

Lights, Camera...YOU! Practical Workshop

Workshop Template

The Players

The Producer. This is the facilitator of the movie workshop. They will always carry the highest perspective and they are the actor's biggest fan.

The Actors. These are all the workshop participants.

The Scene

The producer should define the purpose of the movie workshop prior to the actual meeting. This should be a high-level paragraph description. Share this with the actors prior to the meeting. The producer should write this to encompass what their vision is.

Define the space for the movie workshop. The set can be set up with the actors sitting in a semi-circle with the producer at the front. Visual tools should be available, depending on the size of the workshop. Whiteboards, flip charts or even paper for smaller scenes. Online collaboration tools can also be employed. Just ensure the projected screen is visible and clear, and the producer is an expert in the use of the tools. The producer may choose to have a dedicated non-participant to write, draw or use collaboration software. This will free them up to be more involved for larger workshops.

The Opening Script

The producer will take their place in front of the actors. Subtly observe the acting styles, costume and makeup. Who is eager and on the edge of their seat? Who is looking down, not making eye contact? Who is casually involved, but not fully committed? Observe the masks being worn and what they might be hiding.

The producer will introduce themselves. Then each actor will share their name and describe their role in the production.

The first scene will be discussing the pre-production alignment.

- Safety on the set. Point out the exits and the restrooms.
- This is a judgment-free set. Nothing that comes up today is good or bad. It's all just information.
- If there is feedback, direct it at the idea, not the actor themselves. So instead of, "that won't work," just say "let's explore a different angle."
- There will be set breaks where the actors can check their messages, get something to eat, and take a break. Otherwise, phones and computers stay in props until needed.

The producer should take personal notes during the shoot. These notes should record positive feedback for each actor, calling out when they contributed, or offered valuable feedback. The producer will then use these notes at the after party to recognize something positive about each actor and share that with the group in public.

The Concept

Lay out what the foundational idea is for the workshop. This should be short, one or two sentences, that define what the outcome should be for the Final Cut. The Producer can elicit suggestions from the actors. The producer already knows the concept, so they can help shape this from the suggestions. Confirm the buy-in from the actors when complete.

The Actors

After the concept is agreed, solicit observations from each actor about what they think the concept means to them. Each actor can share up to 3 personal observations.

This will open the door to any subtitles that may be playing out with the group. Don't judge, just observe and record. These can be addressed later in the workshop.

Cinematography and Location Scouting

List and describe the locations that are part of the concept. This could be options for vacation or impacted users in a software upgrade. The producer will record all locations shared by the actors. As the list is being formed, note what agreements or objections there might be for each location. Discuss any contracts that could be involved. Discuss any issues or objections that could arise from the location so that you can address them as a brainstorming session.

List alternative locations if the primary ones become unavailable. If appropriate, note the feeling that you would like to invoke with that location. Determine if there will need to be a follow-up visit to the location to close out details, iron out conflicts or process contracts.

The Screenplay

Use a beat sheet or storyboarding to visually represent the goal and the scenes that will be played out to reach that goal. This is the core of the workshop and will likely take a good amount of time. Start by defining the scenes that require the most attention. Draw this out on the whiteboard, flip chart or paper. It should be large enough for all the actors to see. The producer should solicit input from the actors, while maintaining the shot list to a usable size. Follow the guidelines from the shot list to detail the important scenes.

Shot Description	Camera Angle	Location	Actors	Sound

The Camera

Once the Storyboard is complete, look at the various camera angles. Have all the actors close their eyes. The Producer will then read each scene out loud. That way, the visual actors will see it in their mind's eye and the auditory actors will hear it. Then solicit

feedback from the group for changes. Perhaps even play some quiet background music to prompt other ideas for the auditory actors.

The Projector

If any new or updated ideas are discovered during the use of the Camera, use the Projector lens to focus on the new information more deeply. Note any requirements to now change the script from the storyboarding. The Producer can discern whether there may be some subtitles now playing as the discussion continues. If so, call them out for review.

This would now be an appropriate time for intermission and concessions. Let the discussions marinate with the actors as they take a break.

The Dailies

The Producer can now start the Dailies review. This will be a short recap of the progress in the movie workshop. Note the things that are going well and where things might be dragging. Were there topics that provoked some rabbit holes that may need to be revisited in a future workshop? Were there topics that may require more research? What topics were all the actors in agreement with?

Use all the time you need as the Producer to review the Dailies. Mine the gold that is there. You can choose to revisit some scenes now, or note where some additional screenplay will be required.

Problem Solving

The Producer can now address the problems that have been identified as existing or potential points of opportunities. Leading these sessions requires the Producer to follow the script:

- Define the problem as specifically as possible
- Creative improvisation. Have the actors call out their ideas for solutions. This can be a fun, quick-fire session. Write ALL suggestions where the actors can see the script.

- Note any contingency planning that may already be identified for the problems.
- Stay calm, and have fun with this. The crazier the ideas, the more the actors will feel free to offer all the suggestions they are imagining. There are NO wrong answers here.
- Make the decision. If a decision is required to be made during the workshop, direct the actors to agree on what the decision will be. If agreement is difficult, have the actors look at the options from the director's chair. If needed, the producer can offer subtle input from a higher perspective.

Editing

It is suggested to have another break prior to the editing work. The editing work is detailed, so fresh eyes, ears and minds will be required.

The Producer will lead the actors through a review of the material now created. Look at the information from as many angles as you can, and in detail. Note transitions between scenes and whether they feel too short or too long.

Discuss the continuity between the scenes. Is the information consistent? Are there assumptions being made that haven't been validated yet? Does the pacing between scenes feel natural?

This is part of the workshop where everything needs to come together and be confirmed by the actors. Spend as much time as you need. Note if follow-up sessions may be required for a more detailed review.

Sound Design

The producer should now take a moment and ask everyone to remain quiet for a minute. Then, ask if anyone has an inner voice that is telling them something.

Visual Effects

The producer should now lead the actors in a green screen scenario. Have the actors imagine they can do anything they want with the information written during editing. Is

there something that is coming up as a new idea, a new perspective or a new opportunity?

Final Cut

The Producer will now wrap up and summarize the workshop. If there were takeaways, note them and assign ownership of each item to an appropriate actor. Set timelines for when these scenes will need to be delivered. Schedule any follow-up workshops that may be required. Prepare to send the documented material to the actors as the final screenplay.

After Party

The Producer can now thank the actors for a job well done. Refer to the notes taken throughout the movie workshop and provide feedback to the actors on where they did an outstanding job. Solicit feedback on what could be done better in the upcoming workshops. Now the actors can remain for a short time and discuss the workshop in a casual environment. Well done!