

1. Target Keyword: Getting into top Film Schools
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If you're trying to get into the American Film Institute (AFI) or the University of Southern California (USC) set yourself up for sticker shock. USC will run you \$42,000 a year, and that won't include your room and board. AFI costs about the same. Of course, the Beijing Film Academy, another great school, only costs \$10,000 or so a year, but you had better have an interpreter.

Tuition at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) isn't bad if you're a California resident, but otherwise it's in the same price range as USC. However, if you're getting into a top film school to learn directing or writing, you may find that UCLA has the better program, even though USC is generally considered the very best film school, due to its production and editing strengths.

Getting into top film schools is hard. They are competitive universities with high academic standards, for one thing. So how do you compete? Your portfolio should demonstrate literacy and the ability to construct a properly spelled and punctuated English sentence. This is college, and nobody graduates without passing the required classes. So getting into a top film school requires being able to convince a very jaded admissions committee that not only are you talented and special, but you are definitely able to meet the requirements for obtaining a degree from that institution.

Beyond that, the admissions committee will expect the portfolio. But you're reading this to find out how to be the standout candidate that they clearly want, the one that goes straight on the "accept" pile.

Polish matters almost as much as language skills. You don't want to come across as careless. Still, they won't be all that concerned with whether you already know some of the material. You'll learn that once you attend, so don't spend a lot of time sweating the fine details of screenplay format and special effect descriptions. It's much more important to show that you can:

- Draw a three-dimensional character
- Tell a story
- Create suspense and dramatic tension
- Interest them in what you have to say

If you have a solid resume, getting into top film schools can sometimes be easier. Admissions committees like diversity, and they love people who already have life experience and stories to tell. All the better if you have had acting classes or an occasional bit part or stagehand gig. Willingness to get your hands dirty or take direction is a plus.

Preferably though, it would be best to have great grades, excellent SAT scores, a fantastic portfolio and a resume as long as your arm full of innovation and creativity. But never fear. The admissions committee knows that not everyone will be a perfect candidate. Your grades and SAT scores matter, because the school needs to know that you will eventually be able to graduate, but good grades do not guarantee acceptance any more than bad ones necessarily rule you out. Good luck!

2. Target Keyword: Inspirational Goals Video

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In the course of our day-to-day existence, sometimes we get mired into a routine or accept the status quo as inevitable. Sometimes all it takes are the right words, said the right way, to make us step back, reassess, and move forward.

Even if you cringe at inspirational greeting cards, perhaps a meme jumps out at you on Facebook or the words to a song hit home. Insight is insight. Hope is hope. Look at the reaction Barack Obama got to "Yes we can". It even got [set to music](#) by will.i.am in possibly the most famous recent inspirational video, with twenty-four and a half million views on YouTube. These days, a video on YouTube has a greater potential reach than most broadcast media. And the rise of tablet computing and greater bandwidth availability continue to fuel consumers' [enormous appetite](#) for video.

Inspirational goals videos have always been a great American sports tradition. We were all brought up on locker room pep talks and Nike's "Just Do It" commercials. Think Sylvester Stallone in *Rocky IV*, or Al Pacino in *Any Given Sunday*. But then there is Will Smith in *The Pursuit of Happyness*, or pretty much any TED talk, or any Tony Robbins video for that matter.

If you aren't coming across the right inspirational goals video, why not make one yourself? It's less counter-intuitive than it probably sounds. It's an adage in education that one very good way to get students to retain material is to enlist them to teach it to other students. Think of your video as an affirmation, and affirmations are known to work. And since you are making it, why not videotape it? Odds are that if it speaks to you, it will speak to someone else as well out there, and possibly help them too. And if not, what do you lose? At worst you'll have increased your stock of good karma a little just for having made the effort.

Nobody can tell you how to make your inspirational goals video, or what you should say. Only you know what it is that you need to hear, and what will make it

work. Make it reach out and touch your viewers where they live, make it sincere. Do not write out your script ahead of time, although if you need some notes to stay on track, that's probably a better idea than trying to wing it. Do not portray yourself as "who you want to be" or "the person you would like your neighbor to think you are".

Be yourself and be real. Talk about your problems and what gives you faith, or hope, or even makes you laugh. Propose what you think the solution might be, even though you are having a little trouble believing in it yourself. Do multiple takes if you need to smooth out some stammers, but don't strive for perfection, just authenticity.

Make that inspirational video and inspire someone!

3. Target Keyword: Interesting facts about film making
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If you ever thought you were having a bad day, consider the makers of film noir *Zyzzyx Road*, who spent two million dollars making a film that was universally panned and grossed a whopping \$30. Some of the most interesting facts about film making lie in the stories that took place behind the scenes.

In the age of YouTube, somebody out there apparently thought it had the makings of a cult classic; [Go Digital](#) bought the film and released it for streaming in 2012. Incidentally, the movie misspells the location in its title. Zzyzx Road is off Highway 15 on the way to Los Angeles from Las Vegas, Nevada. It's in the desert of San Bernardino County, California.

Here are some other interesting facts about film making, randomly selected:

- Ever wondered how directors make those big on-screen explosions last so long? It turns out that even though they may look like slow motion, the makers of the [Godzilla](#) series used a frame rate that is ten times as high as normal for special effects of this nature.
- Further interesting facts about film making courtesy of the makers of *Godzilla*: an actor wearing a bulky ape costume often moves more slowly than you might expect the creature to move, especially if he is actually supposed to scare anyone. So the director is likely to shoot those scenes at a slower frame rate.
- The Pixar animators of *Brave* held what they called, "Kilt Friday", where they would all wear kilts to work on the set.
- *Casino Royale* was the first James Bond movie censors would permit to be shown in China.

- Hurricane Wilma forced the evacuation of the cast and crew of *Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest*.
- Keith Richards of the Rolling Stones had agreed to make a cameo appearance in *Dead Man's Chest*, but had to pull out of the project because a conflict arose with the band's tour schedule. Johnny Depp once famously said that his Captain Jack Sparrow is based on the aging and seemingly indestructible musician.
- Richard Armitage plays Thorin Oakenshield in Peter Jackson's new movie *The Hobbit*, but that's not his first *Hobbit* role; he played an elf in a theater production of the book.
- In *The Avengers*, based on the Marvel comic book, the Hellicarrier Bridge set was built on a sound stage in Albuquerque New Mexico, but it could actually fly. The exterior shots of the Hellicarrier were filmed on a runway at Albuquerque International Airport.
- Georges Méliès, a French film-maker who made fantasy films from 1898 to 1912, pioneered the use of special effects with images such as his own head appearing to expand like a balloon then explode. He began his career as a stage magician.

Of course, there are thousands more interesting little anecdotes in the history of cinema, these are just a few from recent years. Have any others you'd like to share? We'd love to hear them.



4. Target Keyword: Upcoming Film Festivals for 2013
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Considering going to any of the upcoming film festivals for 2013? Perhaps you entered a film in a competition or are thinking of doing it in the near future? If so, checking out a festival or two is a great idea. Here are a few you should consider.

FYI: We mention deadlines even if they have passed, as you may want to note them for next year. Festival dates can vary but will be similar from year to year.

The [Sundance Film Festival](#) runs from January 17-27, and [submission](#) ended in July, but it's the leading festival for new directors, so scope it out. You might also like the even more indie parallel festival, [Slamdance](#). Dress warmly if you go. [Park City, Utah](#) is very cold in winter, and the lines are legendary.

The [Palm Springs International Film Festival](#) comes up sooner, January 10th to the 21st, but most films don't start there. If you have a short film, submissions are [currently open](#) for the June 18-24 [Shortfest](#) Festival, also run by the Palm

Springs international Film Society.

[South by Southwest](#) (SXSW), from March 8-16, the hippest and geekiest of the upcoming film festivals for 2013, combines new music and films with an interactive technology conference. The deadline to [submit](#) for 2013 has passed but the [mentor](#) sessions and “Meet the Insiders” alone may make the journey worthwhile.

The [Tribeca Film Festival](#) runs April 18th to 29th. Created by Robert DeNiro, the festival features mainstream and indie premieres. The [deadline](#) for 2013 was December 28th. From April 25th to May 9th, [The San Francisco International Film Festival](#) offers devoted trend-setting local viewers, year-round networking, and cash prizes. The [entry deadline](#) was December 10th.

Comic-Con, July 18-21, runs an [International Film Festival](#). It's the place to launch or sneak preview your sci-fi or action movie. Get it in by February 4th to enter. Other upcoming film festivals for 2013 for sci-fi, horror and other films with a nerd demographic are Austin's [Fantastic Fest](#), August 20-27, and Montreal's [Fantasia](#), July 18 to August 6th.

For a documentary, consider the [True/False Film Fest](#), Feb 28th to March 3rd in Missouri, Toronto's [Hot Docs](#) April 26th to May 6th, [DOXA](#) in Vancouver May 3-12th, and AFI's [Silver Docs](#) June 19-23 in near Washington D.C. DOXA is accepting [submissions](#), Silver Docs begins January 14th, and the [final deadline](#) for Hot Docs is January 11th.

The [Telluride Film Festival](#), August 29th to September 2nd, is great fun to attend and generates good publicity buzz too. The [Deadline](#) is July 1st for shorts and July 15th for features. A number of films have [launched](#) at the [Toronto International Film Festival](#), which is September 6-16th.

The deals get done and the money gets made in November though. On the 6th through the 13th, be in Santa Monica for the for the [American Film Institute's](#) American Film Market and parallel AFI Fest. The American Film Institute provides a [how-to](#) for working the event. Submissions will be [accepted](#) beginning in March.

Good luck!

5. Target Keyword: Best Video Ads for 2012

Page Title: Best Video Ads for the year ending 2012

2012 had many milestones, but video continued to be one of the fastest-growing areas of the internet, fueled by the sales explosion of tablet computing devices. Choosing the best video ads for 2012 depends on whether the criteria is innovation or number of shares, but Felix Baumgartner's leap for [Red Bull Stratos](#) surely ranks at the top of any list of the best video ads of 2012. Half reality show episode, half news event, the leap from the edge of outer space through the sound barrier was a lovely metaphor for the drink's highly caffeinated consumers.

The Red Bull ad may not have been the most shared video ad --- that would appear to have been Turkish Airline's [Legends on Board](#), in which Los Angeles Laker Kobe Bryant and Argentine soccer player Lionel Messi compete to wow a young boy -- but for sheer audacity and attracting the attention of the national media, you really have to award Red Bull the crown. The daring stunt succeeded in catching the imagination of a jaded young adult public, with the added morbid thrill of speculating about possible injury. The pressure suit did prevent the 834 mph fall from harming him.

[L'Odyssee de Cartier](#) also succeeded in generating news stories, through the sheer splendor of the cinematography and the sensual elegance of its composition. The Guardian called it [decadent](#), Mashable said it was innovative. It is certainly exotic and surreal. Unusual too; it runs three and a half minutes versus the fifteen-second *Angel Fantasy*. And, certainly, the video gives new meaning to the word "fabulous".

Unsurprisingly, Victoria's Secret [Angel Fantasy](#) ad was extremely popular, as any montage of tall leggy blondes wearing feathers, silk and billowing little nothings barely covering their highly photogenic lingerie would pretty much be bound to be, whatever the year. In the hotness category we also saw the shirtless crew of [Abercrombie and Fitch](#) mugging it up to the summer hit *Call Me Maybe*.

On a more serious note, [Kony 2012](#) brought attention to child soldiers, and had moderate success in triggering action against an egregious warlord. The news coverage made it one of the best video ads for 2012, even though it ran 27 minutes, almost short-film length. Clearly the goal of making people aware of this war criminal was achieved.

The [Gymkhana 5](#) video was initially a lot of fun, particularly if you have ever been in traffic on the streets and highways he races down. But commuter's fantasy or not, it's a lot like many urban chase scenes. No matter how many times it's been shared, it's different mainly for the San Francisco setting, one of the best video ads for 2012 but not the best of the best.

In contrast, Nike's "Make it Count" video claims to be the home video that got made instead of the ad - except that everywhere the filmmaker visits, he does go for a run. Definitely an original premise, but I would have liked it better without the inspirational quotes.

What do you think were the great video ads of 2012?