Preparing for a Location Shoot

When planning to shoot video on location, the key to a successful finished product is detailed and comprehensive preparation. In the industry, this is called preproduction, and this is how you will spend the bulk of the time your production requires. If you have a thorough plan of action before showing up to your location with a camera, less is likely to go wrong once you begin recording. Ideally, the actual recording will be the easiest part! Keep in mind that you will only have one 6-hour day of shooting, so the more efficient the better. So, where to begin?

Decide on a format

First, you must decide what it is you want to show your audience. Do you have an idea of what you want your finished product to look like? Will it be a demonstration? A walkthrough or tour? Our video team needs to know what type of product this is going to be in order to know how to properly prepare.

In order to better understand your options, here are some examples of different formats:

- **Demonstration** – This would be something like a “how-to” video or some sort of instruction or guidance. These are generally very stationary shots, with many close ups of certain characteristics. Think of something like a cooking show.

- **Walk-through/ Video Tour** – This could be anything from giving a tour of a building to a guided nature hike. Anything that you would want to have a mobile camera following you around as you explain certain aspects or features of the surrounding environment.

- **Stand-Up** – This is what you see reporters in the field doing. Delivering information directly to the camera, standing in front of a scene.

- **Interview** – Pretty straightforward. This can be a Barbara Walters type sit-down, one person answering questions on camera, two people doing a Q&A session, round tables, etc.

This is far from a comprehensive list of options, and feel free to be creative in how you want your video to look. As long as you have a clear idea of what you’re looking for, we can help with the technical stuff and videography.
Determine Specifications

Once you’ve decided on the basic structure of your location video, you’ll need to start narrowing down your specifications. A good way to do this is to answer the who-what-when-where-how.

- **Who** will you need with you on the day of shooting? Will you need anyone other than yourself, like an assistant, and will they be available? Are these people willing to be on camera?
- **What** objects or props will you need? Will they be available for use on the day of shooting? Do you need to reserve anything that other people might take if not?
- **When** will you need to film? Do you want plenty of daylight? Are there events scheduled during that time? Will you need to reserve a space for a certain time? Consider what time of day would be best for shooting a video for that specific location.
- **Where** are we going to be shooting? Indoor or outdoor? Will we be able to get into the building, or have access to what you want to film? Make sure there are no legal or policy restrictions regarding filming in the location. If you think there may be, make sure to get the appropriate permissions.
- **How** long do you want your final product to be? This should be determined before you start planning out what it is we are going to film.

After you’ve answered all of these questions about your video, you’re ready to meet with our staff and start planning out your video with the professionals!

Plan Your Video with Staff

When you sit down with our video staff to start the official planning of your location video, we will have a quick sheet to fill out as we discuss. By asking you about the details of your idea, we can start to formulate a solid plan together. We will want to know specifics about each setting, if you plan on moving around, along with everything that you want to show within these settings. This will help us prepare for the location scout, that comes later.

When we feel like we’ve covered everything you need to make a complete video, we will need to make sure you know what you’re going to say. You (and whomever else will be on
camera) need to be prepared on the day of the shoot. This means that you should think about each detail you want to show on camera and brainstorm what it is you want your audience to know about it. Don’t hesitate to make a list or write notes to make sure you don’t leave anything out. It is important that you think about it beforehand so that we don’t finish shooting and part ways, only for you remember that you forgot a key piece of information. Remember, planning is everything, so do your homework!

Do a Walkthrough

After everything is hashed out in the drawing room, it is important for the video staff to visit the location and do a walkthrough with you. This is referred to as a “location scout” in the industry, and it allows the staff to familiarize themselves with the location before showing up with a camera. At this stage, we will walk through the location with you and go over all of the things you want to show on camera, and take notes on how best to show what you want. Of course, the video staff will know better than most what works on camera, so trust their judgment and expertise. We will also use this time to do a dry-run of the shoot and make sure everyone is familiar with the process and the order in which we will be filming. This step is mainly for the benefit and preparedness of the crew, but it is helpful for everyone to have a good understanding of what will happen on the day of shooting to maximize efficacy and efficiency. Make sure to schedule a walkthrough with the video staff at your meeting.

Shoot Your Video

If you’ve done everything up to this point, then all that’s left to do is film it! Schedule a time with through your Instructional Designer to film on location, and make your acting debut.

On the day of the shoot, make sure you have everything you need and dress appropriately for the camera. By this, we mean no small strips or tight patters. They confuse the camera and end up looking like this:
Also avoid wearing solid white if you’re shooting outdoors, as you may look too bright on camera. And that’s it, you’re ready to begin! See you soon.