



FilmMaker BasicsTM

A Personal Note

I'm trusting you not to make and distribute illegal copies of these forms. I've been a student and low-to-no budget filmmaker myself, and I know the financial challenges of getting a film made on practically no money. But I can't simply give away my time for free.

It's not just the many, many hours it took to design, test and refine these forms; it's also the years of experience I have which made it possible for me to come with this package in the first place.

These forms can save you a lot of time and money, and help you to develop planning habits you will need if you want to make films professionally. They will enable you to plan your film so that your investment package will make your prospective investors feel much more confident about working with you. Now isn't that worth \$30?

Thanks for buying my PDF's, and may all of your films be funded!

Stephen P. Sherwood



Pre-Production Planning for Low-to-No Budget Films

You have a screenplay and you need to know how much it will cost to produce it. This is actually the Development or *Pre-Pre-Production* stage. It doesn't matter if you have a budget in mind, before you can begin to make the business plan to pitch your film, you need a baseline estimate to work from.

To determine how many set-ups (or camera angles) you will need for each scene, you should count only the minimum number of shots required to cover the action. Your goal here is to be time and cost-effective. You want to shoot the film as quickly and inexpensively as possible, but you must also be realistic about how much everything will cost.

"No battle plan survives contact with the enemy."

Helmuth Karl Bernhard Graf von Moltke

No matter how well you plan for your production, things will change. This is not the time to be creative, the film's Director will have their own ideas about how to shoot and schedule the production, and those changes will usually increase the costs beyond what you estimate here.

If you are the Director, then go ahead and plot out the shots just as you intend to shoot them. These forms are useful to filmmakers at any level who are dealing with tight budgets.

This package contains all the forms you need to breakdown any screenplay into its component parts in order to estimate a shoot schedule and budget. The script should have all of the scenes numbered before you begin, and you must be thorough or you may miss details that could become costly.

1. Use the Scene Breakdown Sheets to list every element necessary to shoot each scene and estimate the time required. Use the Storyboards to help you visualize the shots.
2. Sort your Scene Breakdown Sheets by location.
3. Schedule the scenes to be shot in the most efficient order with the Shoot Day Sheets. Big budget films usually schedule 12 hour days, and it's generally a good idea not to go beyond that or you may end up with an unhappy or mutinous crew.
4. Use the Shoot Day Sheets to complete the Budget Estimation Form and arrive at your first draft budget, then run it by the Director before you lock in a final number.