

ROUNDHOUSE

Film Fund Treatment Guide

What is a treatment?

A treatment is typically a 2 - 3 page document that defines the concept, summarizes the story, captures the emotion and pacing, and determines the creative approach of your video/film. The Roundhouse Film Fund application requires a concise summary of your treatment, which contains all these key elements.

The treatment is used to sell your concept and explain how the audience will experience your video/film. Your treatment is the foundation of the project, when someone reads it, they should be able to see and hear the video in their head. It's a good way to plan, visualise the style of the film and identify any potential sink holes. It's an important tool to generate interest and obtain funding, and also a good tool to help your crew understand what they need to achieve.

Language

Keep the language simple. Use of the present tense where possible, and avoid hyperbole. Be specific & direct — don't use words like may, might, or possibly— your film will do 'xyz'. Keep the writing tight and essential, but create vivid scenes that a reader can see and hear.

References

Help yourself with images, quotes, videos, film, or any reference that can help describe your video or film, and the experience that it will give your audience.

Step by Step:

Step One: Basic Information

First, gather together the basics of the project. What's the theme or central message? Who is the audience? What's the purpose of the video? What's the desired outcome (what do you want the viewer to do, think or feel?) What are you bringing that's new or different about this subject? What's the budget for the production? How long will the finished video or film be?

Step Two: The Concept

Create a "concept statement" - a very brief summary of the subject and purpose of the video or film. Include the main questions: what, who, why and how. The concept statement is the core message of the video, as defined by you or in response to what you're being asked to do ("the brief"). The core message doesn't change, but you can present it or "treat" it in many creative ways.

Step Three: Storyline

Remember to structure your story: beginning, middle, and end. Outline the storyline of your video. Give a synopsis of what will happen. Explain how will you present the content, how does it begin, why is it important, how will you tell it, how does it end.

Step Four: The Approach/Look

Once you've defined the core concept, think of different approaches and techniques you could use to reach your audience in a powerful way. What will get the response you want? What approach will grab the audience and make them watch, think, feel, commit? Be sure the approaches you choose are appropriate for the subject. As you develop your treatment, try to engage the senses of your audience.

What do we see? Don't just describe the images, describe the underlying emotion & use visual references. What do we hear? Don't just say "voice over." Describe the narrator's voice - authoritative, giddy, husky? Describe the background music genre, set the mood with background sounds - city street sounds, distant sirens, crickets chirping? There is no need to script the dialog or narration, but if you've got a particularly good line or slogan, include it. Otherwise, sum things up in a brief overview. If your production is a documentary — interviews, testimonials, be specific about what you'll shoot, which kind of characters/people will you interview and what they can bring to your concept.

Step Five: Technical Set Up

Outline and list the equipment/crew you will need to achieve your look. If there are any specific methods or equipment that you want to work with you should give arguments and visual references to support your idea. This planning will be a big help during your pre-production as it will form the basis of the tools you need to create your video technically. This will also give you an idea of the budget will you need for your production and therefore an invaluable tool to obtain funding.

Additional notes:

Extra information that you can include to support your treatment are; costs (budget), locations (if they are confirmed, do not make assumptions or mention a specific location that you haven't secured), set design plans if you already have the filming location, cast/interviewee details (if there are any particular characters that you want to work with or have already secured for the project), Script examples if you have anything written already, plus any other information that supports the treatment in its concept, approach or set up.

