

This resource has been jointly developed by South West Museum Development and James Stuart of Lightbox Film Co. as a guide for museums looking to work with a filmmaker.

**Video is a great way to tell a story and get information across in an engaging way, but how do you go about working with a filmmaker? Here are a few tips to get your project started and what you should consider.**

### 1. Define your project with a brief

Filmmaking is a creative industry, so you need to define what the video should include and do in the form of a well written brief.

Your brief should address key questions or points such as:

- **What do you want to say?** I.e. What is the story or the message you would like to get across?
- **What are you hoping the video will achieve for your museum?** E.g. encourage new visitors, educational content, fundraising tool etc.
- **Who is the target audience?** Consider who will watch/ use your video and the relevant distribution platforms. What do you want your audience to feel or do as a result of your video.
- **How will it be released?** What are the platforms the video will be shown on, is your video part of a wider marketing campaign or a one-off?
- **Does your museum have a 'house style' or branding considerations?** E.g. colour palette, logos, including funders.
- **Be specific** about any content you want included and any that you don't, including style. E.g. Think about any background music or voice over.
- **The format you need your content to be provided in**  
Remember it is good practice for content to be accessible e.g. subtitles.
- **How will you measure if your video has been successful?**  
This could be view count or engagements such as responding to a Call To Action.
- **How to submit a proposal, the deadline and your preferred time frame** for the work to be delivered in, along with any considerations for procurement, such as insurances.

You may find it helpful to look at and find references of other videos you like to help show creatively what you're after.

## 2. Budget

It's best to **have a budget set or an idea in mind of what you are able to spend**. This will also help if you need to raise money through funding.

**Example:** The budget for a typical 2-3 min talking head video with cut away shots within one days filming range from £2000- £5000. Other formats and requirements like animation and motion graphics will add to the cost – our experience has averaged out at approximately £1000 a minute of filming for animation and £500 filming content.

## 3. Finding the filmmaker

Advertise the commission.

You should include:

- Your **brief** and how to apply
- The **budget**, as this will help applicants know if it's suitable for them.
- A request for **examples** of their work
- You could also ask candidates to respond with a **proposal** which includes a treatment (a document that presents the story idea of your film before writing the entire script) and creative pitch.

If you do advertise, expect a good response and allow time to sift through to make a shortlist. You should have a system to fairly evaluate the applicants.

[You may find our resources on working with freelancers useful](#) when trying to commission a filmmaker.

## 4. Filmmaker vs. Agency

The difference between an agency and filmmaker comes down to cost and resources.

### Filmmaker

Will be one person. You will communicate directly with them throughout the process.

You will have more input, but it will require more of your time.

### Agency

Agencies will be a team of people with a broad range of skills. They will appoint a project manager who will be your contact.

They will have a system in place to make your job easier and shouldn't require too much work from you. They can be at the higher end of the budget scale.

*Cont.*

## 4. Filmmaker vs. Agency (cont.)

**Producers:** Consider whether you will need additional support such as a **Producer**. A producer will help you manage your project; liaise with the filmmaker; consider and arrange the logistics. Note sometimes when working with a filmmaker or agency this is arranged in-house. **Make sure you ask for this information to be included in the proposal submitted** when advertising your brief.

**Contracts:** Using either agency or filmmaker requires some of your time and you should factor that in to make sure they're on track to deliver what you expect. **Having a contract in place** which includes the agreed deliverables, budget, timeline and any copyright considerations will help with this. Often filmmakers / agencies have their own template you can adapt if you do not have your own.

## 5. The process

### Kick off Meeting

After appointing someone to create the video, it should start with a kick off meeting. Discuss how they're going to fulfil the brief and what creative ideas they might have.



### Pre-production

This will include scripting, storyboard, logistics such as arranging contributors, times and locations, shot list and schedule. At each point there should be opportunities to feedback and refine. It seems comprehensive but all essential parts in producing good content.



### Production

The part where you capture the content. It is great to be involved and oversee what's going on. It's also useful to listen in to interviews and make notes on good moments which you could later feedback on in the edit. Take photos of the production, during production, especially as record to share with funders or share practice with other members of the team.



### Post production

With everything captured it's time to put it all together. There shouldn't be any unwelcome surprises as you've helped plan it well. The filmmaker will send you a rough-cut, which is an unrefined version of the edit, which you will give feedback on. This process could be a few iterations depending on what you agreed at the start.

## 6. Once you have your video

You've planned, briefed your chosen filmmaker and have worked with them to produce your video, so what happens next? This is usually where your filmmaker steps away and now it's up to you to make sure it reaches your intended audience.

As part of creating the brief you should have thought strategically about your **distribution channels** so it's time to publish and start measuring the success of your content - your **Key Performance Indicators**. It's important to do this as it helps you plan and strategise for content creation for the future including future commissions with filmmakers.

Finally, creating video content is a fun process and a great way to communicate about your museum and the work it does, but it shouldn't be underestimated in the amount of work it takes to complete a project. **Good planning is essential**. If done well, the time you and your team put in will pay off and make it all worthwhile.

## 7. Find out more

### Accompanying Resource

To accompany this guide, we worked jointly with James Stuart of Lightbox Film Co. to produce a useful resource on the '[Key stages of the filmmaking process](#)', from writing a brief through to distribution and review.

### Case Study – Dunkirk Mill Museum

To find out more from a museum who has been through this process, [you can read our Q&A with Jane Ford from Dunkirk Mill Museum](#), who, with support from our Recovery funding, commissioned a film to promote their museum.

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