

PLANNING A VIDEO/DVD PRODUCTION

What is a video treatment?

A video treatment is produced in the **pre-production** stage of a production to outline the style, direction and purpose of the planned film. It includes a variety of considerations that may include:

- The target audience
- Objective of the production (To inform, educate, entertain, or provide training.)
- Style of production (e.g. promotional, documentary, hard-sell etc)
- Use of a presenter and/or voice over artist
- Production length
- Music considerations
- Use of graphics, maps, animation etc
- Video content, subjects to be covered, vital information to impart.

Once the basic treatment for the production has been agreed the draft script can then be written to accompany the treatment. This will give a blueprint to start the production process enabling everyone involved to know what they need to cover. Since the production and post-production stages are time consuming and costly, getting the pre-planning right will inevitably save time and money as well as improve the final production quality.

Getting Started.

It's often best to first imagine that the video has already been made! Imagine watching the film and ask yourself what you want to convey in the production and the order you wish to do it.

Essentially with all productions you are telling a story and like all good stories it requires a beginning, middle and end.

So in terms of your production the first thing you need to do is **set the scene.**

Set the scene.

The first opening 30 seconds of any film is important because it will determine whether you have the viewer's attention.

Often there is a 10 - 30 second opening sequence that may involve fast paced images, suitable music and titles. Very often the opening images are from the production to follow, to tempt the viewer into watching, but equally they may involve thought provoking images if the subject matter is dramatic or in any way controversial. The way you wish to portray the production will be covered in the treatment.

Once the initial title sequence is over then you need to quickly establish the theme and subject of the production.

Establishing the Production.

You will need to establish the content of the production fairly quickly, again to hold viewer interest, and therefore you will need to consider the following...

- Possible geographical locations.
- Subject matter (person, company, sector, product etc)
- Importance of content (saving money, saving time, providing a service etc)

This is where the script will be important, to concisely establish the reason for the production, (backed up with suitable images) before focusing on any particular subject or person etc.

It should be mentioned here that whenever possible, if budgets allow, it is recommended that a ***professional presenter or voice over artist*** should be used to help provide a quality production. Remember that your business or organisation will be judged by the end result of the film!

Once established, the production can then move onto specifics, focusing on a particular topic that may include a product, person or organisation.

Focus on topics.

Once you have moved onto a specific area of your production then this is where research in the pre-production stage will have identified items to include. These may involve: -

- Facts about the person or organisation.
- Selected person for interview.
- Captions, graphics, maps or other data.
- Testimonials from the public.

To increase viewer interest try and involve a combination of interview replies, voiceover links, actuality sound and pictures/graphics/captions. Where possible avoid long interviews or long sections of voiceover. A variety of voices rather than one long one will maintain viewer interest and will therefore be more effective.

Develop the film from one subject to another with a voice over link/pictures to keep the production flowing.

Concluding the production.

Having established the video and covered various topics the final part of the production is to bring everything to a conclusion. If you've been promoting a product then you may wish to emphasize its efficiency, cost saving, reliability etc.

However if you've been promoting a voluntary organisation you may wish to highlight the good work they do for the community, the essential role they play for people and the need for continued support.

Very often a production concludes where it started, bringing matters full circle as far as the viewer is concerned.

There may also be a final 'call to action' to 'order now', 'call our helpline' or 'donate to' etc, supported by graphic information.

Presentation and Packaging

Depending on your target audience you should consider how best to present and package your DVD production. If the production is for retail (sale through) markets then the DVD should be packaged professionally in a box with full colour inlay printed to a high quality. The description of the DVD itself, text layout and quality of any photographs will also be important to sell the product just like any book or magazine.

Similarly the 'face' of the DVD itself should be professionally designed and printed perhaps designed to match the printed inlay within the box.

For corporate productions quality is also important to portray the professionalism of the organisation where logos and corporate branding may also need to be included.

Permissions & Copyright

Throughout the production process great care should be taken regarding permissions for filming. This applies to private property and also certain public places. For example, all London Boroughs require permits for professional filming and many authorities require licenses (and payments) for filming in public parks and other amenities for commercial use.

If in any doubt about filming permissions you should contact the press/media department of the relevant authority before filming commences.

When including participants in your production, in the form of interviews and advice (both professional and otherwise) use a **video release form** to obtain permission from that person to include their contribution in your production.

Standard release forms give the producer of the recorded works (i.e. the recorded footage) permission to use the contribution as they see fit, either in entirety or partially after the edit stage has been completed. Specialist permissions may well be agreed to restrict the subsequent use of any footage to just one production or use under other special conditions.

Great care should also be taken regarding music and other artistic creations where the owner of the works will automatically have copyright. As far as music is concerned it is illegal and a breach of copyright to use any music without permission and suitable royalties will need to be paid depending upon the use of the music, the length of the track and the type of production (i.e. advertisement, movie, corporate programme).

Production music is the most commonly where it is licensed for use through the MCPS (now PRS for Music) at www.prsformusic.com
License rates are shown on this website.

A cheaper alternative to production music is to use royalty free music where you purchase the music in the form of a CD or download a track and once paid for you can use it again and again in several productions.

Many websites provide royalty free music so search on-line.

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