

IN THE NEXT WEEKLY

VARIETY



PACTS IN RECOILING?

MORE ABOUT MARKETING

By RACHEL ABRAMS

During a wide-ranging discussion about P&A funds for investors and borrowers, panelists agreed that producers are under more pressure than ever to bring more than just a good movie to the table.

“We do have the money out there. It’s just attracting it with the right project,” said 120db-films principal Peter M. Graham. “It’s not just about a good film but about the marketing.”

The importance of marketing has been a recurring theme at this week’s Film Finance Forum West, presented by Winston Baker in association with *Variety*. Across the board, bizzers agreed that while money is creeping back into the film financing market, the pressure’s on to give investors security on loan repayments.

That security can come in many forms — foreign pre-sales and tax incentives are two of the big ones. But an executable, well thought out marketing strategy tailored to a particular film can entice many investors back into the marketplace.

“There’s just a ton of money piling up because everybody’s just been so scared,” Graham told the audience.

Panelists, including Fierce En-



Christopher Petzel, Bianca Bezdek-Goodloe, Harris Tulchin and Peter M. Graham II at the Film Finance Forum held at the Universal Hilton

ertainment CEO Christopher Petzel and Harris Tulchin & Associates owner Harris Tulchin, agreed that producers should have extensive discussion with sources of potential P&A funds about marketing strategies, bringing their own ideas to the table.

And the earlier in the process you can identify a business plan, the better. “Most producers struggle just to make the film,” Graham said. “In an ideal world, they’d be working (on marketing strategy) before they make the film.”

That’s not to say, however, that potential investors care any less about the product.

“If you’re a P&A fund, you

kind of want to see how the audience reacts to (the film) before you put your money in,” Tulchin said. “What you have to do as a producer is to be strong and say, ‘Look, we’re going to promote the hell out of (the movie), but we’re going to make a good fucking movie.’”

Both lenders and borrowers need to prepare for the possibility that the movie will become a huge hit that will require even more P&A.

“You don’t want to have a situation where you’ve got a hit on your hands and you don’t want to lose momentum, but the investor is out of cash,” Graham said. “So finding a partner with a reasonable cash cap is important.”