

# Understanding the Production Process

## Production

### Meeting with the Producer

This is the first step. You discuss your vision, your time frame, your budget, etc. The producer will also explain what is and isn't possible within the parameters of your vision and budget. This step puts everyone "on the same page" and clarifies expectations and realities.

### The Script

The script is crucial to a successful project. Scripts often go through many revisions to ensure the completed spot will be what you want. Anyone, including senior level management, having the authority to change any part of a production should review and approve your script before shooting begins. It is important to have an approved script before production begins. The scripting stage is the time to make any changes or to bring up any questions and/or concerns as to how the finished production will look. To make changes after production has begun can be very expensive and can affect your completion deadline.

### Pre-Production

This is the process where all the arrangements for your production are made. A production schedule is developed, a crew is selected and hired, technical equipment is booked, locations are found and booked, talent is cast, props are purchased, music and graphic elements are discussed and hundreds of other important details are covered. Pre-production is a very important step in the actual planning of a successful project.

### Production

As the shooting begins it may be the first time you actually feel like your vision is becoming a reality. This is when all the work done in scripting and in pre-production pays off. Your production should be going according to the script.

## Post Production

The last phase of production is editing. Editing is a layered process, involving many elements. All of the components of the spot—raw footage, narration, music, graphics, etc. are carefully assembled and polished to convey the original message that began on paper as a script. With you, the editor's technical skills and the producer's direction we'll turn your vision into reality.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### How much does a production cost?

The actual cost depends on the complexity of producing the concept. Since every project that dhg Communications produces is a custom project it is hard to put an off the shelf price on your project. Costs are determined by variables such as scripting fees, number and location of shooting days, the number of actors, special effects, graphics, the size of crew needed to produce the project, music selections, number of dubs, etc. If you have an approved script, an estimate can be derived from that to give you an idea as to how much the spot will cost. Costs can escalate if changes are made

once shooting has begun or after a project has been edited. If you don't have a script, it is much easier to work from your budget – how much you have to spend – than it is predict the cost of a spot. With this financial information a script can be written to give you the best product that fits within your budget.

**Why does it cost money to make changes in a script after production begins?**

There are a few reasons why changing the script after production begins can be costly:

- While the producer/director works on how to incorporate the changes, production stops, but not the payroll for the actors and crew. Once they are booked for a specified period of time, they have to be paid.
- Often the scriptwriter has to incorporate the changes so the project still flows smoothly. This also takes time, which affects the shooting schedule and the production deadline.
- Some changes could require additional actors, props, and shooting locations.

Of course, with enough time and money, almost anything is possible. A simpler solution is to remind others on your team the value of approving the script before production begins.

**How many people are needed to produce a video and what do they do?**

There can be a score of people each with a very specific role involved in producing a video. At dhg Productions most clients have contact with only a few key players.

**The Producer**

The Producer is responsible for turning an idea for a production into reality. He or she is the architect for the entire project. The Producer develops and/or helps a writer develop the creative concept, hires and manages the crew, casts the talent, secures shooting locations, develops the production schedule, selects the music, manages the budget, directs the edit session, and handles hundreds of other details.

**The Director/Videographer**

Using the script as his or her guideline, the Director is responsible for making sure the action captured on camera is exactly what the script calls for. He or she also plans the shooting sequence to maximize shooting time and to ensure every shot will flow easily from scene to scene when edited. The Director tells talent what to do in each shot and makes sure all elements of the script have been shot.

**The Editor**

The Editor provides the technical skills to assemble all components of the video into a completed project under the producer/director's specifications. The Editor and the Producer/Director work together to determine overall flow of the video—the length of each shot, the placement of narration, music and graphics, as well as determining creative transitions and when they are needed. Collaboration between the Producer and the Editor is essential to the editing process.

**How long does it take to produce a project?**

Typical Timelines:	
Scripting, Re-Writes, Approval	2-3 Weeks
Pre-production planning	1 Week
Field Production (shooting)	1-2 Days
Editing	1-2 Days

**\*This depends largely on the approval process – dhg Communications often produces projects on a VERY tight time line, many in less than one day... now that is Creating WOW!**