

SPADA MASTERCLASS SERIES

1. The Three Cs of TV - *Creativity, Clarity & Courtesy*

TOP TEN TIPS FOR DOCUMENTARY PROPOSALS

The following notes support the online SPADA Masterclass 1: 'The Three Cs of TV: Creativity, Clarity & Courtesy' hosted by Irene Gardiner.

1. Know exactly what your story is and be able to tell people what it is in one clear sentence. If you can't sell it in a sentence it's probably not a story, or you haven't worked out what the story is yet.
2. Once you have written your most hooky intro sentence, explain how your story unfolds in the most clear and logical way you can. If your documentary is in multiple parts, write a summary of what will be in each part.
3. Who are the most important people in your story? Introduce them in a clear and inviting way. Include succinct bios of main talent, but not endless pages of culled articles presented in an unfocused manner.
4. What is your documentary going to look like - explain your visual/audio treatment, that's shooting style, editing style, and use of graphics and music.
5. What is special about your documentary? Make sure you have really conveyed its essence and the heart of the story.
6. Who are the key people working on your documentary, what is their background and what will they bring to this specific project?
7. If you are working to a set budget, think about how you can achieve the result you want within those parameters. If you are preparing a budget, make sure you ask yourself a lot of questions about how realistic it is. Be careful not to over or under budget.
8. Set your written submission document out clearly and tidily, and don't include un-necessary information. Network Executives and Executive Producers are busy people with limited time to read. If you haven't hooked them with your first page, another 100 pages won't help you. As outlined in tips one to seven, start your proposal document with your most simple description of what your documentary is about, then explain that more fully, then outline who your main talent are, then explain your visual and audio treatment, then key production personnel and budget.
9. If you're no good at spelling and grammar, get someone who is to help you do your final draft. It does matter.
10. If you are doing a verbal presentation as well, get to the point quickly and keep focused. Explain your concept clearly in your first sentence, and then work logically from there. Don't waste busy people's time by not cutting to the chase. Let your passion for your project shine out of you.