



2. PREPARING AND PLANNING YOUR PRODUCTION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Each Advertiser and/or Communication Agency has its own approach to producing a commercial or branded content. However, anyone involved in the production process should have a solid understanding of the audiovisual production industry and associated costs, as well as the ability to realistically estimate and evaluate time schedules.

Firstly, when planning a production and before briefing an independent Production Company, it is important for the Advertiser, or if applicable, together with their Communication Agency, to establish a budget indication for the production. This should align with the creative concept and can be adjusted as the project progresses.

The budget indication provides the Advertiser with an idea of the production costs at this stage and gives the Production Company the opportunity to create a creative and budgetary proposal that meets these limits as closely as possible.

It is important to note that a budget indication should never be considered by the Advertiser as the final budget. The actual production budget will be established during the creative development process by the independent Production Company, accompanied by production notes (bid letter), a production back timing (planning) and a creative treatment (intention note) from the director.

It is essential to nominate one person within the Advertiser's team to lead, communicate, oversee the production, deliver and follow up on production briefs. To ensure a smooth production schedule and adherence to the step-by-step process, it's crucial to avoid any delays and/or additional costs by signing-off each phase of the production process. This also applies to the Communication Agency when involved. If the decision-making process is spread across multiple Advertiser and Agency personnel, it usually leads to delays and additional costs.

2.2 STANDARD TIMELINE FOR A PRODUCTION

Each commercial or branded content project has its own specific approach and timeline. However, below is a standard timeline divided into 7 phases that can serve as a reference for most production back timings:

PHASE 1: CREATIVE CONCEPT

>> Production companies not involved yet.



PHASE 2: BRIEFING AND PITCH PHASE I WEEK 1-2

- >> Briefing and consultation of the independent production companies (long list).
- >> Selection of maximum 3 production companies to start the actual pitch (short list).
 - Creative review with the production company and its director.
 - Writing and designing of the director's treatment.
 - Establishing the production budget by the production company.

Duration: Around 3 weeks, with 2 weeks allocated for the actual pitch. Choosing a single bid or a pitch with two production companies only can simplify and expedite this phase.



PHASE 3: PRE-PRODUCTION I WEEK 3-4-5

- >> Go-ahead on production.
- >> Start pre-production for production company:
 - Casting and location research.
 - Briefing key crew members.
 - Location scouting.
 - Post-production kick-off meeting with sound studio, music composer and VFX-team.
 - Pre-Production Meeting (PPM) with advertiser and agency to decide on creative proposals.
 - Confirmation of talent, locations, and creative decisions following the PPM.
 - Technical recce with key crew members.
 - Final changes.

Duration: Around 3 weeks, with the PPM meeting taking place at least one week before the actual shooting.



PHASE 4: PRODUCTION I WEEK 6

>> Shooting.

Duration: A shooting period typically lasts between 1 and 5 days but can sometimes be longer depending on the concept.



PHASE 5: POST-PRODUCTION I WEEK 7-8-9

- >> Offline edit.
- >> Online edit and/or VFX.
- >> Colour grading
- >> Sound design and music.

Duration: Films with extensive VFX (Visual Effects) require a longer post-production period. Additionally, if music need to be cleared or composed, more time should be allocated.



PHASE 6: DELIVERY OF DELIVERABLES I WEEK 10

Duration: The creation and delivery of all deliverables.



PHASE 7: START OF CAMPAIGN I WEEK 11