



## Film Commissioning Brief

This briefing form covers most of the issues that you and/or your organisation will need to consider when commissioning a video.

If necessary, spend time and resources researching these questions. Getting it right at this stage will pay dividends later. You may not be able to answer all of the questions without first consulting a film production company and some of these questions may not be relevant to your production.

Please answer the 5 questions in **blue** as the minimum requirement. We will guide you through the rest.

(Do not be put off by the length of this document, it is meant as a guide only and designed to get you to think about your requirements, so we can to achieve your goals).

### Questions:

The Story: **What is it all about?**

The most important thing is knowing what you want to say, why you want to say it and who you want to say it to. In film making there is always more than one way to express it. Sometimes – the simplest idea is the best one and it doesn't have to be an expensive one.

### Your Audience

**Who is your audience?** (e.g. age range, sex, geographical location, socio-economic group etc)  
Can they be characterised in any way? (e.g. casual/formal, arty/technical etc)  
What do they already know about the subject of the video?  
What sort of things will appeal to them?  
Where will they watch the film (on the internet, cinema, TV, etc)

### The Purpose of the Video

Consider your storyline:

**What do you want the audience to think or do after having watched the film?**

### Content

**What is/are the key message/s that the video has to convey?**

If you have multiple messages then would you consider breaking your content down into chapters or produce separate programmes?

Is there a secondary use for the material shot for the film?

Will you need to re-edit the content for other purposes? (e.g. training, staff induction, customer sales etc):

### Scriptwriting

Who will write the shooting script?

Will a read through be done of the script to get timings?

How long in advance will the script be ready before the talent or actors can see it?

### **Prompter**

Will the talent be reading from a prompter, or will they be expected to learn their lines?  
If a prompter is required, are they presenting to camera or off camera?

### **Storyboard**

Who will compile the storyboard to the script?

### **Style of the film**

Will the film be presented by someone talking directly to the camera (like a news reader) or will it need to stand alone with people talking off camera?

If standing alone will it have a scripted voice over like a documentary?

Or will the story be told by the actors/talent/interviewees dialogue alone?

### **Format**

In which countries are the film to be shown in?

What format do you want the film to be shot on?

SD or HD.

If SD which aspect ratio: 4x3 or 16x9? (If HD the aspect ratio will be 16x9).

If HD what resolution do you want: 1080 lines or 720?

If HD do you want to shoot interlaced video (best for movement) or progressive (best for cinema)?

If HD what frame rate do you want: 24 fps (cinema), 25fps (PAL) or 29.97 fps (NTSC).

### **Loudness**

Do you have a preferred loudness standard for us to work to?

Will the film stand alone, or will it have to be used in conjunction with other video and audio assets?

i.e. as part of a presentation.

### **Distribution**

How will your audience get to see the video?

What other materials will be used in conjunction with the video? (booklets, websites, etc)

What sort of marketing and packaging will you need?

How many copies will you want?

### **Cost**

How much budget is allocated to this production?

If no budget has been set aside, then consider how much this film is worth to you/your organisation?

Include VAT if you are not VAT registered.

### **Timeline**

Are there any important dates/events that the production must be scheduled around?

When does the project have to be completed by?

### **Locations**

Where is the film to be shot?

Do have locations in mind or do you need the production company to find some for you?

How will the film crew and talent get there?

This needs careful planning as transportation and parking can be a logistical nightmare.

If your shoot is over several days, is there appropriate accommodation in the area?

Your film crew and talent will need to be fed, are there facilities for this to happen?

Do you need electricity for any of your props or production equipment? If so choose a location where it is available or hire a suitable generator. If you need a generator, consider hiring a spare...

Who will do the location reccies? (The ideal option is for you to go with the director and cameraman to discuss the creative options fully.)

Who will get permissions to film at the specified locations? locations (location release forms).  
Will you be working close to or on the water, close to the edge of high buildings or cliff tops.  
Who will do the risk assessment for each location?

*Regardless of where you intend to shoot, you must always consider who owns the property or land.*

*It is always a good idea to let the local police know what you are doing, especially if you are filming outside in public areas.*

### **Studio**

Is this a studio shoot?

Is it the intention to use green or blue screen?

If so, has the relevant thought been given to the colour of the actor's eyes, props and costume?

### **Sound**

Has the locations and or studio space been checked for audio reverberation and external noise pollution.

### **Personnel**

#### **Who is the main point of contact for the video within your organisation?**

Who is responsible for approving the video? (ideally the same person who is the main point of contact with the production company).

Will you be using people from your own organisation within the film production?

If so, what roles will they take (researcher, assistant producer, runner, continuity, etc)?

What level of access will we have to key people?

Will they be able to dedicate time out of their normal working day to the project and filming process?

If the film is interview based, what key information and messages do you need from your interviewees?

Do you want the messages to be scripted? (If so we can use an autocue to save time on the day).

If scripted, who will write the script? (Make sure it is written in the spoken word, not the written word).

*For dramas the best results are always attained by using actors.*

### **Are you using child actors?**

If so, are you up to date with the current laws regarding working practices with children?

Are the child actors going to be needed inside or outside of term time?

Are you going to need a tutor for them?

Do you have a chaperone?

Do you have a designated first aider?

### **Costume**

Do you need any costumes or clothing supplied for your talent?

### **Props**

Props include everything from a pencil to a car or aeroplane. If any of this is specialist, then it needs to be allowed for in your budget.

Will any fake firearms, guns or knives be used?

### **Makeup**

Do you need makeup for your talent?

Do you require any special effects such as blood, broken bones, cuts and bruises, etc?

### **Special Effects**

Do you require any special effects such as pyrotechnics or stunt work.

If so, what is it you want?

Can any of these be done in post production or do they have to be done on set?

### **Stunts**

Are your talent required to do any stunts?

If so, will they do the stunt themselves or will you use a stand in?

Have you considered the risk assessments and relevant Health and Safety Laws?

Will you be working close to or on the water, close to the edge of high buildings or cliff tops.

### **Lighting**

Do you need extensive lighting or lighting effects for your production or will you be mainly using available light?

Do we need to light any scenes outside?

### **Call Sheets**

Who will compile the call sheets? It is a good idea to get someone close to the production to compile call sheets.

### **Music**

Do you need music for your production?

Are you going to provide the music or do you want some provided for you?

What sort of music do you want?

Do have a particular style in mind?

### **Sound FX**

Do you need any sound effects for your film?

If so are you supplying them, or us?

### **Graphics**

Do you need any graphics or animations in your film?

If so what would you like?

Will you be providing the graphics and animations?

### **Accommodation**

Where will the talent and film crew be staying if the shoot is longer than a day?

Is secure parking available on site?

### **Food**

Do any of your crew have special dietary requirements?

How will everyone be fed?

### **Travel Arrangements**

How are the cast and crew travelling to the location?

Who is organising tickets?

Is there adequate car parking on site?

### **Security**

Is the filming location open access to the public?

Is the location a secure site?

Do cast and crew require security passes?

Will the cast and crew need to be chaperoned whilst on location, or do they have free access?

What security arrangements are available on site?

i.e secure parking, lockable room for filming equipment, etc.