



## Handy Budgeting Notes

Though a tiny part of the job we do this is the most visible single part of the producer's job. A good budget is a paradigm of clarity and detail.

Young producers sometimes freeze up when faced with budgeting because of the scrutiny it will be subject to.

Don't be too worried, on the one hand:

- 1 It's simply an encapsulation of everything that has been discussed;
- 2 Almost as soon as it is locked, your budget will start to change as you rob Peter to pay Paul by reallocating resources;
- 3 It will give you the opportunity to call an agency producer's attention to the fact that something wasn't quoted for.

On the other hand:

- 1 Make no mistake, it may make the difference between winning and losing the job;
- 2 A cost controller *will* try to pull it to shreds;
- 3 Agency producers can call your attention to any savings you may have made.

### Script Breakdown

#### Background

Know the script, understand the PIBS, don't over-research: get down to it as soon as you have the information you need. Leave enough time to do it properly.

Most often you'll have an agency board but not a shooting board so you need to be entirely conversant with what the director wants.

It is useful to keep budgeting notes because if you are asked to justify a figure by the Agency Producer/ Cost controller it is handy to know how you arrived at it. Always date the bid – it identifies the correct one. If you have revisions, note Version Number also on front page.

#### A) Recce

If you are shooting on location you need to work out how many days it will take to find the locations, you can always ask the Location Manager but failing that apply common sense and work out how difficult the brief is.

Add on perhaps a day for the director to go around the shortlist of location possibilities with the location manager in order to decide which one/ones works best.

Add on a day for permissions clearances for the locations.

Add on a day's technical recce of chosen location with director & key crew.

Mileage is at £0.50 per mile (please refer to the APA Terms as mileage is only paid for crew if the distance is further than 20 miles from W1F postcode)

#### B) Casting

You can cast a maximum of four characters per session, an average session is 3 to 4 hours, and the more characters you are casting for the more time you will need.

A prep day fee (half of session fee, i.e. £346.50) will be payable in addition to the casting session fee & for casting 5-8 characters, a second prep would be charged along with a second casting session fee.

It is usually a good idea as well as the main casting session/ sessions to have a recall session to see your shortlist. The Agency usually attend and it is good rehearsal time and enables you to spend longer with your shortlist to ascertain who is the best.

A casting studio including camera usually costs around £125 per hour. Plus photo prints at £1.50 a print / Digital uploads at £1 an upload.

### C) Pre-production expenses

Allow for bikes, taxis, and couriers

Allow £300 for Research & £250 for fax & 'phone.

Storyboard. Some artists charge £40 per frame, some will do an all in deal approx £500 - £700 per 30 sec board (but ultimately depends on negotiations with artist).

### C) Salaries

Director's fees range from £5000 – £15,000 per day.

Producer's fees usually half of the director's fee. Again some Cost Controllers cap these.

Prep & post production is included in the daily fees. If a job is very post production heavy and demands a heavy time commitment from the Director then you may be able to insert a fee for this.

### D) Unit

Remember some crew need prep days as well as shoot days for example Focus puller for gear check and steady test before it goes out on location.

Assistant Director, Grip, DOP, Gaffer for the tech recce or electrical & DOP for pre-light if in a studio.

Allow for extra overtime for wrap for key crew i.e. Continuity to type up notes, Grip, Gaffer & Electricians, Focus Puller & Camera Assist. Possibly sound for wild tracks after shooting.

No NIC on Heads of Dept or any crew member supplying equipment.

Refer to APA Guidelines for rates for shooting at night.

DIT (Digital Information Technician) - to download the footage from the cards, backup the files and transcode the rushes to the correct format for the offline edit. The DIT will need this information prior to the shoot to ensure his setup can produce the correct file type. Worth noting:

the DOP is likely to still want a 2<sup>nd</sup> AC.

### F/G) Equipment

Alexa, Red & Canon 5D gear - 3 days = 1 weeks hire

You will always need a camera, lenses, head, legs, dolly, video playback, sound, transport whether camera car or drop off.

Choice of camera is dependent on budget and DOP requirements. Not all equipment is compatible with all cameras, but most have specially designed equipment (follow focus, matte boxes, filters etc.) but lenses are usually compatible via special adaptors.

Lights to include consumables, generator if on location, transport or delivery & collection. Sound Equipment with delivery & collection and other i.e. Motorola's.

Some car action scripts would require a low loader and tracking vehicle costing around £1200 each for a 10h day call to wrap and £60ph O/T.

### H) Art Dept

Usually you give an Art Director/ Production Designer a brief and they will give you a quote for the job, but you need to have an idea in your mind of where you think it is for example: -

Art Director - 1 days drawings, 2 days prep, 2/3 days build if average set, 1 day's dress, 2 days shoot = 9 days.

Ignore Prop buyer's rate all good Prop Buyers are Stylists/ Set Decorators so work at this rate.

Ignore wardrobe rate all good Wardrobe people work at Costume Designer's rate.

Work out how many days buying for Wardrobe, Simplistically

1 character = 1 day's buy

1 x day's wardrobe call

1 x day's shoot

1 x day's return

Prop Masters are required on dress & strike days as well as the shoot.

Prop transport allow £300-600 (depending size of van) per day.

Pick up, shoot day, strike day & return.

Props as per your art directors but anywhere between £1000 for a small job and £10,000 for a big job with multiple locations. Pay attention to special props i.e Prop vehicles that would cost you from £350 - £450 per 10h day (call to wrap) for a normal vehicle. They will charge you fuel at cost. O/T would cost £25ph for the driver. If you needed a precision driver he would cost from £300 - £600 per day (+ possible large buyout for A-list)

Allow £250 per character (approx) for basic wardrobe anything more complicated consult your Costume Designer

Digital:

Most cameras will shoot onto cards that will need to be transferred onto hard drives. Make sure you have enough storage media for the amount you want to shoot. This is commonly a "raid" set up (2 or more hard-drives plugged together) for higher data security, referred to as "TV Drives". Some cameras that shoot high speeds (e.g. Phantom camera at 1000 fps) will use internal hard drives instead of cards as the files are so large. The DIT will download the footage directly from the camera, but will use a similar raid setup.

Compact Flash Cards/ SXS Cards will be included in the standard camera package.

These come in largest size 32GB. Each card holds 13 mins of footage at 25fps 4x4 full HD. filling 320GB.

If you are shooting i.e. with two cameras at higher frame rates this will increase accordingly.

Worth noting: DOPs shoot more footage on digital formats than they do on film, as it can be less expensive to than developing costs but remember (transcoding costs or) additional overtime for the DIT technician.

Depending on the volume of footage, at least two drives (1TB or 2TB in size) will need to be purchased.

1 x 2TB Drive approx £150

L/M) Editing/Post Production

Use your Editor's rate card. Approx £7,000 - £10,000 per 30 sec advert in total.

N) Insurance

Insurance at 3% of the budget but not marked up. However many agencies and clients now have their own wrap insurance. You should allow a fee for your insurance company to check the wrap insurance covers all the requirements for the production to safeguard your production company responsibilities.

NIC is 13.8% in the UK at the moment again not marked up. It does not apply on Heads of Departments or crew bringing own gear.

If shooting abroad

Translating the service company quote

Put in your figures to your budget first. Copy this quote. Go through the foreign quote meticulously. Do you understand everything? Then you're ready to put the foreign figures into the copied quote. Allow enough time to do this.

- a) Their format will be different from yours,
- b) Their currency will need to be converted (at what rate?),
- c) They will be in a different time zone to you,
- d) Cross off every line as you enter it;
- e) Whatever you do, don't forget the service company fee.

## Budget quirks of shooting abroad

This list isn't exhaustive. The US has a minefield that needs to be negotiated:

- 1 In the US you'll probably need additional insurances, certainly Workers Compensation. A payroll company often can take care of this. In the US "excess" is called "deductible".
- 2 There are two loadings on US crew: PT (Payroll Taxes) and P&W (Pension & Welfare). Both vary from state to state and company to company from 23% to 29%.
- 3 Working Union in the US is wildly different particularly in LA and New York. Working with a DGA director means a whole lot of other conditions need to be satisfied.

Elsewhere in the world there are other pitfalls:

- 4 In France social costs on crew can be as high as 62%!
- 5 Check the terms of the service company. You may need to check or amend the PIBS so that you're paid a second 25% on approval of rushes/on wrap.
- 6 Currency variations can work in your favour ... or wipe out your mark-up. Check that the PIBS covers fluctuations and leave the speculation to the traders.
- 7 In many countries you may need to pay gratuities. Allow for them in your quote.
- 8 Air fares move up at least every day. Today's cheapie will be gone by the time you get approval.