



Brightlight teams with L.A.'s Essential

Start-up to develop, produce TV shows for world market

By Etan Vlessing

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TORONTO -- Canadian producer Brightlight Pictures is partnering with Los Angeles-based Essential Pictures to make TV shows for the world market.

The two companies, as they complete negotiations on a "business venture," intend to work under the EBTV banner to develop, finance and produce scripted half-hours, one hours and miniseries.

Two EBTV series are already in the works for Canadian pay TV operators the Movie Network and Movie Central, one of which has participation from Scott Free.

"Working together under the EBTV banner will give us the infrastructure and experience to take full advantage of new, forward thinking business models for financing, producing and distributing television projects, both domestically and internationally," Essential Pictures president and COO Neil Kaplan, who co-founded the production unit in 2008 with Jim Kohlberg, said in a statement.

The move is the latest sign American producers are partnering with Canadian and other foreign producers to tap soft money and co-production expertise to make TV shows in an increasingly global market.

Pending Canadian government approval for its EBTV start-up, Brightlight and Essential will have offices in Los Angeles, Vancouver, Toronto and London.

Vancouver-based Brightlight brings expertise in structuring movie and TV projects as international co-productions, while Essential Pictures will turn its movie distribution expertise from sister company Essential Entertainment to making scripted TV.

"EBTV...provides us with further opportunities to utilize and export Canada's deep talent pool of writers, directors and actors," said Stephen Hegyes, who runs Brightlight with co-founder Shawn Williamson.