



producing an

ELECTRONIC PRESS KIT

Work with the publicist and the EPK producer to identify the objectives for the EPK shoot. Understanding where the footage might be used will inform the number of days required and priorities for cast and filmmaker interviews. Standard EPKs are usually 30–40 minutes.

The key purpose of the EPK is to service broadcast media with vision/audio to cut into film stories. A well-produced EPK will match potential media angles, support the exploitable qualities of the film and help the film appeal to its core audience.

Ideally it's better to bank as much variety as possible as there are many additional applications beyond the media that must be considered, including sales promos, custom and generic IDs (for exhibition, media, promotional partners and conferences), DVD extras, interactive study guides and online marketing.

As the industry moves away from traditional home entertainment towards an online business model, the need for dynamic online promotional components dramatically increases. This is essential to help your film find visibility in an extremely competitive digital marketplace.

The media don't have time to scan hours of endless EPK footage, so use title cards to help them navigate the EPK. If they're doing an interview with an actor, they want a short clip that illustrates the character's place in the film and matches the interviewer's questions and story angles.

It's essential to help the EPK crew become part of the production. They must gain the full support of the crew and cast to develop a level of trust. Clever scheduling that utilises actor's downtime can be a smart way to bank content with minimal impact on the production.

Scene clips

Scene clips are the most commonly used component of the EPK and must be the final grade and mix. Aim for four to eight scenes that reveal the main characters in strong dramatic moments. The clips must represent the film and serve the overall marketing strategy – there may be themes or story elements that you don't want to reveal and obviously no spoilers.

Sound bites (cast and crew interviews)

Generic cast and filmmaker sound bites need to be general enough to work across a range of interview situations yet still create enough interest to pique the media's interest and be a worthy addition to a film story.

Focus on the cast first then the crew. In reality the media will use actors, possibly the director, writer, producer and occasionally HODs if there is a strong story angle, eg the costume designer for a period piece.

Create actor cheat sheets to help them prepare for the EPK interviews (and future media opportunities). It's beneficial if they can describe their character in one line and sum up the film in a sentence and as a logline, eg "It's a white-knuckle rollercoaster ride".

As EPKs don't have an onscreen 'interviewer' the actors should repeat part of the question in the answer.

Question: What was it like working underwater?

Incorrect answer: It was cold.

Correct answer: Working underwater was very challenging, I nearly drowned!

Great answers are succinct, often less than 30 seconds and share interesting and personal insights.

Shooting the interview setups on green screen is a good idea as different backgrounds can be added at a later date, eg poster art, logos. Take advantage of available props, sets and costumes to make the interview space interesting.



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B-roll

Shoot lots of variety, especially with key cast and crew. It's essential to get the name talent and the director working with them.

Capture the specific angles that illustrate the interesting parts of the filmmaking story. What do you want the media to hone in on? Include coverage of the identified marketing hooks.

Consider other 'off-set' opportunities such as production meetings, casting and rehearsals.

Featurettes

A well-produced featurette or 'making of special' can be placed with TV or online outlets and can be held as extra content for the DVD release. Subscription channels often run interesting three to five minute featurettes that highlight the key cast as interstitial content.

An online filmmaker diary can be an effective tool to grow the audience and build anticipation online for the film right from the start. Social media strategies take time to build and require a large amount of content for regular updates between production and release.

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Formats

EPK materials will be used mainly for broadcast and online however the applications for EPK content are endless. It's important to consider all of your deliverables right from the start, to help determine the right format. Shoot in the best quality, HD if possible, as it's easier to down res at a later date for other uses such as online. Consider international formats, PAL is most commonly used as it is the Australian format and can be converted to other formats.

Media are busy and will choose another film to cover if the materials are of poor quality, in the wrong format or difficult to use.

Quality

Sound quality is also a common issue and it's recommended that you use a sound operator to record separate tracks. This is very helpful for broadcast media when editing the trailer and B-roll into film stories.

As the EPK changes hands along its road to broadcast, it may be dubbed many times so it's vital to start with the best quality source material as possible.

Providing a detailed log list with captions is a great way to make the EPK easier to use. Include the actor's name and description of what they say, eg 'Kwanten talks about working underwater'. A separate document is better than an electronic index or onscreen log as the complete EPK may not be serviced to all media. The distributor may want to hold back some elements to place as exclusives.