

From the Planners' Bookshelf...

What a Producer Does: The Art of Moviemaking (not the Business)

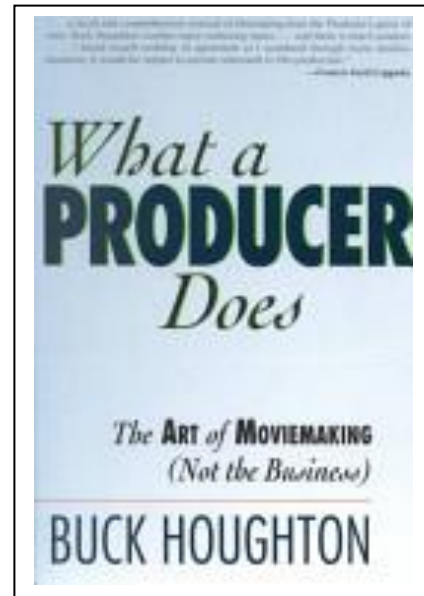
[Buck Houghton](#)

Silman-James Press, 1991.

Many professions have valuable lessons for city planners. Movie producers may not come to mind as an instructive profession, but the means and methods used to produce a movie have many parallels for managing a city planning project with many disciplines, budgets, schedules and specific products. Multi-media, multi-discipline and multi-dimensional plans fit the mold of motion picture production.

In the movie, the story is what matters. From Mr. Houghton's introduction come several thoughts:

- “The [story is the] basis from which all else about a movie springs.” The development program, community vision and comprehensive plan direct city-building projects; getting the story right matters.
- “The good producer, as an inspirer of creativity, must himself, be creative.”
- “He [there have been many more women producers since 1991] is:
 - A creative administrator, who administers everything...
 - A coordinator of the work by many people who may never have met before...
 - A majority force in the hiring of every artist...
 - The center to whom everyone turns...
 - The quietest man in the operation...
- “His agenda, or syllabus, is the budget”.



Think of the story as the development program or the city's vision for creating a sustainable community. Think of the artists as planners and allied professionals. Think of the schedule and budget as the schedule and budget.

Mr. Houghton writes nicely and his discussion is very illuminating for project managers and senior professionals in the city-building disciplines.

A book in the same ilk is ***What Do Editors Do? The Art, Craft & Business of Book Editing*** edited by Peter Ginna in 2017. Another profession with many insights to offer any professional.

Look around; many other disciplines have discovered helpful ways for planners to produce quality products.