Flat Classroom #3 Treatment Worksheet

Your Name _____ Date _____

Group # _____ Topic _____

Title of Video _____

One of the most important tools in the videographer's tool kit is the treatment, a document that defines the concept, summarizes the story and determines the creative approach of your video. A well-written treatment takes the lightbulb glowing over your head and makes it visible to others.

Anatomy of a Treatment

To understand the concept of a treatment, imagine that you're telling friends about a movie you've just seen. First, you'd probably mention the title and try to capture their interest by giving them the high concept. ("Have you seen *Root of All Evil*? It's about this 21st century cop who goes back in time …") Then you'd probably start at the beginning and tell the story sequentially, elaborating on scenes that were especially exciting, funny or that moved you. You might finish with a line or image that dramatically sums up the movie's theme. Then (if your friends aren't angrily berating you for spoiling it for them), everyone has a good idea of what happens in the film. A video treatment is pretty much the same thing: it summarizes the concept and essential story elements, captures the emotion and pacing and defines the creative slant of the finished piece.

Your treatment is the foundation of the video project, so spend time on it. Make it good.

Step One: Research The first thing you'll need to do is gather some basic information. **Answer the following questions:**
1) What's the theme or central message?

2) Who is the audience?

3) What's the purpose of the video? What's the desired outcome--

what do you want the viewer to do, think or feel?

Step Two: The Concept

Write a "concept statement"--a brief summary of the theme and purpose of the video. Be sure to include "what, who, why, and how". Here's an example: "Entering the Japanese marketplace is a potentially lucrative prospect for software developers. But, differences in business style, technical requirements, currency and language create barriers. In this 5-minute video *Head East*, we introduce AccessPro, an exciting, new resource for those seeking to expand and succeed in Asian markets." It's a simple statement of **what**--a program called AccessPro, **who**--for software developers, **why**--to overcome cultural barriers and succeed in foreign markets, and **how**--by viewing this 5-minute video explaining the program.

The concept statement is the core message of the video. The core message doesn't change, but you can present it or "treat" it in many creative ways.

Step Three: The Approach

Once you've defined the core concept, fire up your imagination. Think of different approaches you could use to reach your audience in a powerful way. What will elicit the response you want? What approach will grab the audience and compel them to watch, think, feel, commit, convert or buy? For inspiration, look at successful television commercials and print ads. You'll see a variety of tried-and-true techniques to reach viewers--humor, sentiment, parody, logic, emotional manipulation, cultural icons and identification with people, sports or lifestyles.

Write a summary describing your approach to delivering your concept statement.

As you develop your treatments, try to engage the senses of your audience. Keep the writing tight and essential, but create vivid scenes we can see and hear.

What do we see? Don't just describe the images, describe the underlying emotion. "In a montage of shots, we see several street people. Footage is black and white, restless, disturbing." Or: "A slow pan of the soccer field is interrupted with bursts of

extreme close-ups of players in action: strong kicks, slicing arms, sweaty faces."

What do we hear? Don't just say "voice over." Describe the narrator's voice--authoritative, giddy, husky, Park Avenue. Establish an attitude by describing the background music--hip-hop declaration of independence, hockey-arena organ, elegiac strings. Set the mood with background sounds--urban street sounds, distant sirens, crickets chirping.

WorkCited:

Videomaker, http://www.videomaker.com/article/2974/, Accessed on October 21, 2007