

14

QUESTIONS

to ask your

**LIVE ACTION
PRODUCTION COMPANY**

written by:

Rip Media Group

A black silhouette of a hand with the index finger pointing towards the left, set against a yellow jagged background.

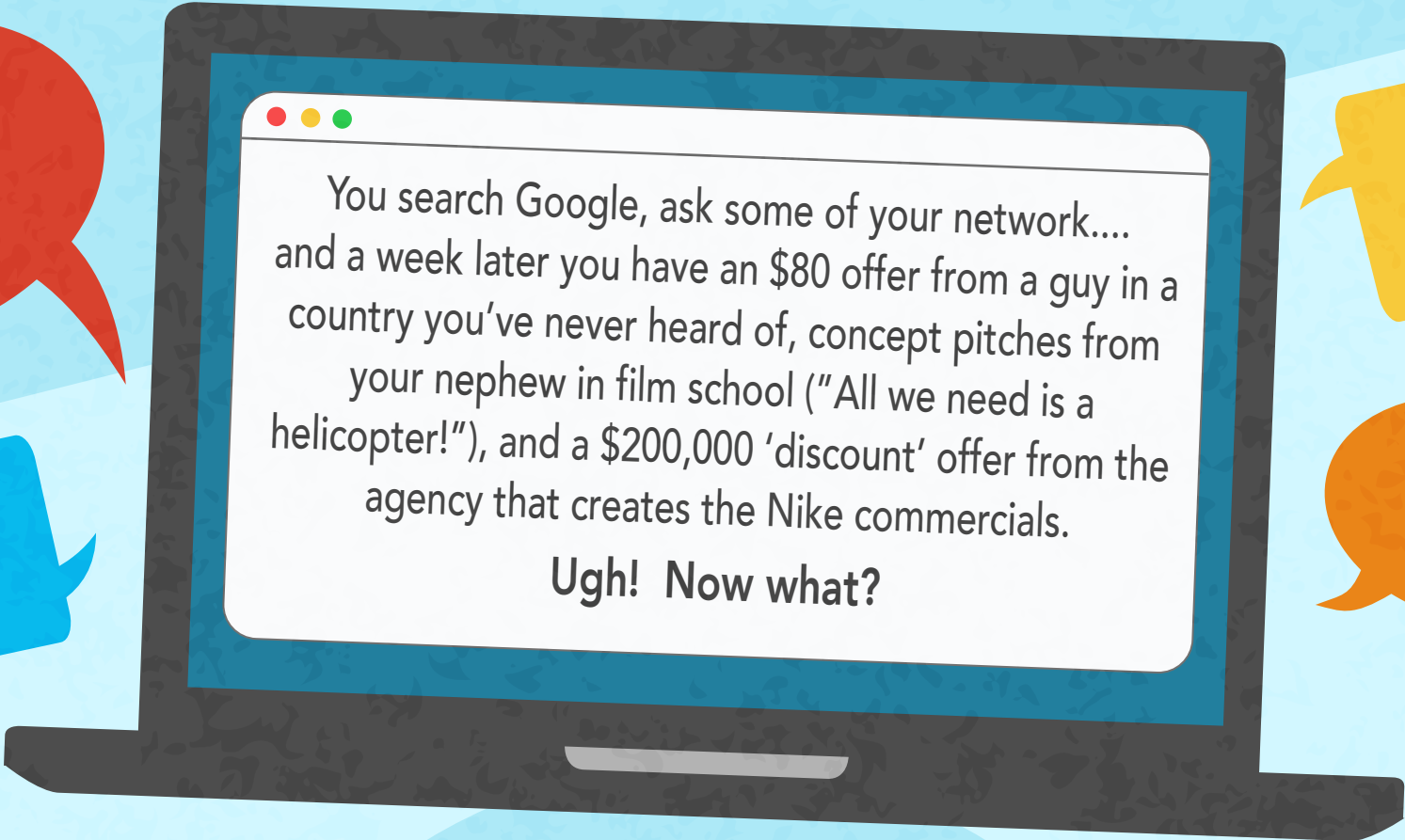
Can you imagine this? Your boss pops his head up and says:

"WE NEED A VIDEO TO TELL OUR STORY...ASAP!!!"

A black silhouette of a hand with the thumb pointing up, set against a dark blue background.



Easy to be the hero here, right?
So, you spring into action:

"I'LL HANDLE THIS."



You search Google, ask some of your network....
and a week later you have an \$80 offer from a guy in a
country you've never heard of, concept pitches from
your nephew in film school ("All we need is a
helicopter!"), and a \$200,000 'discount' offer from the
agency that creates the Nike commercials.

Ugh! Now what?



**HERE ARE THE
QUESTIONS
YOU REALLY
NEED TO ASK:**

1. CAN YOU SHOW ME CONCEPTS AND SCRIPTS THAT YOU HAVE WRITTEN? (AND DIRECTED, PRODUCED, EDITED...)

This is a good opportunity for your potential partner to shine.

They should relish in the chance for some show-and-tell!

If they shrink away from the task, they may not have that much to show. If their 'best-foot-forward' isn't that good, or in reality completed by someone else, you know what they do for you is more likely not work out well.

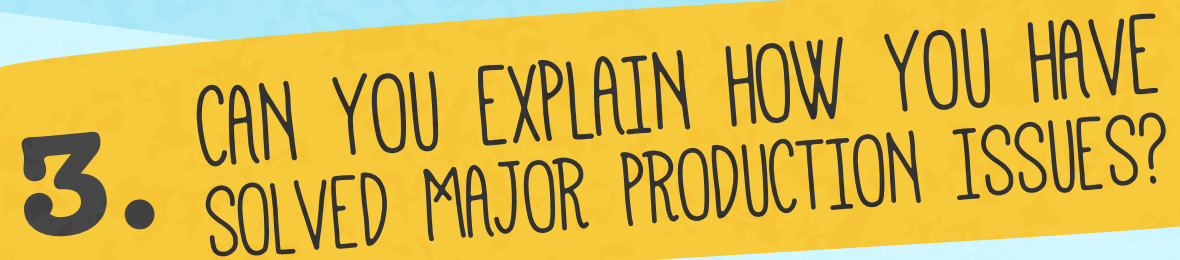
The most important part of this question is whether your partner can create something new for you. There are only so many stories to tell, so finding a way to distinguish you, your brand, and your product is critical to being memorable and making you a success.



2. HOW MUCH EXPERIENCE DO YOU (& YOUR CREW) HAVE PRODUCING LIVE ACTION VIDEO?

Make sure they have an experienced producer (5+ years) assigned to your project. Key production crew should also have at least 5 years direct experience in their roles.


Unexpected challenges can (and do) happen on most productions, and the experience of a solid crew can make a world of difference.



3. CAN YOU EXPLAIN HOW YOU HAVE SOLVED MAJOR PRODUCTION ISSUES?

This is where experience really matters.

Most projects have a change or unexpected event (client changes the date, actor gets sick, your CEO wants to change a whole scene). If you get the 'never happens' answer, run! If you see a smooth operation with a clear and smooth back up plan, you are more than likely in good hands.



4. WHAT DOES A SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIP LOOK LIKE TO YOU?

Every partnership involves a bit of give and take. Make sure you are clear about your expectations, and they are clear about what they will do for you.

For example: Ask if an original (or recycled script) will be written, if they are available for phone calls during normal hours or only via email.



5. HOW MUCH VALUE CAN I GET AND STILL STAY WITHIN MY BUDGET?



Most everyone will say they give you top quality for the least amount of dollars. But if their price quote is too low, there are important corners being cut somewhere.

Find out where those corners are and make sure you are OK with cutting them out of your production. The most expensive video is the one that doesn't work for you!

6. CAN YOU EXPLAIN HOW THIS CAMPAIGN WILL FIT IN WITH OUR BRANDING?

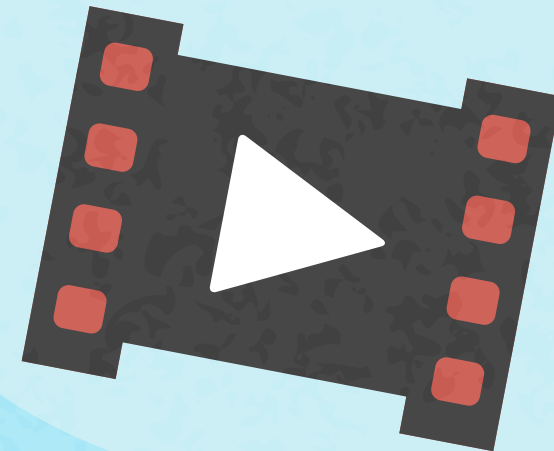


Is the video being made to fit **your** branding, or does the video look a little too much like the brand of your video producer?

Even if all of the previous questions check out and you find you're dealing with a sterling, professional production company, it's important that you don't underestimate the significance of this question. Remember: you are not commissioning a painting—you are making a video for **your** company!

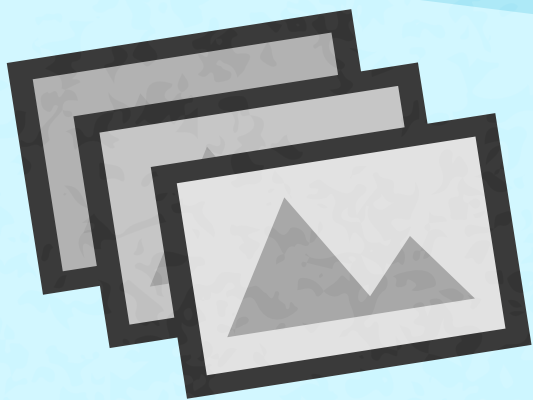
Video has a wider reach than anything you may do in marketing, so it is imperative that you are represented with **your** brand, **your** look, **your** feel, and **your** voice.

7. WHAT DOES A HIGH QUALITY AND SUCCESSFUL VIDEO LOOK LIKE TO YOU?



Quality is something you feel, not necessarily something you can point to on the screen. Do you feel emotionally moved by the video? Are you curious? Laughing? Attracted? Entertained? Motivated?

You are not hiring an agency to 'make a video.' You are trying to convey your message and reach your audience in the most efficient way possible. Video is an extension of your marketing, sales, and/or development department and is critical to improving your business. Your agency should help you solve problems.



8. CAN YOU SHOW ME ORIGINAL AND DIFFERENT STORIES?

Some companies don't mind videos created from a template that may have been used before to create a video for their peers or their competition. These templates will save time and money, but like most short cuts, there is a huge downside when a well-trod story, theme, or character fails to make an impact.

It's scientifically proven that original and unique stories stay in our memories longer. Anyone can create a video, but it takes a committed agency to create a video that makes people feel emotion and take action.

9. WHO ARE THE LARGEST CLIENTS THAT TRUST YOU, AND WHAT WORK DID YOU DO FOR THEM?

This is where the name dropping should begin. Look for recognizable brands and ones that are much larger than yours—you want to be in the same company as firms that are massively successful.

Typically they did the hard work of qualifying the best vendors for you... make sure you see the work and references that were completed for the big guys as well.

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10. WOULD YOU CHARGE EXTRA TO WRITE AN ORIGINAL SCRIPT FOR MY PROJECT?

Is quality an a-la-carte item for your potential partner?
Do they have in place policies and procedures for handling changes and rewrites?
What if your marketing department requires some last-minute updates?
How much will their price change? Do they even allow for changes mid-stream?

You need to know this: especially if you must satisfy multiple stakeholders.

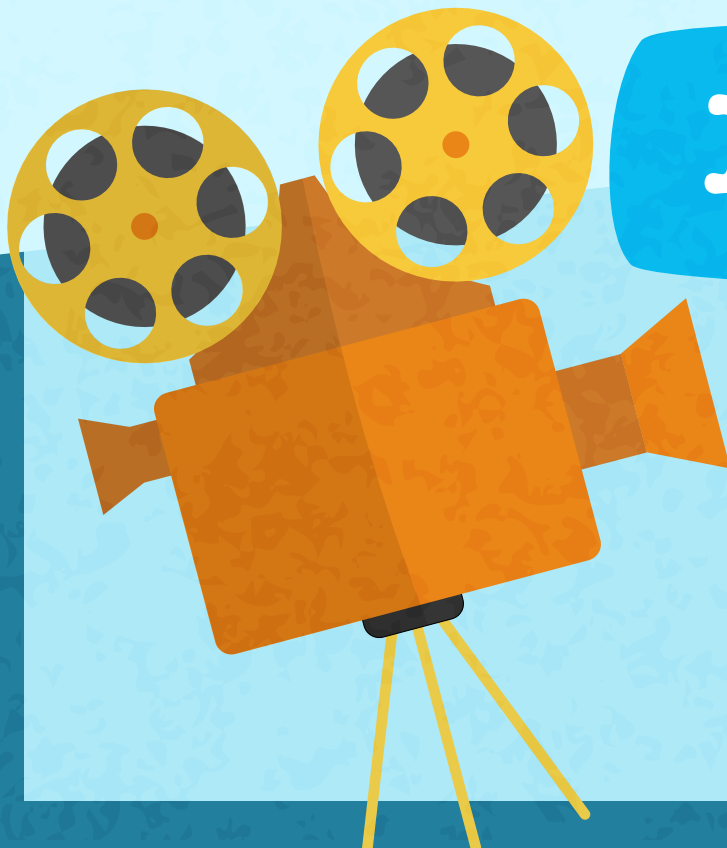


11. HOW MANY REFERENCES CAN I SPEAK WITH BEFORE WE START?



You certainly want to satisfy your due diligence. There are a lot of new companies out there calling themselves 'resellers' that are actually just web storefronts for other companies or fronts for overseas animation studios (See question 1).

Video production calls for a high level of service and effective collaboration—references can give you valuable insight into a company's process and quality of communication. A simple way to make sure you're getting the scoop from fellow professionals is to make sure references' email addresses and phone numbers match their business website.



12. WHAT KIND OF CAMERAS DO YOU USE WHEN ARE SHOOTING?

Is it a 4K or RED or DSLR or...?

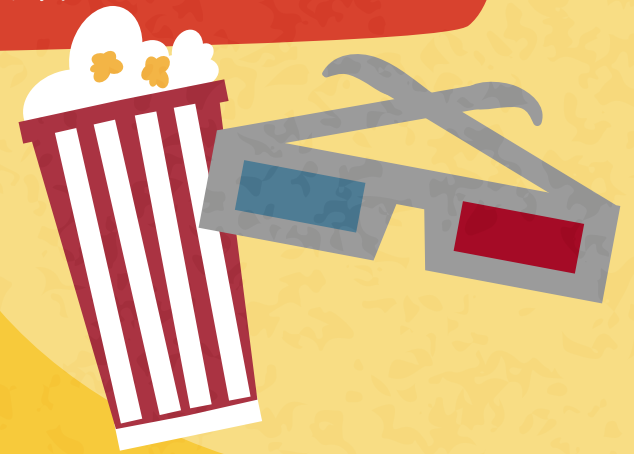
Some cameras give a much greater depth of color in the captured image. In fact, it can vary widely. Depending on the 'look' you are going for, it may require a higher-end camera.

This may or may not affect your budget. Make sure they have full mastery of any camera they will use - whether it is rented or owned.

13. WHAT KINDS OF VISUAL EFFECTS CAN YOU PRODUCE? 2D? 3D? REALISTIC? WHAT ABOUT INTEGRATED VIDEO?

The production company you choose, especially if it is for a larger campaign, should be able to offer all kinds of visual effects, from photo-realistic 3D animation to crayon drawings.

After all, unique is the most important quality to be memorable!



14. HOW DOES YOUR AGENCY HANDLE AND TRACK NOTES?

Some client projects involve multiple stakeholders and decision makers, making collaboration and feedback a challenge. If the agency is managing a project via email, this could become a nightmare.

That's why it's critical to have a rock solid collaboration and project management system in place. Save yourself headaches from the beginning. Find out if your agency uses a Cloud-based system that makes it easy for everyone to access at the appropriate level of involvement. Ask to see it in action.

See an example of a solid Project Management System: <https://vimeo.com/71939634> p/w: Rip

BE EMPOWERED!
ASK QUESTIONS!
AND GOOD LUCK!

P.S.: WE LOVE PRODUCING VIDEOS TO HELP
YOU REACH YOUR GOALS!

CALL US TODAY
(AND ASK US THESE QUESTIONS)!

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