he shares a method he personally learned for tracking the film's progress - is

it ahead of schedule or behind schedule? The book is suitable for film students, but should gradually find its way onto the desks, where it is close at hand, of every film production manager.

I have been associated with the film business for the last 20 plus years, and have not read a book that addresses the real world of Low-Budget film making as well as Robert L. Brown has captured. His book should be compulsory reading for every film student, and those who would like to understand the nuts and bolts of the business. Mr. Brown has managed to make his book entertaining while being informative. (Not an easy job when talking budgets etc.). Mr. Brown's years of experience in being one of the industries most respected producers has culminated in an interesting short-cut to understanding and Planning the Low-Budget Film process. Job well done... Patrick W. Adderson.

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