A Review of *The Essential Guide to Entertainment Law: Dealmaking*

By Jay Shanker and Kirk Schroeder

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The *Essential Guide to Entertainment Law: Dealmaking* (EG2L) truly is a fundamental resource for recent law graduates in entertainment law, as well as entertainment attorneys. EG2L explores the strategies of dealmaking in film, television, music theater, book publishing, electronic gaming, and entertainment industry taxation.

Most casebooks and treatises provide law and precedent that can be difficult to understand due to excessive legalese, making the reader feel as though they are reading another language. Here, the authors/editors of EG2L, Jay Shanker and Kirk Schroder, explain the legal and business complexities within the entertainment industry in a manner that even a layperson can understand. Moreover, fifteen highly esteemed entertainment attorneys join Jay Shanker and Kirk Schroeder as co-authors, providing an in-depth understanding and knowledge to the subjects presented throughout the book.

EG2L consists of two volumes in the series: basics of dealmaking, and intellectual property law principles and issues. The text contains fifteen chapters, each on a different subcategory in the entertainment industry including film, music, electronic gaming, and representation by agents and managers. The text is organized as a reference guide, although it could be read from cover to cover as well. For example, a reader can look at the index or the illustrative forms list in the back of the book to quickly refer to a particular subject. At the beginning of the book, the Contents section outlines each chapter with sub-topics broken down into an outline format as a quick reference guide also. The Glossary of Terms, which are tucked into the last few pages, is an added bonus to assist in providing a clear-cut understanding of the industry terminology.

EG2L includes illustrative form agreements which coincide with the information presented in the book. At the end of each chapter, there is a list of the illustrative forms that accompany that particular chapter's text. When the book is purchased, the reader receives a confirmation code to access the form agreements, which are only available online. Referencing the form agreements in tandem with the text would provide even greater hands on skills to help further one's legal knowledge and skill in entertainment law. However, the form agreements are not necessary for a clear understanding of the concepts of each subject because EG2L provides concise and detailed concepts.

For example, Chapter 8 discusses Music Publishing Law. This chapter lists the primary agreements that are utilized in the music publishing area. Some examples of agreements commonly used are: The Single-Song Agreement, the Exclusive Songwriter Agreement, the Co-Publishing Agreement, the Participation Agreement, and the Administration Agreement among many others. Chapter 8 further outlines each agreement by detailing the parties involved, when to implement certain agreements, and the essential provisions to be included in each agreement.

Furthermore, the chapters contain the basic principles and elements underlying the agreements that are utilized in the entertainment industry. Each co-author offers a distinct approach to the subjects in the book while providing clear examples of legal and business practices. Graphs and charts are sprinkled throughout the book to further illustrate points in the text. On the same hand, the footnotes provided in the chapters identify sources of case law and statutory law.

The final chapters of the book provide an analysis on structuring an entertainment entity, tax considerations, concerns regarding “boilerplate” provisions in contracts, and the role of agents and managers in the entertainment industry. The final chapter, Developing an Entertainment Law Practice, reflects the editor/author’s insights on the role of entertainment attorneys, and ethical matters that arise. Moreover, the final chapter offers invaluable advice to those attorneys who are novices in the entertainment law field. In particular, a new entertainment attorney can learn about trends and developments within the industry by subscribing to entertainment trade papers such as *The Hollywood Reporter* or attend legal seminars that pertain to the entertainment industry.

EG2L takes the wide range of issues encountered in entertainment law and addresses each issue in a concise and comprehensive method. The text not only encompasses the fundamentals in each sector of entertainment law, but it explores common concerns and minute details that could cost you a deal as well. For instance, Chapter 1 introduces the reader to the subject of “Motion Picture Development and Production.” The chapter first reveals the responsible party for ensuring all of the requirements are met for the development, financing, and production of a motion picture. The chapter details the underlying rights, what those rights are, how to acquire those rights, and how to ensure third parties have rights they claim to have. The chapter also explains the different agreements used throughout the development process and the collective bargaining organization that may govern those agreements.

This piece is a far cry from any casebook or study guide for entertainment law. With the abundance of information provided in the text, it does not just teach readers the baseline fundamentals of entertainment law and industry transactions; EG2L also offers readers practical guidelines, explanations, and real-world approaches to enable
law students, recent graduates, or experienced attorneys to become efficient in developing and recognizing dealmaking opportunities and challenges.

Regardless if you are a new practicing entertainment attorney or are a seasoned entertainment attorney, *EG2L* will provide a roadmap to navigate through negotiations and deals within the entertainment industry. The book’s use of illustrations within the chapters breathe life in legal subjects that can be challenging to understand in a practical sense. *EG2L* is a must-have whether you are a seasoned attorney utilizing the book as a reference or if you are a less experienced attorney who needs a refresher on particular issues. The best part: *EG2L* can be read from cover to cover or just referenced when addressing specific issues.

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