

perspective on it or simply your “angle,” **Figure 8-6**. However you describe it, the concept of your video program enables you to make a coherent statement that your audience can understand and respond to. These program organizers are simple to demonstrate by examples, so the sidebar *Sample Program Concepts* suggests plausible concepts for various types of personal and professional videos.

Figure 8-6.

The subhead of this news story reveals the concept: *David Slays Goliath*.

McKinley Beats Fillmore High Underdogs Rally to Defeat League Champs

Sparked by quarterback Charley Folsome, the McKinley Presidents rallied in the third quarter to power home two touchdowns that opened a lead Fillmore was never able to close. When the ground attack pursued in the first half failed against the bigger Fillmore line, Folsome took to the air, completing three passes to teammates Bruce Petit, Mickey Fleschner, and Norm Simas.

Booster Club Donates Scoreboard

At a ceremony during the pep rally before Saturday's game, McKinley Boosters Club President Amanda Wang turned on the new all-digital

In the case of the Sidewinder cordless drill, a possible concept is hidden in the already-selected objectives and audience. Acme Power Tools, Inc., wants to communicate the message that their drill is the best choice and they want to appeal to female buyers as well as male. Considering these two desires together, you develop a concept: *Get your own Sidewinder so your husband can have his back*.

With the concept in place, the whole program suggests itself: a group of brief scenes in which a husband keeps asking for his Sidewinder and his wife keeps promising to give it back as soon as she's finished with it. In each scene, she uses the drill in a different type of project, demonstrating its simplicity and versatility as she does so.

Preparing a Treatment

If you are planning a short, personal video, you can probably start production as soon as you have settled on the content,

length, and above all, concept. Most professional videos, by contrast, require that your informal design be transcribed onto paper as a script, a storyboard, or a treatment, **Figure 8-7**.

Figure 8-7.

A treatment is an outline in narrative form.

The Sidewinder: Part Two, Scene Three
at the kitchen table, the wife is repairing a
toy for her admiring daughter. First she
drills a pilot hole for screw. DISSOLVE TO
seating a repair screw with a drill bit.
DISSOLVE TO smoothing the repair edges with a
sanding drum. DISSOLVE TO buffing the repaired
joint with the sheepskin pad. Daughter is
increasingly impressed and happy throughout.
As we hear the off-screen voice of the husband
say, "Honey, I can't find my Sidewinder
again!" wife and daughter exchange
conspiratorial looks. Then daughter takes the
toy and runs out while the wife drops the
drill out of sight into her lap. Husband
enters and registers humorously on wife's
guilty expression.

Uses for Program Treatments

The simplest transcription is called a **treatment**: a few paragraphs that explain the program's concept, its subject, its order of content presentation, and its style. A treatment serves two purposes: it allows you to see and evaluate the organization of your video, and it communicates your plan to others. By committing your ideas to paper, you can determine whether they are appropriate to your program and whether they flow smoothly and logically. By examining your treatment you can spot problems and opportunities that might otherwise be overlooked.

A treatment is also useful in communicating your vision to other people, especially the colleagues who will help you produce your program and the clients who will pay for it. Without a treatment's overview of the program, your crew can only make one blind shot after another, without knowing how they should fit together and what they should achieve. As for the clients, few if any will underwrite your production without a clear idea of the program you propose to deliver.

Many clients demand a full script rather than just a summary treatment.

Sample Program Concepts

To provide a clear idea of what program concepts are and how they can guide the video maker's approach to developing programs, here are six examples: three personal programs and three professional ones.

Personal Programs

Program type: Vacation video

Subject/working title: "Lake Omigosh Vacation".

Concept: Triumphant over rain.

Summary: Video focuses on comic results of trying to camp out during two solid weeks of bad weather.

Program type: Holiday

Subject/working title: "Easter Egg Hunt."

Concept: The great Easter egg deception.

Summary: Before letting the kids find the eggs, the parents repeatedly hide them in spots where the children have already looked.

Program type: Family oral history

Subject/working title: "Grandfather Reminisces."

Concept: Family connections survive despite long times and great distances.

Summary: Questions and Grandfather's answers focus on family continuity across three continents and two hundred years.

Professional programs

Program type: Training video

Subject/working title: "Using Your Multiline Business Phone."

Concept: Conquering fear of buttons.

Summary: Humorous acknowledgment that business phones can be complex and frustrating

Grandfather reminisces.



evolves into the idea that a little study clears up the confusion.

Program type: Community service promotional

Subject/working title: "The McKinley Boosters"

Concept: Communities depend on volunteers.

Summary: The Boosters Club preserves and beautifies the town of McKinley.

Program type: Wedding video

Subject/working title: "The Anders/Goldstone Wedding."

Concept: As the glass flies apart, two lives come together.

Summary: Starting with a slow-motion shot of a goblet shattering under a cloth, the video moves from this symbol to documenting a traditional Jewish wedding.

Levels of Treatment

Video program treatments have no fixed style or length. They can be a one-sentence statement of concept and content or a multi-paragraph synopsis. They can be an outline so detailed that it identifies every separate content component. Whatever their level of detail, program treatments attempt to convey the effect of finished videos. Here are samples of program treatments developed to three different levels of detail. Each is for the Sidewinder drill program.

A skeletal treatment

This treatment covers all three parts of the Sidewinder video, in the briefest possible form:

The Sidewinder Drill

Part One: a succession of quick scenes shows the many jobs performed by the drill. Part Two: several vignettes in which a husband is frustrated because his wife is always using his Sidewinder drill. Part Three: After he presents her with her own Sidewinder, the two of them collaborate happily on a construction project.

A summary treatment

This excerpt from a summary-level treatment covers just one-third (Part Two) of the skeletal treatment in greater detail:

The Sidewinder, Part Two

Scene One: Husband asks where his Sidewinder is as we see wife using it to repair kitchen cabinet hinge. Scene two: As wife assembles picnic table bench in backyard, husband appears and again asks where his Sidewinder is. Scene Three: Wife is repairing child's toy at kitchen table when she hears husband asking where drill is. As he appears in kitchen doorway, she hides drill in lap.

A detailed treatment

This excerpt from a detailed treatment covers only Part Two, Scene Three, as summarized in the previous version.

The Sidewinder: Part Two, Scene Three

Seated at the kitchen table, the wife is repairing a toy for her admiring daughter. First she drills a pilot hole for screw. DISSOLVE TO seating a repair screw with a drill bit. DISSOLVE TO smoothing the repair edges with a sanding drum. DISSOLVE TO buffing the repaired joint with the sheepskin pad. Daughter is increasingly impressed and happy throughout. As we hear the off-screen voice of the husband say, "Honey, I can't find my Sidewinder again!" wife and daughter exchange conspiratorial looks. Then daughter takes the toy and runs out while the wife drops the drill out of sight into her lap. Husband enters and registers humorously on wife's guilty expression.

The amount of detail in your own treatments will depend on how minutely you need to previsualize your program and how completely you want to communicate it to clients and colleagues.

Creating a Storyboard

The old saying claims that one picture is worth a thousand words, and this is often true in developing video programs. In graphic-based program design, a succession

of pictures resembling a comic book sketches all the important moments in the program. This script in picture form is called a **storyboard**.

Storyboards got their name from the bulletin boards on which the drawings of scenes for animated cartoons are pinned for inspection and editing.

Storyboard Uses

Storyboards have two main uses: to help others visualize the look of the eventual program and to preplan complex sequences shot-by-shot.

Visualization

Storyboards are particularly valuable for communicating content to clients and crew, because they present concrete images instead of the abstract words that describe them. Some people have less talent than others for thinking graphically. The problem is that they are often unaware of their inability to visualize, and so they indicate understanding of written descriptions when they really can't imagine them. The result can be serious miscommunication. A storyboard presents the images in previsualized form, along with captions containing dialogue, sound effects, and descriptions of the action.

Shot planning

Where complex visual sequences are involved, storyboarding can help you as well as others. By planning all camera shots in advance, you can see how well they will edit together and how clearly they will communicate their content. Many directors make extensive use of storyboards in their productions, especially in laying out highly complex action sequences. Storyboarding is also useful for working out consistent screen direction in complex physical sequence like fights and chases.

Writing a Script

Another way to lay out a detailed production design is by writing a full **script**. A script describes every sequence in your program, including both video and audio components. A script is especially useful if the program contains dialogue to be memorized and spoken by actors and/or voiceover text to be read by an offscreen narrator. Scripts are also a common alternative to storyboards for