



FILMER.TV

HOW TO WRITE A TREATMENT

HOW TO WRITE A JOB WINNING TREATMENT

Your treatment is your way of showing and explaining your ideas and vision for the client's brief. It allows them to understand your creative approach and how you plan to achieve it.

Whether you're familiar with pitching for jobs or new to the industry, you'll always want to put your best foot forward in a treatment. Clients will only spend a short amount of time on each pitch, so first impressions are key!

Treatments need to be thought through carefully and should be concise and presentable. Including images in your treatment is incredibly important, as they go a long way in helping convey the look and feel of the vision you're trying to sell.

We've put together a few pointers to help you create a strong treatment that could potentially win you a job through Filmer.



FOR STARTERS

The first key to writing a good treatment is to read the brief thoroughly. Read it at least twice. Try to understand exactly what the client is after and all the information they want you to know. Once you have read and clearly understood the brief, you can start to process it... and then begin brainstorming.

BRAINSTORMING

This is where you begin to dream up and decide what your ideas or vision is for this brief. You may have many directions you want to go, or maybe just one. The important thing is to let your creativity flow and figure out what is the best way to tell this story. It's imperative to have a clear vision of what you can bring to the job – your point of difference that makes you stand out from the competition.

What can you add? How does it make the concept stronger? What will you take away or suggest changing to strengthen that result?

Once you have decided on your ideas, begin writing!

THE WRITING

This is the most important part of the process because it allows you to unpack your ideas and explain to the client what they can expect from you if you are selected to do the job. You need to try get your main idea across clearly and quickly. Be as to the point and succinct as possible. It's important to land your approach as soon as possible. If you haven't hooked them in the first 20 lines, you're toast.

Clients will read a number of pitches, so make it a great experience for them – well conceived, well written and well expressed, in a compelling, clear and logical flow.

Give them a reason to choose you – stand out immediately.

The intro is the key to the treatment, setting the tone and serving as a road map into the document they're about to read. A great intro takes the creative concept and hits the ground running.

Every treatment is different, but in the key points in your writing, it should feel clear that:

- 01** You've understood the creative brief.
- 02** You express what you can bring to the project to add to the creative concept.
- 03** Your personality and experience comes across.

Overall, be real. Don't overpromise, yet don't undersell. And give the client a clear understanding.

AND CHECK YOUR WORDS

As with any piece of writing, always make sure you triple check your spelling and grammar, as mistakes can be a real turn off. Filmmaking is about precision, and if you're careless with your treatment, then it won't give the client much confidence in your ability to complete their job.

VISUAL REFERENCES

Using visual references in your treatment such as images, videos, music or anything tonal will help make your writing more impactful and help the client understand your vision better. So adding quality (not necessarily quantity) visual references to your treatment will go a long way in helping them to grasp your ideas and approach.

A collection of outstanding images – put together thoughtfully and skilfully - is critical to a successful pitch. Some things to keep in mind when choosing the right images for your treatment.

- Don't use stock library images or images with a watermark over them. They are almost always cheesy and nothing looks worse in treatment images than a watermark.

- Don't use low-res images that get pixelated when you enlarge them. And make sure your images are culturally correct.

- Try to use images from movies / ads / series / doccies whenever you can. Keep the images relevant to exactly what the text is saying.

- Try to keep an overall cohesion to the look and the grade across the images.

- Use images from the genre that you plan for the content to look like, ie: blockbuster movie? indie film? doccie? cinematic doccie? hidden camera? TV sitcom? music video? etc.

VIDEO REFERENCE

Reference videos are a great way to show the client what you want to achieve, but make sure you vary your examples! The key is to try and be different, so use other less well-known references to highlight the angle you're going for. Show examples of videos or stills from either your own reel or other people's work, and back them up by explaining how you will bring the ideas to life with styles, techniques and equipment.

AUDIO

For any content piece that calls for music, it's key to provide some reference. Visuals might be your main focus, but often, much of the success of any piece of content is the use of music, sound design or VO. So speak to those elements and give the client a clear understanding of what audio direction you would like to move in.

THEN GET READY TO SUBMIT

Most briefs on Filmer involve pitching your idea with examples of work, an overview of your idea and a full treatment. So once that treatment has been written, crafted and ready for submission, here are some more pointers to win over the client and ultimately, the job.



YOUR FILMER PROFILE

Having an up-to-date profile by writing a bio, adding a profile photo and linking to some of your best work will help the client understand who you are and what you have done. Again, first impressions are key, so make sure your profile is your best foot forward.

On the treatment submission, your profile picture, banner image and the 'Why am I right

for the job?' response are the first things the client sees within your pitch, so that forms an important part of selling yourself. It's nice for the client to put a name and face to your treatment if you're pitching as an individual, or a great chance to show off your branding if you're a production company.

TAILOR TO EACH SPECIFIC BRIEF

Always keep the client in mind. Linking to your latest showreel gives a great idea of your work as a whole, but it's just as important to submit the most relevant examples of your work. Too often, filmmakers use examples that aren't relevant to the client or the brief, or include work that could have been used to highlight their ability to execute a similar idea.

Make sure your pitch is personalised to the client and keep the focus on your concept or approach

Clients don't want to scroll through pages and pages of company info, case studies or complex schedules.

Instead of submitting the same templated PDF to every brief, think of your treatment as a mood board to entice the client. Focus on what you're bringing to the job, let your work speak for itself and try to keep things short and sweet!

CLARIFY ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

If you're pitching as a production company, make sure you're very clear about who will be the director working on the brief. Clients need to know who they are selecting to create their video, so it's important to share the director's bio, as well as information on all the key members of the team who will be working on the project.

When sharing showreels and examples of work, they should be from the director, rather than from the company as a whole.

Any additional information about your cast or crew is always useful. Clients don't want to be uncertain about the people behind the pitch!

EXTRA DOCUMENTS

Uploading documents with bios, post-production details, timelines or budgets is great if the brief calls for it, but keep these separate from the actual treatment. The detail and careful planning looks great to a client, but the information can be easily lost within the treatment if you don't lay it out clearly. Think about what the person on the other end is being presented with and the impression you want to leave. Making sure they understand the essence of your idea is key, and then back this up with supporting information to show that you can execute the idea.





THE DEADLINE

Pay careful attention to the brief deadline and familiarise yourself with the time and date. Often clients start reviewing submissions straight away. Make sure you leave enough time to upload, edit and preview your treatment before the deadline so that if anything goes wrong there's time to fix it.