

## JACKSON'S GUIDE TO PAINLESS PRODUCTION



22215 Carleton Ave • Southfield, MI 48033-4914 • 248/352-1010 • Fax 248/352-7911 • [tppl@flash.net](mailto:tppl@flash.net)  
[www.productionpeopleltd.com](http://www.productionpeopleltd.com)

## **JACKSON'S GUIDE TO PAINLESS PRODUCTION**

So you want to be in pictures - - eh? Well, Cecil, here's what ya' gotta do. Have a PLAN!

Media presentations can be as simple as a one projector slide show or as complicated as a multi or mixed media show which can include, motion pictures, videotape or DVD, computer graphics, multi-channel sound or any combination of the aforementioned elements.

For the purposes of this guide, we will concern ourselves primarily with video presentations.

Planning is essential to any successful presentation. That includes careful research, defining your objectives, defining your audience, writing your script and creating a production plan.

### **Let's Start With Research**

You must ask yourself, "What is the information I want to convey? What are the pertinent facts I'd like to include? What information do I already have on hand that might be helpful in planning my production?" **Do this before you meet with your producer !**

### **Define Your Objectives**

Ask yourself, this question, "What do I want people to go away from my presentation knowing that they didn't know before they saw it? What, if any, action do I want them to take as a result of viewing my presentation? What is your time frame? **Be realistic.** Don't give your producer a deadline two or three weeks before you actually need the show. If you do, you will almost certainly add considerable overtime costs. If for any reason, you have a change in your deadline, tell your producer the instant you know. In an effort to please you, a good producer will move heaven and earth to meet your deadline but, remember, if you don't need it when you said you did - nothing can dissolve good producer/ client relations faster than, after countless sleepless nights, weekends and crews on overtime you say, "*Oh I forgot to tell you, we don't need it until next month.*"

### **Who Will See Your Show?**

Define your audience. Is this show in the nature of a training presentation where you'll have a captive audience, hopefully with high motivation to receive the information presented? Is this a general audience presentation such as a commercial or public service announcement (PSA), which will have to compete with a trip to the fridge for another cold one? Is this a presentation designed for audience participation such as a teleconference? Is this presentation designed to "stand alone" as part of a display at a fair or exhibition? Is this a multi-use presentation, which may have several of the aforementioned intended methods of transmission? Will you want multiple languages?



## **JACKSON'S GUIDE TO PAINLESS PRODUCTION II**

### **Now You Are Ready To Call Your Producer And Say**

"I'd like to do a show about \_\_\_\_\_ to be seen by \_\_\_\_\_. It should convey the following messages \_\_\_\_\_ and I'd like to have it completed by (date/time). Your producer will probably say, "You want it WHEN??!!!"

### **What To Do At Your First Meeting**

If at all possible, be prepared to give your producer a written outline of what you want. This should include points you want covered, contact persons and phone numbers for more information and any printed material already available on the subject. You should discuss budgets at this meeting and you should, if possible, decide on a maximum length for your show. *This is sometimes but not always helpful in determining costs.* Beware of the cost per finished minute estimate. That no longer holds true in today's production environment because some 60-second commercials can cost more than other one-hour programs.

### **Once The First Meeting Is Completed**

Your Producer will go away and draw up a document called a "Work Authorization" (see example). This document will contain your name, title and phone number, a brief description of the project and a preliminary budget estimate. Once approved, work can begin.

### **What Happens Next?**

Your producer / researcher / writer will go over the materials you have presented and then probably have a thousand questions. To the extent possible, be accessible. During this phase, the researcher is gathering all the information necessary to make your presentation as accurate as possible.

### **Once The Research Is Complete A Script Will Be Written.**

When complete, a copy will be forwarded to you for your approval. Look over the script and when you are satisfied that you have noted all changes and/or questions, it is time for what is called a "script conference." For this meeting you should prepare to meet with your producer and go over any changes or questions. Following this meeting you should receive a corrected script for your final approval. Just a word of caution here.

### **Too Many Cooks Spoil The Soup**

Unless it is a matter of accuracy, i.e. a statistic is incorrect or a name, which might be mispronounced, it is probably better for you to go over the script alone.

### **One Picture Is Worth A Thousand Words But No Word Is An Island.**

There must be a picture to go with every word you write. If you do write in additional words, also write in additional pictures and remember, the pictures that go with the words must be obtainable. So don't ask for snowmobiles in June. Although we do have a library of scenes, you should always



assume that new tape will have to be shot. More often than not, file tape is not quite right for a new script. Feel free to ask for Hawaiian waterfalls in January.



22215 Carleton Ave • Southfield, MI 48033-4914 • 248/352-1010 • Fax 248/352-7911 • [tppl@flash.net](mailto:tppl@flash.net)  
[www.productionpeopleltd.com](http://www.productionpeopleltd.com)

## **JACKSON'S GUIDE TO PAINLESS PRODUCTION III**

### **Once The Script Is Approved, Production Can Begin.**

Your help will be needed in setting up the production schedule. Your secretary can be helpful here but please remember this is **your** show. The more you put into it, the better it will be. You can also open some doors for your production crew that would be difficult for them if left to their own devices.

### **No-Nos**

Do not wait until the production crew is on location to make changes in the script. This is a very expensive move and fraught with peril as hasty changes might not always be absolutely accurate. If something does change between the time you approved the script and the crew gets to the location, you have no choice; but be sure it **MUST** be changed before you request a revision at this point. Changes are expensive. Resist them at all costs once you have approved your script. Script approval is the time for changes, not after.

### **Once The Production Phase Ends**

One of the most important phases begins--post-production or editing. During this process, which would probably bore you to tears, all of the hours of tape are edited into the tight concise program that conveys just the right message to your audience in an entertaining but informative show. This is a painstaking process, which requires infinite patience and meticulous attention to detail. Shows can be made or broken in this process.

### **When Can I See It?**

Following post-production you are given a first look at the finished show. If you have followed all the aforementioned steps, you'll look at it, love it, and pay for it promptly.

