

STORY PLANNING QUESTIONNAIRE

With an unscripted documentary, rather than planning everything beforehand, you simply give yourself guidelines and let the story evolve based on the material you capture. If you do your research and have a sense of the story you want to tell before you start shooting, you should stay open to surprises, and be ready to make changes as you go.

The following workbook pages are designed to pull the pieces of the production puzzle together. You will answer these questions:

- ✓ **Who is your audience?**
- ✓ **What are your key messages?**
- ✓ **Who should we interview?**
- ✓ **What do we show?**
- ✓ **What locations should we shoot in?**
- ✓ **Who's in charge?**

Answer the questions that follow to work out your audience, message, subjects, locations, dates, content, and responsibility assignments. Once you have these in place, your path forward will be much more obvious.

WHO IS YOUR AUDIENCE?

- ✓ What is their average age?
- ✓ What is their preferred communications method? (How are they likely to watch your video?)

KEY MESSAGES

What are the 5 most important ideas you want this video to convey?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

WHO SHOULD WE INTERVIEW?

Think generously of people you might talk with. Make lists of whomever comes to mind. Some may be friends, and some may be strangers. You do not even need to know names, you can simply list them by position or title.

Name people who you think will know whatever it is that you want someone to talk about. Don't be shy, just free associate. As you make this list, choose people who intrigue you or who are experts. Be bold. Add to your list "the best authorities in the field."

Include famous people, even if you don't think there's a chance in the world that they'd have the time or interest to talk to you. You never know; you might be able to get them. Even if they don't agree to appear in your film, they might act as consultants or write a blurb for your project.

NAME	TITLE	TALKING ABOUT

WHAT SHOULD WE SHOW?

Choose your interview locations to help tell the story in the background. Think about the activities the people in your documentary do as they go through their daily lives. As you list situations that might be filmed, give some thought to the sequences of events. Think also about mundane tasks. Things like going to market, or drinking a cup of tea. Consider events that help tell the larger story.

When you make a list of these situations, be alert for the ones that seem to have the most "life." Such situations will naturally rise to the top of your shooting list.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

WHAT LOCATIONS SHOULD WE SHOOT IN?

List the locations and landmarks that seem essential to your idea, as well as places that excite you. In every film, there are places that define the characters and the story. If you can film these places, they will give your project depth and power.

LOCATION

ADDRESS

REASON

WHO'S IN CHARGE?

My primary relationship is always with the CEO. Since the CEO is often the most well versed and passionate player on the team, we want him/her to be the primary spokesperson in your film. The CEO should assign a **Project Manager** to oversee the film's development.

The role of the Project Manager is:

- To collect and organize the materials needed
- Gain permissions to shoot at locations
- Schedule and coordinate with participants (*the cast*)
- Gain and manage release forms
- Act as liaison and assistant to your Producer as you move through the process.
- It will also be important for the Project Manager to maintain communications between your producer in the field and the CEO so that he/she is kept in the loop without creating a large drain on his/her time.

WHO WILL THIS PERSON(S) BE?

Now that you know who has which responsibilities, who you will interview, where you will interview and what key messages you want the viewer to walk away with, you are ready to begin scheduling and shooting your video case statement!

-END