How to How to Get Your Own TV Show: A Complete Step-by-St

Arts and Entertainment · about 18 minutes · 2026-11-09

From a one-line logline to a pitch meeting — 28 illustrated steps to develop, package, and sell your TV show, with a web-series fallback when the doors stay closed.

Develop a Show Worth Buying

1. **Pick Your Lane: Scripted, Unscripted, or Format**
   Decide what kind of show you are making before anything else.
2. **Write a One-Sentence Logline**
   Compress the show into one sentence that names the protagonist, the goal, the obstacle, and the hook that makes it fresh.
3. **Build the Series Bible**
   The bible is the show's reference document: the world and its rules, main characters with wants and flaws, the tone, and what a typical episode feels like.
4. **Map Season One and Find the Series Engine**
   Buyers are not buying an episode; they are buying a hundred of them.
5. **Write the Pilot Script in Industry Format**
   For scripted shows, the pilot is your calling card: a complete, properly formatted script that introduces the world and hooks the series.
6. **Hold a Table Read and Rewrite**
   Gather five or six honest friends, assign roles, and read the pilot aloud with snacks and no defending yourself.
7. **Register and Back Up Your Drafts**
   Before the script leaves your hands, create a paper trail.

Package the Proof

8. **Write the One-Page Pitch Document**
   Distill the show onto a single page: title, logline, format and length, the world, the main characters in two lines each, the engine, and why you are the person to write it.
9. **Design the Pitch Deck and Storyboards**
   A pitch deck is a visual document — tone, world, characters, season arc — that makes the show feel real on screen.
10. **Shoot a Sizzle Reel or Proof-of-Concept**
    Unscripted shows live and die by the sizzle reel: two to five minutes that prove your characters, access, and tone.
11. **Get Proper Headshots and a Creator Bio**
    Buyers bet on people as much as projects.
12. **Build a Simple Creator Website**
    Give the project a home: one clean page with the logline, the reel, your bio, and contact details.

13. Budget the Proof Before You Spend

Price the whole package before spending: registry fees, deck printing, reel production, headshots, website, festival and competition entries.

14. Keep Production Money Separate

The moment other people's money or collaborator payments enter the picture, open a separate account.

Get in the Room

15. Learn Who Actually Buys Shows

Networks and streamers rarely accept unsolicited submissions — legal risk makes them return unopened material.

16. Target Production Companies, Not Just Networks

Make a list of twenty production companies behind shows that feel like yours — the end credits and IMDb are your research tools.

17. Query Managers and Agents

Managers develop careers and are generally open to queries; agents negotiate deals and usually come via referral or after you have heat.

18. Apply to Fellowships, Labs, and Writer Programs

The major studios and networks run annual writing programs, and institutions like the Sundance Institute run labs that develop new voices; in the UK, BBC Writersroom opens submission windows for scripts.

19. Work Pitch Markets, Festivals, and Events

Pitch festivals and industry markets sell you five minutes with a real buyer — the fastest feedback loop that exists.

20. Enter Competitions and Submission Platforms

A strong placement in a respected screenwriting competition gets reads you cannot otherwise buy.

21. Avoid Scams: Real Buyers Never Charge Reading Fees

The golden rule: legitimate agents and managers earn commission on work they sell you — they never charge upfront reading, representation, or 'mandatory editing' fees.

Pitch, Negotiate, and Launch

22. Rehearse the Verbal Pitch Until It Sounds Natural

A pitch is a conversation, not a recital — but it is structured like a persuasive ten-minute conference talk: hook, world, characters, engine, season, why you.

23. Take the Meeting and Listen More Than You Talk

When the meeting comes — in person or on a video call — open with your personal connection to the material, deliver the pitch, then stop and listen.

24. Leave the Leave-Behind and Follow Up

End every meeting by leaving the one-pager and deck — the executive's next step is forwarding you upward, so make the package travel well.

25. Turn Notes Into Rewrites Without Ego

Interested buyers give notes — sometimes contradictory ones.

26. Understand the Deal Basics Before You Sign

The first yes is usually an option or a shopping agreement, not a series order: a producer pays for the exclusive right to set the show up for a limited period.

27. If Nobody Bites, Launch It as a Web Series

The back door is real: shoot the show yourself as a short web series, publish it, and build an audience buyers can measure.

28. Run the Show Like a Project, Season After Season

Whether the show lands on a network or your own channel, operate it with discipline: a weekly written status rhythm like a clear project update, a budget you actually watch with personal finance habits, and a season-two plan ready before anyone asks.

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Written as a checklist from https://www.howcompass.com/how-to/How-to-Get-Your-Own-TV-Show. Corrections: https://www.howcompass.com/