



Getting Script Development on the Same Page The Story Behind LitCentral

After receiving her M.F.A. from Loyola Marymount University in screenwriting, Robin Hillary signed with one of the top entertainment agencies: International Creative Management (ICM). After her agent left ICM, Robin was in possession of two key valuables: her personal screenplays and a collection of antique typewriters, which was worth thousands of dollars. Without an agent, Robin found herself in the all-too-common territory of marketing her talents to Hollywood on her own.

As all hopeful writers do, Robin played the "query letter game," but knew her query letter had to stand out amongst the hundreds that were sitting on any given producer or agent's desk. **"I knew I had to create a query package that reflected the creativity in my scripts."**

Inspired, Robin anchored 100-year old typewriters to the bottom of boxes, rolled her query letters inside the carriages, and sent her cherished collection – one by one -- to over 25 development executives and A-list actors whom she envisioned in her screenplays. All but three recipients kept the typewriters and responded favorably...but still, no sale. **"In Hollywood, success is a numbers game. Out of a hundred 'no thank you's' can come one 'yes' ... and that's all you need to win."**

Depleted of her prized possessions and tired of the frustration of trying to get her scripts read, Robin began looking for a better way for her and thousands of other screenwriters like her. Robin envisioned a "paperless Hollywood" where electronic versions of scripts could rocket directly to agents and production companies based on their interests, supported with a better script coverage and analyzing system where the best scripts could gain exposure and be purchased in a fraction of the time. The result would improve the quality of screenplays going into production, leading to a better product at the box office.

Turning to her best friend Michelle McCarthy, the two began to brainstorm. **"Michelle had a full-time job and three kids, but --in spite of this -- she was the one friend I knew would be willing take on this venture with me."** To get things going, Michelle cashed in her photography business to get the fledgling enterprise up and running. The duo opened offices in their home town of Temecula and -- with cutting-edge technologist Louis Rodriguez -- developed the foundation of LitCentral. **"Once Lou came on board the idea just exploded. His tech savvy -- mixed with Michelle's leadership and my industry knowledge -- took the project to a whole new level."**

For seed capital, Robin and Michelle approached the heartland of America, raising hundreds of thousands of dollars from friends and family in just a few months. Many were dissatisfied with the quality of their movie-going experience and others were shocked at the antiquated process of development. **"Even people far outside the industry saw LitCentral as a means that could potentially help deliver a better product at the box office."**



Even the "everyday Joe" could see the industry was desperately overdue for a universal script management system and a better way to analyze its literary assets. LitCentral stayed well under the radar for a year and a half developing the software, building a strong team of key people with decades of software experience and/or industry knowledge. **"Script coverage today is not consistent. Every company does it a different way; by the time a script reaches the studio, it can have 20 different coverage reports attached with 20 ambiguous opinions. In order to bring uniformity to the way Hollywood works today, we knew we had to create a system that could quantify all the subjective feedback that occurs during the development process."**

In order to quantify the value of a screenplay LitCentral constructed a new grading system that offered a universal language between writers and those that read their work. Focus groups were held with professional readers, story analysts/consultants, writers, producers, etc., and a statistician from academia – all who contributed their expertise.

As LitCentral began unveiling the software to professionals in the industry, even they were surprised by the enthusiastic response. **"Everyone we met with -- from the WGA to produced screenwriters to former agents and top studio execs -- were so excited about the concept. They either wanted to contribute to it, be a part of it, or simply said they were rooting for its success."**

LitCentral's Film Edition will be available 4Q 2006 with subsequent additions to follow.