Organizing the Production

In dramatic productions, a director has to pour it on six days a week and twelve hours a day.

Steven Spielberg

A lot of what is covered in this chapter is obvious, so obvious that many production people overlook these essentials in their initial enthusiasm—and their product is less effective.

TERMS

Arc: A camera move that moves around the subject in a circle, arc, or "horseshoe" path.

Empirical production method: The empirical method is where instinct and opportunity are the guides.

Goals: Broad concepts of what you want to accomplish with the program.

Objectives: Objectives are measurable goals. That means something that can be tested for, to see that the audience did understand and remember the key points of the program.

Planned production method: The planned method, which organizes and builds a program in carefully arranged steps.

Remote survey (Recce): A preliminary visit to a shooting location.

Shot sheet (shot card): A sheet, created by the director, that lists each shot needed from each individual camera operator. The shots are listed in order so that the camera operator can move from shot to shot with little direction from the director.

Site survey: See "remote survey."

Storyboard: The storyboard is simply a series of rough sketches that help you to visualize and to organize your camera treatment.

Art conceals craft

When watching a show on television, our thoughts normally center on the program material: the story line, the message, and the argument. We become interested in what people are saying, what they are doing, what they look like, and where they are. Unless we start to get bored or the technology becomes obtrusive, we are unlikely to concern ourselves with how the production is actually *made*.

We *believe* what we see. We respond to techniques but remain unaware of them unless they happen to distract us. We even accept the drama of the hero dying of thirst in the desert without wondering why the director, camera, and sound crew do not help him.

All this is fine until you begin to make programs yourself. You soon realize the gulf between watching and enjoying from the audience's point of view, and creating the illusion by the way the equipment is used

Shot selection

You cannot just point a camera at a scene and expect it to convey all the information and atmosphere that the on-the-spot observer would experience. A camera is inherently selective. It can only show certain limited aspects of a situation at any given time. If, for instance, you provide a wide shot of the entire field at a ball game, the audience will have an excellent view of the movement

patterns of teamwork, but the viewers will be unable to see for themselves who individuals are or to watch exactly how they are playing the game. A close-up shot gives details, even shows how a player is reacting to a foul, but prevents the audience from seeing the overall action at that time.

The problem of familiarity

There is an essential difference between the way any director looks at the program and how the audience reacts. That is not surprising when you stop to think about it. The director is completely familiar with the production and the circumstances in which it has been prepared. For example, let's say that the program is showing us a collection of priceless objects in a museum. There can be significant difference between the critical

reactions of an enthusiastic viewer seeing the program for the first time and the director's own reactions.

The problem of quality

When shooting pictures for pleasure, you can be philosophical if the odd shot happens to be slightly defocused, or lopsided, or cuts off part of the subject. It is a pity, but it doesn't really matter much. You can still enjoy the results. But when you are making a program for other people, any defects of this kind are unacceptable. They will give a production the reputation of carelessness, amateurishness, and incompetence so that it loses its appeal and authority. Faulty camerawork and poor techniques will not only distract your audience, but they can turn even a serious, well-thought-out production into a complete disaster.

The problem of "bigger and better"

How you tackle any program is directly influenced by your resources (equipment, finance, crew and their experience, etc.), time, conditions, standards, intended market, and so on. While there is no one correct way to handle any subject, there are a number of bad methods. Suppose you want to discuss the problems of growing a specific crop. You could make an impressive program using special computer graphics, an expert walking through the crops speaking of problems, aerial views of the fields, and time-lapse demonstrations. However, this treatment could be expensive and time consuming. Alternatively, you could use a simpler approach. The camera could explore a typical field and show the program title finger-traced in the earth. It could look at typical crop features, with close-ups of specimens. A commentary could provide an explanatory voiceover to pictures. If any additional sounds are required, they could be the natural ones, such as wind, birds, or tractors, recorded as a wild track at the site. "Bigger is better" does not necessarily translate into greater audience appeal. Sometimes it distracts

viewers from the real subject itself and draws their attention to the clever techniques instead. The treatment must be appropriate for the target audience and the program content.

Communication can be elusive

There are no absolute rules when creating a production, but there are a lot of well-established guiding principles. These principles have been discovered through years of experience. Occasionally a director can deliberately ignore these guides and create an interesting or unusual effect. However, you must be careful because the audience response may not turn out as you hoped. The human mind is great at seeing relationships, even when there aren't any. We all spend our time interpreting the world about us, frequently seeing meanings or significance where there is none. In an experimental film made up of a random series of close-up stills from magazine covers, the disjointed fragments of buildings, foliage, and objects appeared on the screen as patches of color, progressive patterns, and geometric forms.

Start with an idea (concept)

It is unlikely that you will suddenly decide, out of the blue, to make a video program on a specific subject. Something has triggered the idea. Perhaps you heard of an interesting incident that gave you the idea for a narrative. Maybe a local store asked you to make a point-of-sales video to help the home handyman. Here is how to start with the project: You know the subject to be covered (in principle at least), what the program is to be used for, and who the audience for the program will be. The next question you should probably ask is, "How long should it be?" It is important to know if the client wants a two-hour epic or a two-minute video loop.

Determine how the audience is going to relate to this program. If it is one of a series, don't go over the same material again unless it requires revision. There is also the chance that the viewer may not see the other videos in the series

Goals and objectives

What do you really want your audience to know after they have viewed your production? The answer to this question is essential because it guides the entire production process. The goals and objectives will determine what is used as a measuring stick throughout the production process. Goals are broad concepts of what you want to accomplish:

Goal: I want to explain how to field a Formula One racing team.

Objectives are measurable goals. That means something that can be tested for to see that the audience did understand and remember the key points of the program. Take the time to think through what the audience should know after seeing your program:

Objectives: When the viewers finish watching the program they should be able to do the following:

■ Identify three types of sponsorship

■ Identify four crew positions

■ Identify two scheduling issues

All three of these are objectives because they are measurable. The number of objectives is determined by the goals. This means that sometimes only one objective is needed, other times five may be required. Target audience Whether your program is a video "family album" or a lecture on nuclear physics, it is essential to determine whom the program is for and its chief purpose:

■ Who is the viewing audience?

■ Is it for the general public, for specialist groups, or for a local group?

■ At what level is it required: basic, intermediate, or advanced?

■ Is any specific background, qualification, language, or group experience necessary for the audience?

■ Are there specific production styles that this audience favors?

The target audience should determine your program's coverage and style. It is self-evident that the sort of program you would make for a group of content experts would differ from a program made for young children. The conditions under which the audience is going to watch the program are important too. Most video programs are not made to be

broadcast. They are viewed as DVDs or even streamed in homes, classrooms, corporate offices, and many other locations. The wise director tries to anticipate these conditions, for they can considerably affect the way the program is produced:

■ How and where is your audience going to see the program? Will they be a seated group of students watching a large screen in a darkened classroom?

■ Will the viewer be watching a streamed video off of the Internet while at the office?

■ Or will the program be viewed on an iPod while riding in a car?

If the program will be viewed in direct daylight, directors may want to avoid dark or low-key scenes. The images displayed on many receivers/monitors in daylight can be poor quality. Tonal gradation can be coarse, lighter tones block-off, smaller lettering bleeds and actually may be indecipherable, color is often either paled out or overemphasized. All this is frequently due to incorrect monitor adjustment, as viewers try to get the brightest possible picture. Try to anticipate the problems for an audience watching a distant picture monitor. Long shots have correspondingly little impact. Closer shots are essential since they add emotion and drama. Small lettering means nothing on a small distant screen. To improve the visibility of titles, charts, maps, etc., keep details basic, and limit the information. If your target audience may be watching on an iPod or other very small video screen device, directors should lean more toward more closeups than usual since the long shots may not be as discernable on the small screen. Here are a number of reminder questions that can help you to anticipate your audience's problems:

■ Does the program rely on previously established knowledge? How much is known about the subject already?

■ Does the program relate to other programs in a series?

■ Does the audience need to be reminded of earlier programs?

■ Is the audience going to see the program individually or in a group?

■ Are they only watching the program once, from the beginning, or as a continuous loop?

■ Can they see the program as often as they want, including stopping and replaying sections?

■ Will viewers watch the program straight through, or will it be stopped after sections,

for discussion?

■ Will there be any accompanying supporting material (maps, graphs, or statistics) to which the audience can refer? (You cannot expect viewers to hold detailed data in their heads as they follow the program's argument.)

■ Will there be other competing, noisy attractions as they watch (such as might occur at an exhibition)?

■ Will the program soon be out of date?

■ Is the program for a formal occasion, or will a certain amount of careful humor be useful?

■ Are there time limits for the program?

■ Will the program need to be updated with fresh material on an ongoing basis? If so, what is the schedule? Research For some programs, such as documentaries, news, or interviews, the production team must conduct research in order to create the program's content or make sure the existing content is accurate. This research may be going to the library, doing online research, or contacting recognized experts in the content area. Travel may even be required. It is important to remember that research is time consuming and may impact the production budget. This is especially true if a content expert wants an appearance fee or if flights and lodging are included for the crew or guest.

Covering the subject

The kind of subject that is being covered, who makes up the audience, and the content that needs to be featured will influence how the camera is utilized in the program, where it concentrates, how close the shots are, and how varied they are. Here are some of the areas that the director needs to think through:

■ What content areas need to be covered?

■ Is the subject (person or object) best seen from specific angles?

■ Would the addition of graphics help the audience understand the content?

■ Will it be possible to watch a preliminary noncamera rehearsal, so that the best

viewpoints and shots can be determined?

■ How will I give the talent and crew the vision and goals for the production and then help them know what they can do to help us attain these goals?

■ Would it help to create a shot list for each camera operator? A shot list is a description of each shot needed, listed in order, so that the operator can move from shot to shot with little instruction from the director. Other camera operator supports may include team rosters to help the operator find a specific player for the director.

Production methods

Great ideas are not enough. Ideas have to be worked out in realistic, practical terms. They have to be expressed as images and sounds. In the end, as the director you have to decide what the camera is going to shoot and what your audience is going to hear. Where do you start?

There are two quite different methods of approaching video production:

■ The empirical method is where instinct and opportunity are the guides.

■ The planned method, which organizes and builds a program in carefully arranged steps.

The empirical approach

Directors following the empirical approach get an idea, then they look around for subjects and situations that relate to it. After shooting possible material, they later create a program from whatever they have found. Their inspiration springs from the opportunities that have arisen. An example would be that the director decides to make a program about safety at sea. Using the empirical approach, the director might go to a marina and develop a production based on the stories heard there. Or the director might discuss the idea with the lifeguards and decide to follow an entirely different plan. The director might also visit a commercial dock and discover material there of an entirely different kind. After accumulating a collection of interesting sequences (atmospheric shots, natural sound, interviews, etc.), the director reviews the content and puts it into a meaningful order. He or she then creates a program that fits the accumulated material, probably writing a

commentary as a voiceover to match the edited pictures. At best, this approach is fresh and uninhibited, improvises, makes use of the unexpected, avoids rigid discipline, and is adaptable. Shots are interestingly varied. The audience is kept alert, watching and interpreting the changing scene. At worst, the result of such shot hunting is a haphazard disaster, with little cohesion or sense of purpose. Because the approach is unsystematic, gaps and overlaps abound. Good coherent editing may be difficult. Opportunities may have been missed. The director usually relies heavily on the voiceover to try to provide any sort of relationship and continuity between the images.

The planned approach

The planned method of production approaches the problem quite differently, although the results on the screen may be similar. In this situation, the director works out, in advance, the exact form he or she wants the program to take and then creates it accordingly. Fundamentally, you can do either of the following:

■ Begin with the environment or setting, and decide how the cameras can be positioned to get the most effective shots.

■ Envision certain shots or the effects you want to see, and create a setting that will provide those results.

A lot will depend on whether you are

■ Interpreting an existing script (as in drama). This will involve analyzing the script, examining the storyline and the main action in each scene, and visualizing individual shots. or

■ Building a treatment framework. This will involve considering how you are going to present a specific program subject and working out the kinds of shots you want. At best, the planned approach is a method in which a crew can be coordinated to give their best. There is a sense of systematic purpose throughout the project. Problems are largely ironed out before they develop. Production is based on what is feasible. The program can have a smooth-flowing, carefully thought-out, persuasive style. At worst, the production

becomes bogged down in organization. The program can be stodgy, routine, and lack originality. Opportunities are ignored because they were not part of the original scheme and would modify it. The result could be a disaster. In reality, the experienced director uses a combination of the planned and the empirical approaches, starting off with a plan and then taking advantage of any opportunities that become available.

Storyboards

Directors need to think through each scene in their minds so that they can then capture the images and turn them into a storyboard. The storyboard is simply a series of rough sketches; these sketches help the director to visualize and organize the camera treatment. The storyboard is a visual map of how the director hopes to arrange the key shots for each scene or action sequence. As a director, you will find that the storyboard can be a valuable aid, in whatever manner you are going to shoot the action:

■ Continuously, from start to finish

■ In sections or scenes (one complete action sequence at a time)

■ As a series of separate shots or "action segments," each showing a part of the sequence

Storyboards can be designed a number of different ways. There are software programs that assist the director in visualizing ideas; someone can roughly sketch them out or a storyboard artist can create detailed drawings that can even be animated to show during the fund-raising period. To begin, draw a grid of frames in the appropriate aspect ratio. Now, imagine your way through the first scene, roughly sketching the composition for each shot. You don't have to be able to draw well to produce a successful storyboard. Even the crudest scribbles can help you organize your thoughts and show other people what you are trying to do. If the action is complicated, you might need a couple of frames to show how a shot develops. In our example, the whole scene is summarized in five frames. Let's look at a simple story line to see how the storyboard provides you with imaginative opportunities (see the storyboard sidebar, "Analyzing Action").

There are dozens of ways to shoot this brief sequence. You could simply follow her all the way from her home, watching as she crosses the road, enters the post office, goes up to the counter. The result would be totally boring.

Let's think again. We know from the previous scene where she is going and why. All we really want to register are her reactions as she buys the stamp. So let's cut out all the superfluous footage and concentrate on that moment.

1. The child arrives at the counter, and looks up at the clerk.
2. Hesitatingly, she asks for the stamp.
3. She opens her fingers to hand the money to the clerk.
4. The clerk smiles, takes the money, and pulls out the stamp book.
5. A close shot of the clerk tearing the stamp from a sheet.

You now have a sequence of shots, far more interesting than a continuous "follow-shot." It stimulates the imagination. It guides the audience's thought processes. It has a greater overall impact. However, if this type of treatment is carried out badly, the effect can look disjointed, contrived, and posed. It is essential that the treatment matches the style and theme of the subject. You could have built the whole sequence with dramatic camera angles, strong music, and effects. But would it have been appropriate? If the audience knows that a bomb is ticking away in a parcel beneath the counter, it might have been. It is all too easy to overdramatize or "pretty up" a situation (such as star filters producing multi-ray patterns around highlights, diffusion filters for misty effects). Because so much is now done in postproduction, resist the temptation. This breakdown has not only helped you to visualize the picture treatment, but you begin to think about how one shot is going to lead into the next. You start to deal with practicalities. You see, for example, that shots 1 and 3 are taken from the front of the counter, and shots 2, 4, and 5 need to be taken from behind it. Obviously, the most logical approach is to shoot the sequence out of order. The storyboard becomes a shooting plan. To practice "storyboarding," review a motion picture carefully, making a sketch of each key shot. This way, you will soon get into the habit of thinking in picture sequences rather than in isolated shots.

Why plan?

Some people find the idea of planning restrictive. They want to get on with the shooting. For them, planning somehow turns the thrill of the unexpected into an organized commitment. But many situations must be planned and worked out in advance. Directors need to get permission to shoot on private property, to make appointments to interview people, and to arrange admissions, among other tasks. They might occasionally have success if they arrive unannounced, but do not assume this. However, directors also need to be prepared to take advantage of unexpected opportunities. It is worth taking advantage of the unexpected, even if you decide not to use it later.

The three stages of production

Most programs go through three main stages:

1. Planning and preparation. The preliminaries, preparation, organization, and rehearsal before the production begins. Ninety percent of the work on a production usually goes into the planning and preparation phase.
2. Production. Actual shooting the production.
3. Post-production. Editing, additional treatment, and duplication. The nature of the subject will influence the amount of work needed at each stage. A production that involves a series of straightforward “personality” interviews is generally a lot easier to organize than one on Arctic exploration or a historical drama. But in the end, a great deal depends on how the director decides to approach the subject. Working at the highest quality, directors can create incredible programming by using simple methods. Treatment does not have to be elaborate to make its point. If a woman in the desert picks up her water bottle, finds it empty, and then the camera shows a patch of damp sand where it rested, the shot has told us a great deal without any need for elaboration. A single look or a gesture can often have a far stronger impact than lengthy dialog that attempts to show how two people feel about each other. It is important to understand the complexity of the

production. Some ideas seem simple enough but can be difficult or impossible to carry out. Others look very difficult or impracticable but are easily achieved on the screen.

Coverage

What do you want to cover in the available time? How much is reasonable to cover in that time? If there are too many topics, it will not be possible to do justice to any of them. If there are too few, the program can seem slow and labored. There is nothing to be gained by packing the program full of facts, for although they may sound impressive, audiences rarely remember more than a fraction of them. Unlike the printed page, on video the viewer cannot refer back to check an item, unless the program is designed to be stopped and rewound or is frequently repeated.

Building an outline

Next you will need to prepare the program outline. This begins with a series of headings showing the main themes that need to be discussed. If we use the example of an instructional video about building a wall, the topics we may cover could include tools needed, materials, foundation, making mortar, method of laying bricks, and pointing. We can now determine how much program time to devote to each topic. Some will be brief and others relatively lengthy. While we will need to emphasize some of the topics, we will skip over others to suit the purpose of the program. The next stage is to take each of the topic headings and note the various aspects that need to be covered as a series of subheadings. Under “tools,” for instance, each tool that must be demonstrated should be listed. Now there is a structure for the program, and the director can begin to see the form it is likely to take.

Broad treatment

The next stage in the planning process will be to decide how to approach each subheading in the outline. Remember, you are still thinking things through. At this stage, the idea may even need to be altered, further developed, shortened, or even dropped altogether. This is a question-and-answer process. Let’s imagine the situation:
What is the topic, and what is its purpose?

It is discussing “animal hibernation in winter.”

How will you approach it?

It would be nice to show a bear preparing its den for hibernation and settling down. Show the hard winter weather with the animal asleep. Later, show the bear waking up in the spring and foraging. And do all of this with a commentary.

■ This is a good idea, but where are the pictures coming from?

■ Do you have any?

■ Are you using a film library’s services?

■ Does the library have that sort of material?

Let’s say that we cannot afford to obtain the pictures. We need to find a less expensive method. You could have an illustrated discussion or a commentary over still photographs and drawings (graphics, artwork). That could be boring, a little like a slide show. Not necessarily, for you could explore the still photographs with the camera, panning or tilting the camera across the photographs. The key is to keep the shots brief and add sound effects and possibly even music. How do you find bear photographs that you can use? You could take the photographs yourself in the wild or at a museum or zoo. Stills can also come from books (with permission), online stock photo agencies, or the private collections of photographers. Note how each decision leads to another development. For example, if you decide that you are going to shoot photographs at a zoo, you then have to figure out how, when, and where you are going to get these shots. You have to figure out how the zoo needs to be lit. Will the glass cage cause reflection problems? Can you get the viewpoint you need? You may not be able to decide at this point, but you will have to do some research to see how feasible each specific idea is.

Production research

There are, in fact, several stages during the creation of a program when you will probably need more information before you can go on to the next step. “Research” might amount to nothing more than hearing that Uncle David has a friend who has a stuffed bear that he

would lend you for the program. Additional opportunities and problems will be discovered as research is being completed. Sometime those opportunities and problems will even alter the outcome of the project.

Lists can be daunting, but here are reminders of typical areas you may need to look into in the course of planning your production.

The Idea	The exploratory process: — Find sources of information on the subject (people, books, and publications). — Arrange to consult these sources. — Accumulate data. — Select material that is relevant and appropriate to the idea. — Determine whom the program is for. — What is the purpose of the program? — Does it have to relate to an existing program? (Are there specific levels or standards that must be adhered to?) — Does the program need to be a specific length? — Coordinate ideas into an outline with headings and subheadings. — Consider the program development, forming a rough script or a shooting script.
Practicality	Consider the ideas in practical terms: — What does the viewer actually need to see and hear at each point in the program? — Where can the program be shot? — What sort of props are needed for each sequence (items, furnishings)? — How should the scene be arranged? (Action in broad outline.) — What talent (people in front of the camera) are needed for the program?
The Equipment	What is needed to shoot the program: — Single camera or multi-camera? — What equipment, beyond the camera(s), will be required to make the production a success? — Is equipment owned, can it be borrowed or does it need to be rented?
Feasibility	Check what is really involved: — Are the ideas and treatment being developed reasonable for the available resources? — Is there another way of achieving similar results more easily, more cheaply, more quickly, or with less labor? — Can the needed items be acquired? — Are the locations available and affordable? — Is there sufficient time to do research, organize, rehearse, shoot, and edit the production? *Costs*: — What is the budget? — How will you arrange to research possible costs for a sequence before including it in the production? — Is it possible to obtain advance payment for expenses? — Are advance payments required for some services and purchases?

	Assistance: — Will you need assistance, manpower, expert aid or advice, extra transport, etc., to do the job? — What talent is involved (amateur, professional, casual)? — Do you need professional services (to make items, service, prepare graphics, etc.)? *Facilities*: — Are there facilities available that are sufficient for the anticipated shooting requirements and the post-production work? — Will additional facilities be needed to augment the existing facilities? *Problems*: — What might be the impact of major problems such as weather on each sequence of the production? — Is there any obvious danger factor (shooting a cliff climbing sequence)? — Will the situation you need be available at the time the program needs to be shot (snow in summer)? *Time*: — Is there sufficient time to shoot the sequence? — What backup plans must you make to protect the production in case serious problems arise? For example, instead of taking a couple of hours to shoot a scene, it might take two days with an overnight stay if things go wrong (high wind, rain, noise, etc.).
Administration	Various business arrangements and agreements: — Obtain permission to shoot, passes, permits, fees, and so on. — Obtain copyright clearances, if using music, copying photographs, and so on. — Insurance may be necessary to cover losses, breakage, injury, and so on. — Union agreements may need to be followed. — Contractual arrangements may be needed for the talent, crew, equipment, transportation, scenery, props, costumes, and editing suite. — Arrange for transportation, accommodation, food, and storage. — Return borrowed/hired items.

Remote surveys (recce)

Fundamentally, there are two types of shooting conditions: at your base and on location. Your base is wherever you normally shoot. It may be a studio, theater, room, or even a stadium. The base is where you know exactly what facilities are available (equipment, supplies, and scenery), where things are, the amount of room available, and so on. If you need to supplement what is there, you can usually do so easily.

Checklist: The Remote Survey

The amount of detail needed about a location varies with the type and style of the production. Information that may seem trivial at the time can prove valuable later in the production process. Location sites can be interiors, covered exteriors, or open-air sites. Each has its own problems.

Sketches	■ Prepare rough maps of route to site that can ultimately be distributed to the crew and talent (include distance, travel time). ■ Prepare a rough layout of the site (room plan, etc.). ■ Outline anticipated camera location(s). ■ Designate parking locations for truck (if needed) and staff vehicles.
Contact & Schedule Information	■ Get location contact information from primary and secondary location contacts, site custodian, electrician, engineer, and security; this includes office and cell phones as well as e-mail. ■ If access credentials are required for the site, obtain the procedure and contact information. ■ Obtain the event schedule (if one exists), and find out if there are rehearsals that you can attend.
Camera Locations	■ Check around the location for the best camera angles. ■ What type of camera mount will be required (tripod, Steadicam, etc.)? ■ If a multicamera production, cable runs must be measured to ensure that there is enough camera cable available. ■ What lens will be required on the camera at each location to obtain the needed shot? ■ Are there any obstructions or distractions (e.g., large signs, reflections)? ■ Do you anticipate any obvious problems in shooting? Anything dangerous?
Lighting	■ Will the production be shot in daylight? How will the light change throughout the day? Does the daylight need to be augmented with reflectors or lights? ■ Will the production be shot in artificial light? (If so, will you use theirs, yours, or a combination of the two?) Will they be on at the time you are shooting? ■ What are your estimates for the number of lamps, positions, power needed, supplies, and cabling required?
Audio	■ What type of microphones will be needed? ■ Any potential problems with acoustics (such as a strong wind rumble)? ■ Any extraneous sounds (elevators, phones, heating/air conditioning, machinery, children, aircraft, birds, etc.)? ■ Required microphone cable lengths must be determined.
Safety	■ Are there any safety issues that you need to be aware of?
Power	■ What level of power is available, and what type of power will you need? This will differ greatly between single-camera and multicamera production. ■ What type of power connectors are required?

Communications	■ Are radios needed? How many? ■ How many cell phones are needed? ■ If it is a multicamera production, what type of intercom and how many headsets are required?
Logistics	■ Is there easy access to the location? At any time, or at certain times only? Are there any traffic problems? ■ What kind of transportation is needed for talent and crew? ■ What kind of catering is needed? How many meals? How many people? ■ Are accommodations needed (where, when, how many)? ■ If the weather is bad, are there alternative positions/locations available? ■ Has a phone number list been prepared for police, fire, doctor, hotel, and local (delivery) restaurants? ■ What kind of first-aid services need to be available? (Is a first-aid kit sufficient, or does an ambulance need to be on-site?) ■ Is location access restricted? Do you need to get permission (or keys) to enter the site? From whom? ■ What insurance is needed (against damage or injury)?
Security	■ Are local police required to handle crowds or just the public in general? ■ What arrangements need to be made for security of personal items, equipment, props, etc.)? ■ Do streets need to be blocked?

A location is anywhere away from your normal shooting site. It may just be outside the building or way out in the country. It could be in a vehicle, down in a mine, or in someone's home. Your main concern when shooting away from your base is to find out what you are going to deal with in advance. It is important to be prepared. The preliminary visit to a location is generally called a remote survey, site survey, or location survey. It can be anything from a quick look around to a detailed survey of the site. What you fi nd during the survey may influence the planned production treatment.

Freedom to plan

In practice, how far you can plan a production depends on how much control you have of the situation. If shooting a public event, planning may consist of finding out what is going on, deciding on the best visual opportunities, selecting camera locations, and so forth. The director may have little or no opportunity to adjust events to suit his or her production ideas.

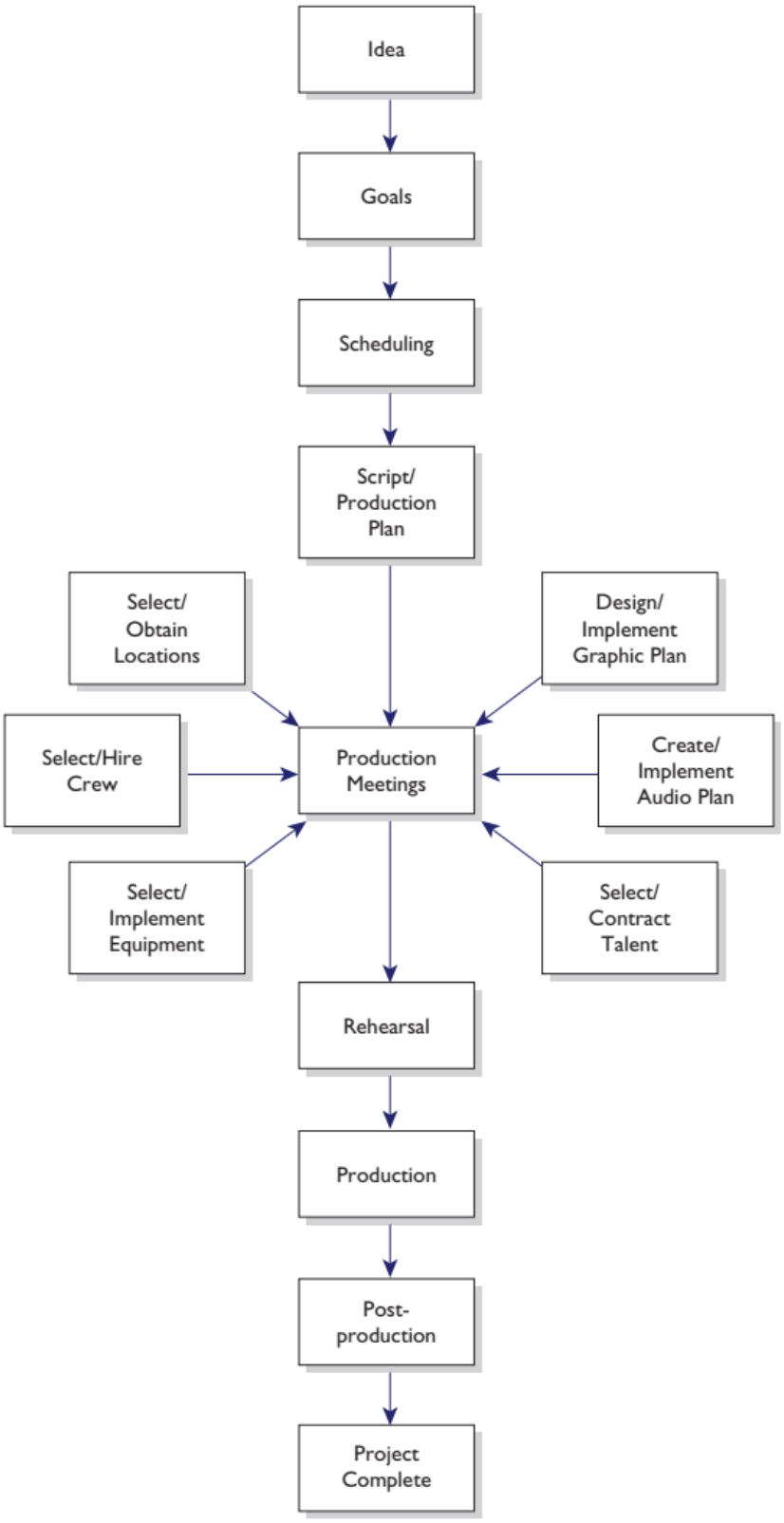

FIGURE 3.20
During the flow of the video production process, the production meetings provide a forum for all parties involved in the production to hear the vision, share ideas, and communicate issues.

If, on the other hand, the situation is entirely under the director's control, he or she can arrange the situation to fi t the production's specific needs. Having planned the ideas, the director can then organize the elements of the production and explain the concept to the other people involved (Figure 3.20).

Single camera shooting

When shooting with a single camera, the director is usually in one of two situations:

■ Planning in principle and shooting as opportunity allows. For example, the director intends on taking shots of local wildlife; but what is actually shot will depend on what the crew finds at the location (Figure 3.21).

■ Detailed analysis and shot planning. This approach is widely used in filmmaking. Here the action in a scene is reviewed and then broken down into separate shots. Each shot is rehearsed and recorded independently. Where action is continuous throughout several shots, it is repeated for each camera viewpoint.

■ Shot 1. Long shot: An actor walks away from camera toward a wall mirror.

■ Shot 2. Medium shot: The actor repeats the action, approaching the camera located beside the mirror.

■ Shot 3. Close-up shot: The actor repeats the walk as the camera shoots into the mirror, watching his expression as he approaches. When edited together, the action should appear continuous. It's essential to keep the continuity of shots in mind throughout. It is regular practice to shoot the complete action in one long shot and then take close-up shots separately. These individual shots can then be relit for maximum visual effect. Even when a person is supposedly speaking to someone else, it is quite usual to shoot the person alone, repeating a speech to the camera, to allow the camera to be placed in the best possible position.

Multicamera shooting

When shooting with two or more cameras, a director tends to think in terms of effective

viewpoints rather than specific shots. The results may be similar, but the strategy is different; cameras need to be positioned to catch various aspects of the continuous action (Figure 3.22).

When planning a multicamera production, directors have to consider a variety of situations:

■ Will one camera come into another camera's shot?

■ Is there time for cameras to move to various positions?

■ What kinds of shots does the script dictate?

■ How will the microphones and lighting relate to the cameras' movements (visible mics or shadows cast by the boom pole, etc.)?

Copyright

Whenever material prepared and created by other people is used—a piece of music, a sound recording, videotape, film, a picture in a book, a photograph, and so on—the producers/directors are required to pay a fee to the copyright holders or an appropriate organization operating on their behalf, for copyright clearance. The copyright law is complex and varies among countries, but basically it protects the originators from having their work copied without permission. You cannot, for example, prepare a video program with music dubbed from a commercial recording, with inserts from television programs, magazine photographs, advertisements, and so on without the permission of the respective copyright owners. The owners will probably require you to pay use fees, and these fees will depend on the purpose and use of the program. Some of the exceptions to this policy occur when the program is only to be seen within the home or used in a class assignment that will not be seen by the public. In most cases, the copyright can be traced through the source of the material needed for the production (the publisher of a book or photograph). Agreements take various forms. They may be restricted or limited. A license and/or a fee may need to be paid for using the material. For music and sound effects, directors are usually required to pay a royalty fee per use, or it may be possible to buy the rights to use an item or a package (“buyout method”).

Contracts

Whenever you hire talent (actors, talent, and musicians) or use services (such as a scaffolding company), contractual agreements arise. Union agreements may also be involved. So before you commit in any way, find out exactly what is entailed both financially and legally. Apart from general shots, whenever you want to shoot in the street, it is wise to let the local police know in advance. Productions may cause an obstruction or break local laws. If you are going to be shooting footage of people, you are required to get their permission in writing (with their name and address) on a talent release form (Table 3.3). While terminology varies, depending on the purpose of the

production and the nature of the actor's contribution, the release form generally authorizes the director to use the individual's performance—free or for a fee.

Table 3.3 Sample Talent Release Form

Talent Name: _____

Video Project Title: _____

I hereby consent for value received and without further consideration or compensation to the use (full or in part) of all videotapes taken of me and/or recordings made of my voice and/or written extraction, in whole or in part, of such recordings or musical performance for the purposes of broadcast, cybercast, or distribution in any manner by _____ (production company name).

Location: _____ Date: _____

Talent's or legal guardian's signature: _____

Address: _____ City: _____

State: _____ Zip code: _____ Date: ___/___/___