**WORKING TO A BRIEF**

Introduction

In this assignment I will consider different types of briefs and the structures within the media industry. When working with a client in any industry you are provided with a brief which gives instructions on what the client wants from the provider. It is important to understand what the client’s intentions are and be aware of different types of briefs. I will explore the most common types of briefs, tenders, commissions, contracts and competitions and provide examples of these.

The Importance of Understanding The Brief

Understanding what the client wants from any project is paramount. It is important not just to read the document provided but discuss the project with the client and explore in depth what they want to achieve from the project. You may also need to speak to others to gain further understanding of the project or themes and possibly even take into account issues which may affect the legality an emotive topic or theme.

An Informal Brief

This type of brief is one which I have most experience of so far. I have been involved in the production of a piece of film for a client which did not have any formal written guidelines or contract. We simply met to discuss the client’s ideas, explored the opportunities available and came to a verbal agreement to produce a short piece of film to be used on a social media site to promote an event. Things we agreed upon were the content of the film, the time scale for filming, editing and delivery of the piece and the intended audience. The brief was initiated by a short telephone call, an informal discussion over a cup of tea and a visit to the location where the event, a fashion show, was due to take place. I was able to provide information about what equipment was available and demonstrate how we could use the location to its best advantages with regards to layout and lighting etc. I was able to provide the client with an overview of what I thought was appropriate running time and content and they were able to give me information too about what their priorities were in terms of brand identity and what product lines they wanted to promote more than others. I worked out an outline of my time, pre-production set-up, recording and editing and agreed a budget for the piece. Having submitted a first draft of the film, the client gave me feedback and I made some small changes to the piece of film which was then supplied to the client ready for uploading to their site. I received feedback from the client shortly after the piece went live and they seemed very pleased with the piece and seemed to get plenty of good reviews from their clients too. This positive outcome led to other similar projects. I was careful to explore what similar businesses were doing to ensure the standards were appropriate and had to take into account issues about copyright particularly where music was included in the film and permissions had to be sought from parent companies to include some retail brands in the promotional videos.

A Formal Brief

A formal brief can be a tender, contract or a commissioned brief. The client will be clear and precise about what they want, have prescribed content, a budget and a deadline for the project. Formal briefs are usually used for larger productions and can be funded in a variety of ways for example local councils may commission a brief for the delivery of a piece of film to promote a new service or increase awareness of issues such as road safety or effective recycling. There will be a tendering process since public funds are being used. The council will invite interested parties to submit a tender of the delivery of the brief. The tender will include details of how the production company intend to meet the objectives of the brief, give details of the pre-production stage, filming and editing scheme and final production and delivery of the work. Details of those who will take part in the production, the facilities and equipment available, resources to enhance the quality and add value to the contract as well as detailed costs will be put forward for the client to consider. There is usually a deadline for submission of the tender documents, these are kept secure and opened only once the deadline has passed. A panel will consider the merits of each tender submitted and award a contract to whoever offers the best proposal.

When there are no public funding issues, a business may seek out a small number of production companies and ask them to submit a proposal to meet their needs. In these instances, the client is usually quiet clear about what they want to achieve from the project and have a budget in place. They may ask prospective suppliers to present their ideas on how they would meet the objectives of the company. An example of this would be the development of a new advertisement for a leading supermarket or maybe a popular brand such as Coca-Cola. The company would then choose the supplier who most effectively meets their needs and award a contract to them. The contact would include specific details such as costs, timescales and content. By accepting the contract the production company undertakes to provide the media production services and will be paid usually once they have delivered a satisfactory product – maybe a short advertisement to promote the brand and attract new business.

A commissioned brief is also a formal agreement between the production company and the client. There will be specific requirements as regards timescales and costs but the main difference in a contract and a commission it that the provider will have a more creative influence on the project. The client will usually have a specific issue(s) to address and a budget to work within. They will engage with the provider and be open to suggestions on how best to develop the project. The BBC commission production of a variety of programmes to supply their broadcasting network. You can find current calls for programme commissions at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/commissioning/tv>. They are currently seeking an Observational Documentary series with purpose and broad appeal for 8pm or 9pm. Production companies who have ideas for such a documentary series are being asked to submit their ideas to the BBC for consideration. The BBC Commissioning board will consider the suggestions made and come to an agreement with the production company to produce a series of documentaries that will be suitable for audiences during the 8pm/9pm peak viewing time. Successful companies will make the programmes on behalf of the BBC, agreed to meet the standards required and be paid for their work.

So far any work I have been involved in has been informal productions. I am looking forward to working with larger production companies and being able to play a part in media production for a variety of purposes. I would like to be able to work on commissioned programme productions as this is an area where there is greater scope for variety and diversity.