



PREPRODUCTION



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PREPRODUCTION IN AUDIOVISUAL

We always need to prep before going on the field to gather stories. This stage is called preproduction.

This is the very first process you must do when you plan your video or story. In this stage you can determine:



The idea: what story to tell?



The type of story: video, interview, voiceover video, photo, audio story?



Where will it be published: social media, YouTube, report, external media outlet, internal channels?



Tone: Will it entertain, inform, educate or call to action? (Punchy, newsy, uplifting, serious or urgent)



The target: Who is your audience? Who do you expect to watch/read your story?



The people involved in the production: the people you want to interview and support team if needed.



Technical equipment: camera/smartphone, microphones, lights, tripod, stabilizer, etc.

PREPARE AHEAD OF YOUR MISSION:

It's very unlikely to have the time we would need to gather all the quality content when we're on the field. It's our reality. So, to set you up for success, it is essential to plan ahead. Here we have a few recommendations:



Talk with your colleagues at the branch:

Staff members and volunteers are great sources to identify stories and people to interview. A few weeks before your content mission, talk to them to identify the stories you will tell.



Ask for specific information: Ideally, the people locally can get you general or specific information about the people or details of the activities you will cover (facts, figures, # of people, etc.). This will help you brainstorm on how to frame your story and what type of content you will produce.



Prepare your gear: Always be prepared. Charge batteries, bring a power bank, bring extra batteries for microphones if needed, set-up your mobile phone camera in advance, and make sure to wear comfy clothes. Anything can happen! Don't forget: print out enough consent forms for people to sign.

Line-up your interviews: arrange ahead of your mission a time and date with people you will interview or shoot video from.

SCRIPT

To make a better plan and make the most out of the short time you have on the field, draft a basic script. There are different kinds, but the most useful for you is:



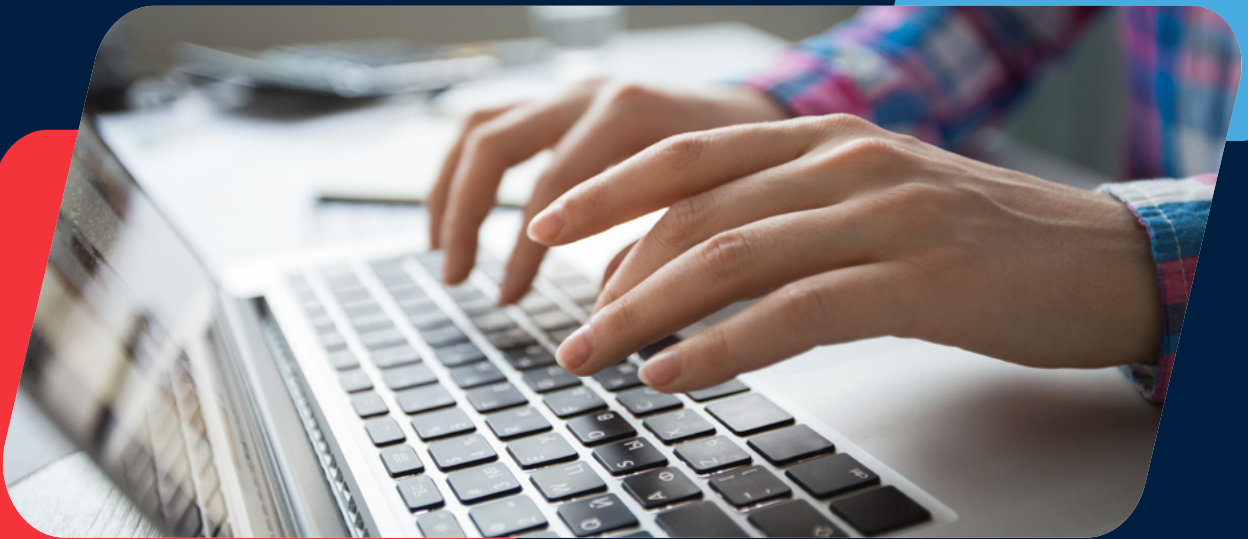
See an example here.

Technical script: this one is specific for the people shooting the video, So they can know where to position each element in every take. However, in the nature of our job, sometimes it's difficult to know exactly what the video will look like. The best way to go is to at least **create a shot-list**. What are the must-have shots? Video portrait, a general shot for context, a close-up of the hands, etc. This is important even if you are the one doing the shooting. The shot-list then becomes an important checklist to ensure you come back from the shoot with all the elements you need.

Download example shot-lists and scripts here

Tips on how to create shotlists

7 steps to create shotlists



DISCUSSION:

Why do we need a script?

The script takes a good story and gives direction to the people shooting and editing the video in terms of what to do. It's an essential guide in any film, video or audio project.

When one is doing a news or humanitarian video, our stories are not fictional, so we cannot predict or dictate what people will say and do- So in this case the pre-production script is a short guide based on our research and pre-production work. That script is then refined once we have taken videos of the actual events and interviews, and gathered all the latest facts we need.

Quick things to remember when making a script in today's media world.



The catchy intro: People make up their mind to watch or not watch your video in the first 3 seconds, so the introduction is critical. What intriguing statement, image or question will you put at the beginning to get their attention and lead people into the story?



How will you keep their attention. You can keep people's attention by changing setting, ensuring the rhythm and flow of the story keeps pace and by ensuring that interview segments don't go longer than 20 to 40 seconds.



Include as much visual details as possible: Scripts use words but your script should be equally about what people will be seeing on screen at any particular moment. This will help you know what kind of b-roll you need to back up what people are saying.

