

Pre-Production Planning Document (Mini Doc)

GENERAL INFO

1. **Your Name:** John Rudolph
2. **PROJECT:** Mini Documentary – Small Staff

CREATIVE BRIEF

1. What must it be?

This video will be a short “mockumentary” about growing a graphic design studio in today’s competitive job market. It will provide a fictional peek into my personal reservations about making Map Agency bigger.

2. Who is it for?

The humorous video will be shared on social media for current family, friends, and clients during the holidays.

3. How long must it be?

A shareable documentary of this type should be no longer 3 minutes.

4. What is your objective with the piece?

The main objective of this piece is to provide a lighthearted holiday video during a stressful time of year. Secondly, it will serve as a self-promotion video.

5. When is it due?

The creative brief and initial script are due Sunday, December 7th. The final mini documentary video is due Sunday, December 14th.

6. What is the overall idea?

The overall idea of this mini mockumentary is this: it’s not the size of the design studio that matters, it’s the attention to detail, the quality of the work, and, above all, the relationships we build.

7. What is the storyline summary?

The mockumentary begins with the narrator explaining how he built Map Agency with growth in mind. As the client list continues to grow, creative staff is needed to support newfound demand. Agencies are really built around culture, but that it can be difficult to manage a large company, so he has decided to start with a “small staff.” The ironic twist comes when John reveals that his recent hires are kids — his seven-year-old daughter and eight-year-old son. Through short interviews with the narrator and the two new designers, deeper insights are revealed about John’s fear that the business has grown “too big.” Office interactions highlight John’s personal approach to design, and the humorous interactions with his young new employees. He questions his recent business decisions but, in the end, it’s revealed that the future of design looks bright.

8. Elevator pitch:

Many businesses today are designed to grow, but scaling too quickly often results in a loss of creative culture. In this mockumentary, by founder John Rudolph, a humorous revelation is made when viewers discover his new hires turn out to be his young children. Their playful demands highlight the challenges of balancing design integrity with expansion. The key takeaway is that smaller studios can deliver just as creative solutions as their bigger, and more expensive, competitors.

9. Tagline:

Map Agency may be a small design studio, but they deliver really big ideas.

10. Look and feel description (including “pacing”):

This mockumentary is striving to achieve the look and feel of “The Office,” though less banal and without the camera movement. The direct-to-camera interviews will mimic that of an actual documentary, while the relatively flat lighting will make it look like a usual office setting. Brick walls, plants, colorful printouts, and office décor will reflect the setting of a creative studio.

QUESTIONS / NOTES

SUBJECT:

1. Why did you choose this story?

In the TED presentation, “The Clues to a Great Story,” filmmaker Andrew Stanton says to “use what you know, and draw from it. It doesn’t always mean plot or fact. It means capturing your truth from experiencing it.” That’s what I intend to do with this fun mockumentary, because I know how funny and ridiculous office culture can be. And, as Michael Moore admits, “Laughter is a way, first of all, to alleviate the pain of what you know to be the truth. And if we’re trying to be truth tellers as filmmakers, then for God’s sake, what is wrong with giving the audience a spoonful of sugar to help the medicine go down?”

2. Story ideas:

- Samantha and Owen drawing concepts at the white board.
- Office meeting is held to review job list, but kids bring Christmas wish lists instead.
- Kids act as “hovering art directors” over my shoulder, critiquing the work.
- Owen “multi-tasking,” or reading Dogman while clicking the mouse at his computer.

NARRATION/HOST:

1. Who will lead us through the piece?

I will lead the viewer through the mockumentary, as narrator and interviewer.

2. Narration Ideas:

My narration will act as voiceover during the scenes of the employees doing their jobs. The idea is to describe what they are doing like a documentarian, and the humor will come from kids acting as design professionals. The tone of voice should be obviously sarcastic.

INTERVIEWS:

1. Who will you interview?

The two new employees, my kids, will be interviewed as if a documentary is being made about the office.

2. Why is this person important to the piece.

The kids provide different perspectives about what happens in the office and ironically seem like industry experts.

3. What questions will you ask?

What do you like about working at Map Agency?

What do you think about the state of design?

What’s on your plate for this week?

4. What follow-up questions might be important.

Describe a typical day at work.

What do you think about your boss?

Who are some of the designers that influence your work?

B-ROLL

1. What B-Roll visuals will be important to convey the story? Keep in mind you should show what the interviewees are talking about.

B-Roll footage will be of the kids/employees coming to the office and getting to work. While they will be doing adult activities, like designing a logo, they might be coloring with Crayons, or playing games on their iPad, or singing into the lav mic.

2. Any still images or charts or graphics.

Perhaps a still of the kids' work on the white board, but no graphics will be needed.

3. Is the natural sound of the environment important? If so, be sure to record it properly.

Background music is always playing at the office, so finding appropriate stock will be important.

4. B-Roll Ideas:

Closeup of a kid's hand on the mouse.

Pan of Christmas list, instead of job list.

Small feet wearing Crocs entering the office.

Closeup of kid's book in front of computer.

MUSIC:

1. What is overall "mood" and "feel" of the piece?

Prolonged pauses and general white noise will help create the awkwardness achieved in "The Office," though I do think music will also help indicate a change in scene. In each case, the music will add to a sense of humor, or maybe even ensuing chaos.

2. Music track ideas:

- Heave Metal: <https://stock.adobe.com/search/audio?k=353750140>
- In the Middle of the Show: <https://stock.adobe.com/search/audio?k=471927726>
- Fun Show Opener: <https://stock.adobe.com/search/audio?k=1454372667>
- The show is not over yet: <https://stock.adobe.com/search/audio?k=471927953>

PERMISSIONS:

1. Am I allowed to film here? Do I need permission and/or a permit?

I am the lease owner, and have the appropriate liability insurance.

2. Will any people be in my shots? Do I need permission and/or release forms?

I'm the only one who will be in any shot.

GENERAL:

1. What gear do I need to pack and bring with me for the shoot?

DSLR camera, tripod, 3-point lighting, sandbags, lens, camera battery charger, extra memory card, lav mics.

2. How will I transport everything and keep it safe?

All of my equipment is on-site, ready for action.

3. Are there any potential hazards or complications at this location?

It's a rather small office, so positioning the backlighting might be tricky. Also, there are very few wall outlets, so extra power strips will be needed.

SCRIPT

Name: John Rudolph

Title: Growing Pains / The Perks of a Small Agency

<u>VIDEO</u>	<u>AUDIO</u>
Int. Office Room #1 MS of John, the narrator.	(Fade in ambient audio) *Casual* VO: There are definitely perks to having a small design studio — I get to work directly with all of my clients, for example.
MS or pan of office. CU of shoes entering office doorway.	(Fade in ambient audio – meeting conversation) VO: But we had great year at Map Agency, and the new business presents a unique opportunity to grow.
CU of hand on mouse. CU of hands typing.	(Fade in rock music – few seconds) VO: So I recently made the big decision to... hire a small staff.
MS of kids' heads peeking around computer.	
Quick cut to MS of kids' drawing at white board.	(Loud rock music – few seconds) (SFX: kids laughing)
Quick cut to MS of kids' drawing at white board.	
Int. Office Room #2 MS of Office meeting.	(Lower music to background) VO: Okay so what's on your to-do list this week? Samantha: Looks like I have a new Labubu, an iPad, Mini Brands...
CU of Samantha looking serious.	(SFX: record scratch) *Annoyed*
MS of Samantha giggling.	VO (cutting her off): Hold on... Is this the job sheet, or your Christmas list?
Int. Office Room #1 MS of John, the narrator and stand up.	*Casual* VO: It's not that the new generation of designers don't care. In fact, they're incredibly detail oriented and opinionated.
Cut to MS of kids hovering over shoulder behind computer.	Samantha and Owen: Can you try green? Move it over there! Can we add animation? Let's make the logo bigger!
CU of narrator looking annoyed.	(music cue: "heavy metal riff")
MS of piggyback at white board.	VO: They're extremely collaborative.

Over shoulder shot of Samantha multi-tasking with book and headphones at computer.	VO: Can multitask. (SFX: keyboard tapping)
MS of Owen on stool at standup desk.	VO: They're problem solvers.
MS of Samantha scribbling with Crayons.	VO: And great designers.
Int. Office Room #1 MS of interview with Samantha.	VO: What do you like about working at Map Agency? Samantha: I get to draw every single day. Like, that's my job. (Will have to see how she answers.)
MS of Samantha drawing on whiteboard.	
MS of interview with Owen.	VO: What do you like about being a designer?
Owen taking a nap at desk.	Owen: Creative problem solving is my passion. (Will have to see how he answers.)
Int. Office Room #1 MS of John, the narrator.	*Casual* VO: Do I have any regrets? Like, should I have gone bigger?
Cut to Samantha taking sip out of coffee cup.	*Long pause* VO: I'm not sure...
Cut to Owen drawing on iPad.	VO: They've become like family to me.
Closeup of kids working together.	*More energetic* Besides, it's really hard to fire people with the job market today. I think I'll keep them around for a while. I like keeping things small.
MS of John, the narrator. Kids enter frame.	Samantha: Dad can we go home now??? (Fade music up) (Fade to black)