



7 SECRETS OF PROFESSIONAL DIRECTING



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INTRODUCTION

• WHO WE ARE

The **Working Director** is a network of both aspiring and professional directors who have chosen to come together to share their knowledge and experience with one another. The goal here is to give aspiring directors information, criticism, and advice in a creative environment, straight from the people who direct for a living. More importantly, we are an online based organization, so it doesn't matter if you live in the middle of Hollywood or the middle of Indonesia, you'll still have first hand access to industry professionals from across the globe. Basically, our goal is to become your direct connection to the pros. And, of course, once you become a working director, we hope that you will stay in our network as a mentor to the next generation of filmmakers.



• WHY YOU NEED TO READ THIS?

Let's put this to you plain and simple. You want to be a Working Director, so the first thing you need to do is learn the information that the pros already have. This document will give you all the info you need to get you started in creating your next masterpiece. It is a compilation of opinions and advice from commercial, television, and feature film directors over the last several years. Of course, we won't tell you exactly what films to make, but we will give you 'big picture' pointers to keep you from going down the wrong path. Whether you are still coming up with an idea, busy producing your film, or have several of them under your belt, the information in this document will help you make your next move. Honestly, we all wish we had this information at the beginning of our careers. So sit back and enjoy the next few pages and we hope that they inspire your upcoming film projects.



1. YOU HAVE TO PAY TO PLAY

• IF YOU WANT TO GET INTO THE INDUSTRY, YOU ARE GOING TO HAVE TO CREATE AND PAY FOR YOUR OWN FILMS.

First and foremost, all aspiring directors are going to have to create their own content in order to get noticed in the industry. That means everyone, including you. This sounds obvious, but many people don't realize that they need to commit to some form of financial contribution in order to achieve the production value that people look for. Of course, there are a few exceptions to this rule, but it doesn't change the fact that if you want to make a career out of directing, you need to create a film that stands out from the crowd. We'll get more into what you need to do to "stand out" a little later, but for now, just take a deep breath and get ready to spend a few pennies.

• MANY PROFESSIONAL DIRECTORS ALSO HAVE TO CREATE THEIR OWN PRESENTATION FILMS.

I can honestly tell you that even the pros have to create their own content in order to get jobs. Recently, I had the unique opportunity to work with an 'A' list feature film director while he created a five minute short film to show studio executives how he would direct their next blockbuster film. I'll leave out the specifics for obvious reasons, but you should know that this individual has already directed several films in the multi-million dollar range. So, aspiring directors have no monopoly on having to create and pay for their own content. Even the big boys have to dip into their own pockets to make it happen. If you would like any specific examples, hit up google for behind the scenes info on the directors of *Battle Los Angeles*, *The Karate Kid* (remake), or even the test for *Mortal Combat*. Believe me, you are all in good company.

• IT NOW COSTS LESS THAN EVER TO CREATE DIRECTORIAL CONTENT.

And now for the good news. As you probably know, it is easier and cheaper than ever in the history of filmmaking to create professional level content. Gone are the days of struggling to get short ends of 16mm or 35mm film and access to flatbed editing stations. Today, one person can create an entire production studio with a laptop. From DSLR to Final Cut to After Effects, its never been easier to actually create high level content. There is an entire section of this document dedicated to technology, so keep your spirits up and let's find out how what the pros say you should do next.



FILMMAKING IS CHEAPER THAN EVER BEFORE.

In order to stand out from the crowd, you're gonna have to make a great piece of film. And, you'll probably have to pay for most of it yourself. The good news is that the cost of filmmaking has come down to just needing a camera and a laptop to make it happen.

2. NOBODY IS GOING TO LOOK FOR YOU



THE UGLY TRUTH.

You're going to have to force people to take a look at you. The positive side of this is that most aspiring directors don't know the correct steps to take in order to get noticed. YouTube can be a great tool, but only if used correctly. Know your outlets (including the internet) and you'll get the decisions makers to take a look at you before the others.

• GETTING NOTICED.

As we start out, I want to stress that the hardest part about getting into the industry is getting noticed. I mean, it doesn't matter how talented you are if no one is aware that you exist! In other words, whether its feature films, commercials, television or music videos, you basically have to force people to take a look at you. Before we move on, let's take a look at why it's difficult for the decision makers to find you.

• THE DECISIONS MAKERS ARE VERY BUSY! (OR VERY LAZY)

So, why is it so difficult for people to find you and your directorial talents? Well, our Working Directors pointed to a few different reasons. First, the decisions makers (studio heads, television executives, etc.) lead very busy lives. Some of our pros called it "laziness", but I decided to go a little easier on them. Basically, they don't have the time or energy to actually take a look at the talent that's out there. They would much prefer to have someone give them a recommendation or read about you on some big ticket blog because it means that someone has already done the work.

The other reason it's hard for people to find you and your directorial work is a simple problem of scale. There is simply too much content available for people to see. Think about how much visual content you watch per day and you'll know what I mean.



• KNOW YOUR OUTLETS

So, what does this mean? Is it impossible for people to find you? Absolutely not. The professionals we spoke to actually feel the opposite. In fact, most of them said that at least you have the option to get your films out to the public, which was not the case only a few years ago. But the question is, where do you go to show your work. Let's take a look at what the Working Directors think your best options are.

Film Festivals

First, there is the traditional film festival route. What we've learned is that festivals are great, as long as you choose the right festivals. Sounds like a trick response, but the truth is that many festivals won't give you any exposure beyond the twenty people who come to watch your film. What you really want to do is aim high and hope for the best. Check out Chris Gore's *Film Festival Survival Guide* to get a list of the top ten. Beyond that, just pick and choose from local festivals and also genre festivals that fit your films particular style. Also, on our website, www.TheWorkingDirector.com, you'll frequently find reviews of different festivals that you might want to keep an eye on.

Internet Marketing

Next, there is the wonderful world of the internet. YouTube is the leader here, but Vimeo is close behind. As far as internet marketing goes, the problem of 'standing out' in the crowd is bigger than ever. You really have to look at some of the success stories like *The Gift*, *The Raven*, *What's in the Box*, and *Panic Attack* to really see what's possible. Sure, all of these films are filled with high end visual effects, which always get viewers, but the point is that it is possible to have success online. Working Directors agree that the internet should be an "additional" outlet for your work.

Fellowship Programs & Contests

Lastly, you have to know about all the Fellowship Programs and contests. Here in the US, many of the major networks have fellowship programs to foster talent. A lot of them focus on women or minorities, but I've seen several that are all inclusive. Also, directing contests pop up from time to time and offer major prizes and exposure. The problem with both fellowship programs and contests is that you really have to stay on top of the applications or you'll miss the deadline. Again, on our website, www.TheWorkingDirector.com, we'll do our best to let you know when the deadlines are coming up so you won't kick yourself the day after everything's due.



DON'T FORGET ABOUT FELLOWSHIPS AND CONTESTS.

In addition to film festivals and youTube, there are also a lot of fellowship programs that can help you get your start. The application window is very short, so stay on top of it.

Also, there are lots of 'directing contests' every year that can help you get noticed. Check our blog frequently, as we strive to keep you up to date on all the latest competitions.

(left) Past directing competitions with high profiles.

3. WHAT'S GOOD VS. WHAT SELLS YOU

• THE END GOAL

When we spoke with Working Directors in Hollywood and asked them what kind of films aspiring directors should create, a lot of them said exactly the same thing. The consensus was that you have to realize what the end game is. For most of you, that goal is to direct high level projects with named actors and big budgets. Even for those of you that want to do more artistic, story driven projects, the goal still tends to be working on a large, professional scale. So, what you shoot today won't be that project. You simply won't have the resources to get it done straight out of the gate. That being the case, the films that you create should be "calling cards" to get people to notice you and your talents.

• STORY IS KING! (WELL, SORT OF)

Now that we know what the goal is, it's time to really think about what type of film to make. I'm sure you've heard the saying "story is king" hundreds of times by now (if you haven't, don't worry, you will). We are not going to argue with that concept in any way. However, if story is king, eye-catching is 'queen'. Meaning, you need to push the envelope with your films if you really want people to notice. Now, we know that this gets into the "creative" realm, but we want to be honest with you. Hollywood can make art-house films from time to time without risking much, but you don't have that luxury. In fact, you are probably using the 'beg, borrow, and steal' method just to get your films made.

So, ask yourself, would you actually enjoy watching the film you plan to make, even if you weren't associated with it? Or, would you watch the first thirty seconds on YouTube and then click to something more interesting? These are the questions that you have to ask yourself before spending the time, energy and money on your projects. Our Working Directors couldn't stress this point enough. So, don't be shy, push the limit. Look at films like *Pi*, *Paranormal Activity*, *Monsters*, "*Sex, Lies and Videotape*", etc. to get an idea of what it takes to grab someone's attention and get a newcomer noticed.



PUSH THE ENVELOPE, PUSH THE STORY

The goal for most of you is to make a great film that gets you noticed. In order to do this, you'll need to grab their attention. In these modern days of internet on cell phones and instant access to information, you really have to create films that don't allow people to be distracted. So, take a look at your scripts and make sure that they push it in terms of story, art direction, action or whatever your specific genre is.

(top) An actor shakes inside a 'death machine' in a short film.

(below) A young actress prepares for an aggressive abductions scene.

4. SHORTS VS. FEATURES



• HOW LONG IS LONG ENOUGH

Now that you know what your film is and how you are going to grab your audience, you need to determine what length of film you are going to create. Are you making a short, feature, webisode, etc. Well, If you're goal is to work as a commercial or music video, then this doesn't really apply to you. (Commercials should be exactly 30 seconds and music videos should just stay under 5 minutes). But, if we are talking about films, then the topic of 'shorts' versus 'features' is something that needs to be discussed. Now, this is a topic that the pros have very strong feelings about. The point that we heard over and over again was that if it is at all possible to make a feature length film, then you should do it. Shorts are a great tool, but they will never have the impact that a feature length film has. Of course, this doesn't count if the feature length film is not any good, but you get the point. In fact, one of my mentors, a contributor to *The Working Director* actually won the Academy Award for his short film back in the 1970's. Even he wanted to let you know that directing a feature would be a better way to go.

At *The Working Director*, our consensus is that features are better than shorts, but shorts are better than nothing. So, ask yourself, how much more difficult would it be to create 90 minutes, instead of 5 or 10? Would it be possible to shoot a few more days and get enough material to put together a feature film. If it seems there is even the slightest chance that this is doable, then you should go for it. After all, if it doesn't work out, you can always edit it into a short. If however, you barely have the resources to get people together for a short period of time, then you should not be discouraged from creating a short film. Film school students shouldn't be having all the fun. So, either way, if you want to be a director, you have to direct. And, whether it's a short film or a feature, it will help you hone your craft and could even lead to your big break.



CAN I SELL MY SHORT FILM?

There are more and more outlets for short films, including iTunes, mobile devices, etc. So, even though a good feature film is more marketable than a good short, there are many ways to get noticed with a short film.

(left) A crew member sets up for a two day short film in Los Angeles.

5. TECHNOLOGY AND YOUR BIG BREAK.

Now you've come to the part of the process that can be either the most exciting or the most confusing, depending on your point of view. The Internet is full of tips, tricks and reviews of new filmmaking technology. So much in fact, that it can sometimes be hard to find any other filmmaking education. At The Working Director, our goal is to focus on the aspects of directing most important to get you into the industry, whether that be technical, aesthetic or creative.

• STAY DIGITAL, STAY MOBILE

Now, in terms of specifics, the number one thing to remember is that digital filmmaking mediums are more accessible, cheaper, and easier to work with than traditional mediums. Although most of you will probably never be shooting 35mm film until you get on your first big film, there are some film purists who will tell you that you need to shoot film to understand the filmmaking process. I can tell you first hand that this is not true. The medium doesn't really matter in today's world, if your goal is to get noticed and get your break. (For aspiring cinematographers, this is different, but they aren't reading this anyway). In fact, an extremely large percentage of big budget films, commercials, television shows, and music videos are shooting completely digital nowadays. So, if you want to make your life easier, shoot digitally and save yourself a lot of heartache.

• YOU CAN WORK ON THE SAME LEVEL AS THE PROS.

Since the pros had so much to say about this topic, there is a lot of good news for you. First of all, no matter what your experience level or resources, you can now work at the same technical level as the pros. They all know it and admitted it to us freely. What they also told us, however, is that they see so many people who only focus on the technical and don't bother to learn the basics of film directing. And, when this happens, the results are obvious and detrimental. So, the directors we spoke to urged all aspiring directors to stay current on technology, but not let it be the only factor in determining your projects.



YOU AND THE PROS HAVE THE SAME TECHNOLOGY

The technology that is in the high end equipment is also available in less expensive packages. Sure, there are a few less features, but know that you now have access to the same basic equipment used on big budget features.

(far left) A Cinematographer talks tech with his assistant. (left) An audio recorder with the same tech as an inexpensive Zoom H4N.

• TECH FOR DIRECTORS

Is DSLR the only option?

The major advance in technology over the past few years has been DSLR photography. I'm sure that many of you will be shooting your projects in this medium, and for good reason. For a few hundred bucks, you can achieve a look that rivals anything in the theatre today. But what if you don't have the resources for that. Well, don't be discouraged, shoot on whatever you have access to, just know that you are going to have to compensate for the look in other ways. I mean *Paranormal Activity*, *The Office (UK Version)*, *Catfish*, and many other successful film projects chose not to go with high end camera gear and still did fantastic in terms of marketability. In my opinion, you can make a great film on your cell phone, so long as you compensate for the visual quality with a compelling story, creative editing, and an eye-catching look.

What about Editing?

In terms of editing, the best way to go is to find an editor and use whatever package he or she is most comfortable with. Even if you have the ability to edit your projects on your own, *The Working Director* will show you why you don't want to edit you own film. Nowadays, you can find an aspiring editor that will help you out for free. At worst, teach a friend how to edit and at least he can give you the extra opinion that helps you shape your story.

I wish I knew how to do VFX.

Visual Effects happens to be how I got into directing professionally, so I know a lot about this topic. In my opinion, visual effects are now present in almost every film made today. Sure, in art-house films, that might only be grain reduction or a simple greenscreen here or there. However, the fact is that VFX are now part of our everyday understanding of film and you need to be aware of how it can help your filmmaking. In addition, VFX films tend to get people interested in your film (which can be good or bad, depending on the story). My advice is to become familiar with what types of VFX exist so you know what's possible in terms of your film. When you do this, however, make sure that you only try to use VFX when the story calls for them and only effects that you can pull off at the level of today's blockbusters. Once again, even if you are clueless in terms of VFX software you should be able to find someone who can help you. If not, *The Working Director* will have several "VFX for Directors" seminars coming up in the very near future.

Color, Sound, and Finish.

The last part of your directorial projects will involve the finishing. By this time, you'll be exhausted and probably won't have the energy you had the night before you shot your film. So, once again, the pros we spoke to said that the best thing to do is to find someone who can help you finish your films. So, get that network of friends together and make sure that you are not the only one dragging your project across the finish line. As a general rule you should try to spend at least half as much time with the Color Correction and (more importantly) Sound as you do editing your film.



IS THE PRICIEST CAMERA THE BEST CAMERA?

Of course not. Don't get us wrong, most cameras are expensive for a reason. Despite this fact, you should take a look at where you expect to show your film. In many cases smaller cameras will fit your needs just as well, with a much smaller price tag.

• A WORD ABOUT BACKUPS

Before we leave the topic of tech, I have to mention something about backups. Since almost all of you will be shooting digitally, know that there is a serious risk of losing your data if you are not backed up. In the industry, this is called being “redundant”. Hard drives all fail at some point and if you want to avoid that sinking feeling in your gut when you lose your masterpiece, get used to buying hard drives two at a time. Anything that goes on disk, should go in two places. (Notice we said in two places, which is different than being on two hard drives that are stored in the same place.) Sure, it costs twice as much for storage, but those costs have come down so quickly in the last few years that it shouldn't make a difference.

At The Working Director, we believe that when it comes to data, you should have an extremely pessimistic view of its safety. Assume it's going to fail and you will probably never lose any information. In practice, I've found that asking myself, “What would happen if there was a fire in here right now?” tends to force me to make proper backup decisions. So, if you are reading this and your answer to that question doesn't end with “. . .but at least we'd still have our film”, then you need to go out and buy some storage immediately!

TECHNOLOGY CHEAT SHEET

Choose your camera wisely (don't just go for the shiniest one).

Yes, there are tons of new cameras coming out everyday. Take a look at your production and post production needs before going out and renting the most expensive digital camera. In a lot of cases, a small, inexpensive camera will do just fine.

Don't forget about the sound

People forgive a hard to view image with good sound (i.e. Cloverfield). However, no one forgives a good image with bad sound. Make sure that you triple check your sound process and digital recording pipeline on set and in post.

Talk about VFX beforehand

Even if you don't know how to do VFX, try to find someone who does to talk to before you shoot. In many cases, he or she may be able to make your shoot easier (i.e. cheaper) with a little bit of VFX magic.

Back it up to get it back

Nobody wants to spend money on hard drives. However, having at least two copies of all the material is the ONLY way to make sure you won't have a very bad day when a drive crashes. All hard drives fail at some point. So, make sure you have two drives with your source material and store them in two separate locations.



6. MAKING YOUR ONE SHOT COUNT



So, you've made a few projects and people have taken notice. Eventually you are going to find yourself on set with someone else paying the bills. This is it. You are in the midst of your big break. How do you assure that you don't blow it? (An occurrence that happens far too often.) The pros gave us the following tips to keep a new director from quickly becoming an ex-director.

• LANGUAGE IS YOUR ONLY TOOL.

Directors are not actors, editors, cinematographers, or even producers. Of course, sometimes we also fill those roles but, in general, our job is simply to direct. When you really think about it, the physical work of directing is pretty minimal. In fact, the only tool we really use is, believe it or not, 'words'. It's our job is simply to take the story and, using our words, instruct the team how to execute our vision. So, of course, language is paramount to how well you can do your job. But what does this mean?

Directorial Polyglot (Oh, yeah... triple word score!)

First, you have to become familiar with being a multilingual director. This doesn't mean you have to run out to the bookstore and start taking French lessons. Instead, what the pros think you should know is that every person on your crew speaks a different language. For example, your actors don't talk about a scene the same way your cinematographer does. The actor wants to know what the emotional impact of the previous scenes should be and what the character is feeling. In contrast, your cinematographer is going to want to talk about the visual tone of the scene and framing of the individual shots. These two conversations are fundamentally different.

So, learn the terms of the different departments so that you can speak to each member of your team in their language. Believe me, the respect and admiration that you will get from this is immeasurable. This is one of the most important aspects of the job that The Working Director would like you to remember and it's also something that almost no one talks about.

Actors crave direction.

Since we touched on actors, it's important to take a moment to speak specifically about how to work with them. All the pros agreed that the ability to work with actors is something that develops over time, but there are a few tips that will help you get the most out of your actors. It's no secret that actors crave direction and the more information you give them, the better. We're not saying that you should give them all the information you have on the story, character, or scene. In fact, almost everyone we spoke to strongly advised against this. Instead, your task is to determine what information each actor needs. For example, some actors just want to know what type of emotion you want for them in a scene. Other actors want to know the backstory of the character in order to get into their process. On www.TheWorkingDirector.com we will have several courses in the near future that dig deeply into this aspect of directing, so stay tuned.



Any answer is better than no answer.

OK, this one is going to sound strange, but it is true that when working professionally, you have to learn to answer every question. Basically, any answer is better than no answer, which seem counter intuitive. However, you are the director. You are expected to know exactly what you want. If you don't know what you want, make a best guess. (You'll almost always have a chance to change you mind later in the process). Basically, you just have to get used to the fact that a director is a leader and everyone expects the leader to have all the answers. Sometimes, you're just going to have to have faith and go with whatever answer comes to you. Because, contrary to what you might believe, any answer is better than "I don't know".

Being nice vs. being a friend.

This last topic shouldn't really be necessary. But, alas, the pros that we spoke to urged us to give you the information. It deals with how you treat people in general and it's a bit of a tricky subject. We've all seen the stereotypical portrayals of directors in television shows and movies. A lot of the time, those fictional representations aren't all that flattering. You know, when you see the director screaming at the top of his lungs, firing Production Assistants if their coffee order is wrong, etc. etc. The sad thing is that this portrayal is not always too far from the truth when it comes to certain directors. Just search around for behind the scenes clips of the director of *The Fighter* or *The Boondock Saints* and you'll see why we needed to bring this up. Take a look at our cheat sheet below to help you balance friendliness with respect.

ON SET CHEAT SHEET

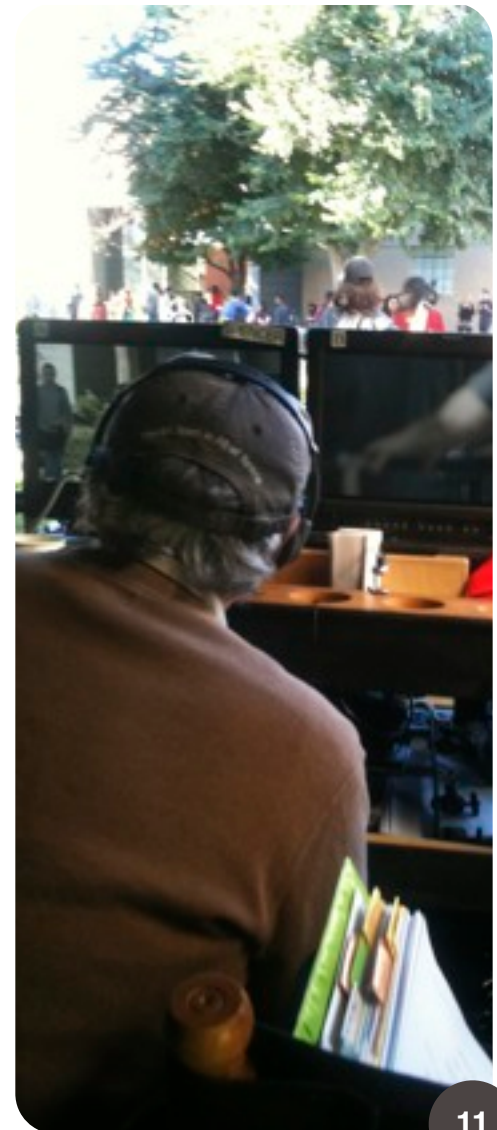
Refrain from yelling (sounds obvious, but you'd be surprised).
Try speaking at a normal tone and allow people to be quiet in order to hear you. If you need to get everyone's attention, use your Assistant Director as the bad guy.

Be friendly, but try not to joke around during the workday.
It's great to be friendly to everyone, but you are the leader of the set, so you can't really afford to be a jokester. Of course, this is something you can feel out for yourself based on your personality. In our opinion, err on the side of being too serious rather than too playful.

Don't allow anyone else to speak for you in meetings.
Make sure that you always answer for yourself. If someone does speak for you, add your take as well and try to hint politely that you will answer any follow-ups.

Don't dress too casually.
No need for a suit and tie, but you should be better dressed than the grips and PA's.

Learn everyone's names.
This is extremely important. When you show up in the morning, call each member of the crew by his or her name. Have an assistant take pictures of everyone for you if memorization is not your strong suit.



7. KNOWING THE PROCESS



• LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION IS JUST THE BEGINNING

Most aspiring directors have a strong mental image of what it would be like to call 'lights, camera, action' on a big Hollywood production. But the reality is very different from this dreamlike image. More importantly, the actual days on set, working with the actors and trying to get everything done before the sun goes down is a very small percentage of a director's actual work. The majority of a professional director's work happens during pre and post production. But, what actually happens during these phases of the process. Well, we're glad you asked.

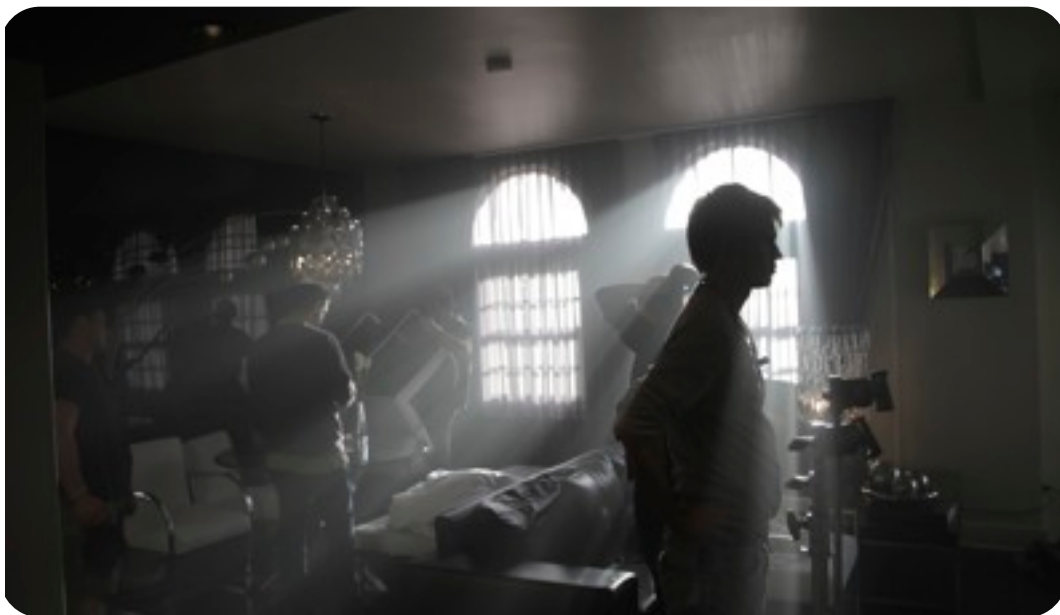
When you show up at the start of 'prep', you should have a good idea of what's in store for you. Of course, this varies, depending on whether you are doing tv, movies, or film, but there are a few constants that exist in almost every situation. They most time consuming ones are:

Script revisions

The script is obviously the most important part of the process, but it gets worked on constantly. After you start pre production, every script revision is assigned a different color for clarity. Many times, you receive a new script every couple of days, so you'll need to get pretty used to re-reading your scripts.

Location Scouting

This sounds like it should be simple, but finding locations tends to be very time consuming. Finding the location that fits the bill of being something that is appealing, affordable, accessible, and available is no small order.



KNOW THE TERMS

Many of you are getting familiar with the on set terms of filmmaking. You need to also familiarize yourself with the terms of production. Everything from the location scout, to casting, to post production has a language. The more of it you know, the more professional you'll sound on the job.

(Left) The FX department adds a 'hazer' to the scene for effect.

Casting

Most of you know the deal here. The only thing to remember is that you, as the director, don't always get the final say. Our pros said to always choose a second and third choice, just in case.

Department Meetings

From props, to wardrobe, production design, to VFX, you'll be meeting with each department to make sure that they know what to provide you during the shoot.

Production Meetings

There are so many meetings, that we aren't going to break them down here, but just know that communication is key and you'll be doing a LOT of communicating before you shoot.

Post-production

We're pretty sure that you are all familiar with the concepts of editing, sound, and color correction, so we won't go into detail here. Just be aware that all the pros we spoke to urged aspiring filmmakers to budget (both in time and money) to spend as much time in post production as possible. It doesn't matter how great the story is if no one can hear it or see it properly.

• COMMERCIALS VS. TELEVISION VS. FILM

Now that we are moving into the details of the filmmaking process, we have to talk a little about the differences between the popular forms of professional filmmaking and what it takes to get employed. This will simply be a bullet points list, but over at www.TheWorkingDirector.com we will be going heavy into the details of what it takes to get your break in each field.

Feature Film

This is still the wild west of filmmaking. There are lot more ways into feature films than other forms of directing, but there are also far more people trying to get in. Basically, you have to create a film that gets you noticed, whether that is a feature film, a short film or a webisode. When asking the pros, they stressed that getting more people to see your film is almost as important as the quality of the film itself. So, the general consensus is that you either need to get in (or win) a popular film festival or you need to get it shared heavily on youTube or Vimeo in order to find an audience.



IT'S NOT ALL ABOUT SAYING 'ACTION' AND 'CUT'.

Once you make your big break, you need to know the process of directing. You'll find out that most of your time is spent in meetings, looking for locations, and the like. Knowing all of the pieces that go into directing will allow you to look like a seasoned veteran on your first day at work (above) A production meeting and a location scout.

Commercials / Music Videos

OK, this one is pretty cut and dry. Everyone agrees that in commercials, you are going to have to create fake spots (called 'spec spots') and put them on a reel. All commercials should be exactly 30 seconds long (not 31, not 60) and should be for brands that actually exist. Try to stay away from the major brands like Nike, Volkswagen, or Gatorade since the budgets for these commercials tend to be extremely high. So, matching that level of quality is very difficult.

For music videos, it's a bit easier. All you need is to find a few local bands that want videos. Do not let them make all the creative decisions or you won't end up with the best result. Take what they are looking for and really push the envelope in terms of directorial style. That 'style' is one of the major selling factors in videos, so go for it.

Television

This might sound hard to believe, but getting into television directing is, by far, the hardest nut to crack. The problem is simply because of the studio system in which television shows are created (at least here, in Hollywood). In order to get in, you are going to have to have the same sort of materials necessary to get into feature films, but you also have to find some Television directors that can help get your work seen. Over at www.TheWorkingDirector.com we'll be going into far more detail on this topic, but it all comes down to having an ally in the episodic television world. The best way to enter that world is through one of the fellowship programs that the networks offer or by staying on the blogs, especially our blog. We'll make sure you know about every opportunity.

NEXT STEPS CHEAT SHEET

So, this document can't possibly explain everything that's involved in the directing process, that's what www.TheWorkingDirector.com is for. Instead, we just thought we'd list a few of the things that were left out up till now. Check our website for exclusive training on all these topics and more.

- Putting together your directing reel
- Finding a Agent/Manager
- Getting into the Director's Guild in your country
- Getting the meeting, what to present.
- Working with the writers
- Making the most of your film festival experience
- And much, much more.



CONCLUSION

• TAKING AWAY THE “NO”

At the end of the day, you are one of many individuals trying to make the transition from aspiring director to Working Director. What's sets you apart in addition to your talent, will be your knowledge of the process and your ability to maximize every opportunity. At our website, we will give you the training and professional insight you need to stay informed and also make sure to keep you up to date with as many opportunities as we can. Please refer to this document often, as it will save you from making a lot of the same mistakes that many of the pros did who came before you. Here are a few things to keep in mind.

• WHO ARE YOU AND WHY SHOULD THEY CARE

Anyone you meet in the industry is going to assess you. That's just the nature of the beast. Basically, they want to know why they should spend their time getting to know you. So, you need to be able to answer the “who am I and why should they care” question to yourself in order to let people know when they meet you.

• WHICH GENRE ON A DESERTED ISLAND

Many aspects of the film industry are based on genre or style. To make things easier for the decision makers, they like to put people into categories. Now, I'm sure many of you believe that you are equally capable of directing any genre or medium of film, which may be true. Regardless, you need to ask yourself where your heart is. Meaning, if you were going to a deserted island and could only bring one form of filmmaking with you, what would it be. Shorts or Features? Television or Music Videos? Action, Drama, or Horror? Having the answer to this question will simplify your life in terms of what your initial film projects would be. Trying to be too diverse can often cause problems.

• THIS IS THE GREATEST JOB ON THE PLANET

Directing is a very competitive profession. Of course it's going to be difficult to get in. So, just take that as a given as you move forward and know that, with the right training, it is more than possible to make a living as a director. The Working Director is your first stop for professional support and will always be a few mouse clicks away when you need a little information or guidance. Hope to see you there.



www.TheWorkingDirector.com