

# Riger

## R E P R I N T

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## Ready, Set, Shoot! Effective TV and Video Production

Did you ever catch yourself humming the theme to one of your favorite commercials? Or find yourself mimicking the actions or expressions of characters in those spots? Effective television and video combine sight, sound, motion and emotion into high-impact images whose bottom-line is to attract attention, persuade, maybe even entertain, and above all else sell something.

Like every other aspect of advertising, effective production starts with planning and understanding basic principles.

### Every commercial or video is a prototype

Production is not a mechanical or rote process, even if the project is similar to one previously produced. There is often a temptation to generalize the process which prevents drawing out elements that might make a new commercial or video special and memorable.

### Every decision is a trade-off

For example, an unrealistically short production schedule may result in additional cost or not allow sufficient time to achieve desired quality. A budget that does not realistically reflect actual creative goals may force compromise or require additional time to achieve those goals.

### Every problem is solved through communication

The clearer the specifications (at all levels), the better the TV commercial or video will be. Problems are solved more effectively and at much less cost if discovered early in the process. Changes made in the conceptual stage (e.g., script, storyboard) cost less than changes made during production or post-production, when the meter is running at peak load.

## Stages in the production process

### Pre-production

- Cost estimates
- Production house
- Editor
- Music/audio/sound effects
- Talent (In some commercials, selecting talent — actors or spokespeople — can be 50% of the job.)
- Direct production costs (i.e., studio time, animation, special effects, travel, expenses, etc.)
- Design and construction of sets or props
- Scouting of locations
- Approvals of scripts/storyboard
- Casting and wardrobe
- Pre-production meeting

### Production

- Recording voice-over announcer
- Production crew requirements
- Location and set shoots
- Client's role

### Post-production

- Editing footage
- Adding optical effects, computer graphics, titles, etc.
- Editing and mixing soundtrack
- Final approvals
- Color correction
- Shipping of finished creative

## Essentials of a good television commercial

1. Identify the key visual. In a thirty-second spot there is little time to communicate anything but the major selling point, brand image or positioning. Be single-minded in order to help the viewer absorb the primary selling point.
2. Develop an attention-getting and relevant opening. Like a headline in a print ad, the opening of a commercial determines whether the viewer continues to watch or reaches for the remote.
3. Build in high product visibility. Show the product as often as possible. Show close-ups and people using the product. End the commercial with the product and key selling point for additional reinforcement.
4. Keep it simple and keep it moving. Remember what makes television a powerful medium is visual emphasis and action. Think about the best way to frame shots and add motion to take advantage of this.
5. Develop good continuity. Learn to appreciate the flow of commercials. Note the cuts, dissolves, camera moves and angles used. Plan ahead so the commercial moves naturally from opening scene to closing message.

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