

Pre-Production Checklist: **Ingredients for an Award-Winning Film/Video**

"Award-winning" films & videos have a few elements in common: they are well-produced, engaging, believable, and original. The following is a pre-production checklist with suggestions for ensuring that your piece has the impact that you want:

Story & script

- Is our idea original? Have we seen it before? If so, in what way is our version different? Is the ending overly predictable?
- Is the story coherent and believable? Are we speaking from what we know?
- Can we tell the story effectively in the length of time that the piece will be?
- Will the piece have the effect we intend on the audience? (Eg. when we acted out a scene from the script of our comedy, did the audience laugh? Did it laugh in the places we wanted them to?)
- Is the dialogue believable? Is there enough/too much?
- Is the piece 'tight'? Are there still places in the script where we can cut out unnecessary exposition/dialogue/digressions?
- Do our storyboards use framing effectively for each shot and scene?

Actors & casting

- Will our actors be believable in the roles they are playing? E.g. Can this 17-year-old make a believable 21-year-old character?
- Can our actors act?
- Do we have access to the actors we need?
- Will our actors sign appearance releases?

Production planning

- Is this location believable? Eg. Will this school gym look like a Roman arena?
- Do these costumes/props look believable? Eg. Do these sheets really look like Roman togas or do we look like we're going to a frat party?
- Are there clearances necessary for any of our locations or props? If so, can we get them or will we have to consider alternatives?
- Do we have time to shoot all the footage we want?
- Do the costumes, props and locations reflect the time, place and characters of our story? Will we include locations that clearly show a local landscape rather than something generic? (This can be a strong 'plus' in some cases; there are fewer filmmakers showing Whiterock or Surrey than there are showing Vancouver or the U.S.)