Writers Professional Working Materials

INTRODUCTION

Writers professional working materials and the tools of the trade – they are considered the sales tools for a writer's work. These will be the most utilised materials when trying to establish yourself as a scriptwriter as either writer-for-hire work or when pitching your own original idea.

No Producer or Production Company (locally or internationally) will ever read a script, treatment, logline or synopsis – unless a pre-existing relationship is in place – unsolicited. This means writers first need to be invited to send through materials in the manner that best suits that Producer or Production Companies. This helps to protect copyright or a copyright claim for both parties.

It is also important to note that in international territories only Agents are able to introduce writers to Producers and Production Companies.

Below each header you will find links to helpful sites and further information.

As a screenwriter your job is to write, research, write, learn, write, and adapt. Google is your friend and before you ask Facebook for the answer, ask Google! Or check out the NZWG website for information on knowing your rights, contracting, useful facts and upcoming events.

Before going any further, the below link is a must read for newcomers and is aimed at people applying for early development funding. It's put together by Screen Australia, and is a very basic 'How To Guide' for feature filmmakers on application materials included in their application process – logline, synopsis & treatment.

https://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/getmedia/ae5708a4-05d9-4db0-b5fb-4f999fdfed57/What-is-a-synopsis.pdf

Below are all the materials broken into parts, starting with how to format your works.

FORMATTING

All materials should be presented in industry-standard formatting and 12 pt courier font.

Links to examples:

https://www.studiobinder.com/blog/brilliant-script-screenplay-format/

https://screenwriting.io/what-is-standard-screenplay-format/

https://johnaugust.com/library

FORMATS

Understanding the format you are writing for can help create better crafted writers materials. To help garner attention you want your treatment or script to best deliver your story for screen, no matter the format desired.

Format means what screen type of screen story you are writing ie: TV Series, Short Film, Feature Film etc.

Info on writing TV Pilots | https://screencraft.vhx.tv/

Successful TV Pilots to read | https://screencraft.org/2019/09/16/65-tv-pilot-scripts-that-screenwriters-should-study/

Writing a feature film script | https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/screenwriting/0/steps/10507

Short film writing advice video | https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zi_TqRQHK3o

LOGLINE

The logline is a statement, in 35 words or less, that reflects the narrative 'hook', premise or essential dramatic dilemma inherent in the proposed film. This is not a tagline for a movie poster, but rather a one or two-line summary of the film's essential storyline.

http://www.indiewire.com/2014/01/how-to-write-the-perfect-logline-and-why-its-as-important-as-your-screenplay-31710/

SYNOPSIS

The synopsis is a highly condensed story outline of no more than half a page that clearly reflects the dramatic spine of the film. It must touch on the film's tone, genre, emotional journey and key characters, and must include the film's ending.

http://www.scriptmag.com/wp-content/uploads/How-to-Write-a-Synopsis.pdf

http://www.scriptreaderpro.com/pitching-a-screenplay/

POTENTIAL AUDIENCE

Writers should know who they are writing for, this is an important tool that producers and then financiers will most definitely want to know when trying to fund a story.

These are some questions that help writers identify their audience:

Who is the primary target audience? What makes this movie different from competing movies? Why should your audience spend their time and money watching this movie?

MPAA Audience statistics - https://www.mpaa.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/MPAA-Theatrical-Market-Statistics-2016_Final-1.pdf

BFI Audience statistics - http://www.bfi.org.uk/sites/bfi.org.uk/files/downloads/bfi-statistical-yearbook-audiences-2016-2017-09-27.pdf

NZFC Cinema Media & Trends - https://www.nzfilm.co.nz/resources/cinema-and-media-trends

TREATMENT

Between 5-20 pages

This is a key material that the story will be delivered to potential funders, producers, or agents. This will determine whether a Producer or Production Company will want to take your story any further or "Buy IN". The treatment should deliver an outline of the core narrative story, including a beginning, middle and an end. The treatment should also convey the emotional journey, structure, and genre, as well as something of the tone and characters.

Film Treatment Guides:

https://www.studiobinder.com/blog/how-to-write-a-film-treatment/

http://www.movieoutline.com/articles/how-to-write-a-treatment.html

https://www.masterclass.com/articles/how-to-write-a-film-treatment-in-6-steps

TV Treatment Guides:

https://www.scriptadvice.co.uk/writing-a-treatment-for-a-tv-series/

https://www.studiobinder.com/tv-show-treatment-examples/

SCRIPTWRITING SOFTWARE

It all starts with the script. Final Draft (NZWG members get a 10% discount) is considered the one and only script writing software of choice for professional scriptwriters and the wider industry.

You can also use any of the following scriptwriting software, most are web based and the free versions do contain ads and not all of the functionality of paid for software.

Final Draft | https://store.finaldraft.com/final-draft-11.html

StudioBinder | https://www.studiobinder.com/scriptwriting-software

Screenplay | http://www.screenplay.com/catalog/product/view/id/30/category/8

Celtex | https://www.celtx.com/pricing.html

Writer Duet | https://v6.writerduet.com/

Fade In Pro | https://www.fadeinpro.com/index.pl?reopen=true

Scrivener | https://www.literatureandlatte.com/scrivener/overview

Kit Scenarist | https://kitscenarist.ru/en/index.html