

WHITEPAPER

# **How to burn money**

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# **in film production**

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**From smart savings to costly mistakes—  
how to make your film budget work.**



**A PRACTICAL GUIDE  
TO BUDGETING  
FILM PRODUCTIONS  
LIKE A PRO.**

## 1. INTRODUCTION

# Let's talk about the Elephant in the room

The most common reaction to a film production quote? *'Wow, that's expensive.'* And then comes the classic: *'For that money, I could buy a car.'* Sure, you could. But that car won't create engaging content for your brand.

- Many people think film productions are expensive simply because they **don't know what's behind them.**
- Let's be real: **What do different types of productions actually cost?**

Type of Production	Estimated Cost (€)
Corporate Image Film (5–8 min, high quality)	50,000–100,000
TV Commercial (30 sec, premium production)	200,000+
High-End Interview (Doctor, Clinic, max. 12 min)	40,000–70,000
4-Minute Film (1 shooting day, full production)	25,000–40,000
Social Media Cutdown (30 sec, from existing material)	1,500–3,000
International Shoot (USA/Japan, local team – full Production, 4–12 min film)	32,000–65,000
International Shoot (USA/Japan, German team traveling – full Production, 4–12 min film)	42,000–83,000

## EXCURSUS

# If it's so expensive, why do you need video?

Good question. The answer: Because nothing captures attention and builds trust like video.

### 1 People Watch Video – A Lot.

- 82% of global internet traffic comes from video content.
- A website with video has **53x higher chances of ranking on Google** than a text-only page.

### 2 Video Converts Better.

- Including video on a landing page can **increase conversion rates by up to 80%**.
- B2B buyers are 95% more likely to retain information from a video than from text.

### 3 It's the Fastest Way to Build Trust.

- People connect more with **faces than with words**.
- A professional video **makes your brand/product feel credible, established, and engaging**.

### 4 Video Works Across Platforms.

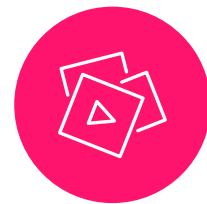
- **Social media, websites, events, sales pitches, internal comms** – one video, endless applications.
- Companies that use video strategically **grow revenue 49% faster than those that don't**.

Bottom Line:

***You Can't Afford to Ignore Video.***

**Yes, quality film production isn't cheap – but it delivers real ROI when done right.**  
**The real question is:**

**Can your brand afford not to use video?**



## 2. WHERE THE MONEY GOES

# The Biggest Cost Drivers

A film isn't expensive because we think it's fun to charge more.  
It's expensive because people, equipment, and expertise cost money.

# 1

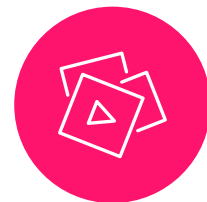
### Crew & Expertise – No, Filming Isn't Just 'Pressing Record'

- A professional film crew is **not** just a person with a camera.
- **Director, producer, cinematographer, sound engineer, editor** – each has a role.
- The difference between 'good enough' and 'wow' lies in experience.

Example:

A **basic interview setup** (one person, single camera, simple lighting, minimal editing) may cost **10,000–15,000 €**, while a **high-end multi-camera interview** in a hospital with cinematic lighting and full post-production can easily reach **30,000–50,000 €**.





## 2. WHERE THE MONEY GOES

# The Biggest Cost Drivers

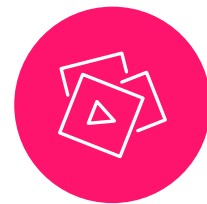
## 2 Equipment – Why a Cinema Camera Isn't an iPhone

- Yes, an iPhone shoots 4K. But no, it won't match professional lighting, depth, and quality.
- **Cameras, lenses, lighting, sound gear, drones, gimbals – all add up.**
- Renting high-end gear alone can cost thousands per day.

Example:

- **A cinema-grade camera setup** (RED, ARRI) can cost **€1,500–€3,500 per day**, excluding lenses.
- **High-end lighting setups** (softboxes, spotlights, rigging) add another **€1,000–€5,000**, depending on scale.





## 2. WHERE THE MONEY GOES

# The Biggest Cost Drivers

# 3

### Post-Production – The Invisible Cost That Makes All the Difference

Shooting the film is just half the job. The magic happens in post.

- **Editing, sound design, and color grading** define the final look and feel.
- Cutting corners in post makes even expensive footage look cheap.
- Good post-production ensures **smooth storytelling, strong visuals, and a polished result.**

What It Costs (Based on a 4–6 min Film):

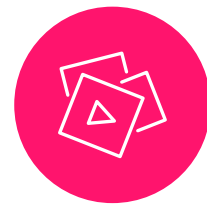
- **Basic edit** (simple cuts, no heavy corrections): **€5,000–€7,000**
- **Cinematic edit** (color grading, sound mixing, effects): **€12,000–€20,000+**



Why It Matters:

- ✓ **Keeps viewers engaged** – Pacing and storytelling make the difference.
- ✓ **Enhances production value** – A polished edit elevates the entire film.
- ✓ **Strengthens brand perception** – A high-quality film conveys professionalism and credibility.
- ✓ **Saves money in the long run** – Fixing things in post avoids costly reshoots.





## 2. WHERE THE MONEY GOES

# The Biggest Cost Drivers

## 4

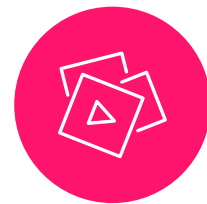
### Licensing & Rights–Music, Voice-Over, and the Fine Print

- A famous track costs money. A cheap track **sounds cheap**. There is something in between.
- A great voice-over isn't a guy in his basement—it's a pro with a soundproof studio.

### Example:

- **High-quality stock music** (licensed for multiple uses within a campaign, ensuring legal security and no third-party claims on platforms like YouTube): **€300–€800**
- **Custom music composition**: **€3,000–€10,000+**
- **Licensing a well-known song for a corporate film**: **€20,000+**, easily.
- **Professional English voice-over**: **€500–€2,500**, depending on language and usage rights.





## 2. WHERE THE MONEY GOES

# The Biggest Cost Drivers

# 5

### Travel & Logistics – Why Filming in Tokyo Costs More Than in Munich

*It's not just about getting a crew on a plane – it's about making the shoot work efficiently.*

- Travel costs, permits, location fees – **it's not just showing up and filming.**
- **In many countries, working with local teams is the smarter choice.**
  - **They know the production norms** – avoiding costly misunderstandings.
  - **They understand cultural differences** – ensuring smooth interactions with talent and interviewees.
  - **They remove language barriers** – making coordination faster and more precise.

Examples:

### Why Local Teams Are More Cost-Effective

#### FILMING IN JAPAN

- Local team (Full Production, 4–12 min film): €32,000 – €65,000
- German team traveling to Japan: €42,000 – €83,000 (higher due to flights, hotels, and logistics)

***Example risk:** A German crew might struggle with permits, cultural nuances in interviews, and local regulations, leading to delays.*

#### FILMING IN THE USA

- Local US team (Full Production, 4–12 min film): €32,000 – €65,000
- German team flying to the US: €45,000 – €85,000 (due to higher travel & insurance costs)

***Example risk:** Some locations in the US require union-approved crews, and not knowing the regulations can block the shoot completely.*

#### FILMING IN THE MIDDLE EAST

- Local team: €30,000 – €60,000
- Foreign team: €40,000 – €80,000 (due to special permits, on-site support, and security costs)

***Example risk:** Certain regions require a fixer or cultural advisor, and a non-local crew may struggle with filming restrictions.*





### 3. HOW TO WASTE MONEY

## The Three Fastest Ways to Make a Film Expensive (without meaning to)

There are ways to waste money. Here are three classics.

1

#### **"Let's Do It Cheap First and Fix It Later."**

- **What happens?** Poor quality, re-shoots, post-production headaches.
- **End result?** Paying more than if it had been done right in the first place.

2

#### **"Let's Skip Post-Production, We Don't Need That."**

- A film without proper editing is like an unfinished sculpture.
- Sound and color matter. Bad post-production makes a film **look amateurish**.
- Some clients think they can handle post-production in-house or outsource it to cheap freelancers. But the best results come when **the people who shot the footage – and understand the creative vision – finish the job.**

3

#### **"We Know Someone Who Does Film Too."**

- Just because someone has a camera doesn't mean they know how to make a great film.
- Many companies or agencies **offer video as an add-on**, but they don't specialize in it – meaning they lack the daily hands-on experience needed for high-quality results.
- Professional film production isn't just about filming – it's about storytelling, lighting, sound, post-production, and knowing **how to bring all of these elements together seamlessly.**

## 4. WHERE YOU CAN SAVE MONEY

# And Where You Shouldn't

Not everything needs to be expensive. But some things should be worth it.

### Why It Matters:

- ✓ **Use existing footage where possible** – Reuse past material instead of reshooting.
- ✓ **Film multiple assets in one shoot** – Maximize content from a single production day.
- ✓ **Plan ahead to avoid unnecessary reshoots** – Proper pre-production saves money.
- ✓ **Optimize shooting days** – Fewer locations, tighter schedules = lower costs.
- ✓ **Work with local crews** – Avoid high travel & logistics expenses.
- ✓ **Choose stock footage wisely** – When custom shots aren't essential, high-quality stock can replace them.
- ✓ **Keep scripts and concepts tight** – Overcomplicated storytelling = unnecessary production complexity.
- ✓ **Avoid unnecessary high-end gear** – Not every project needs the most expensive cinema setup.
- ✓ **Use existing voice-over & music libraries** – Custom isn't always needed; great licensed options exist.

### Where **NOT** to Save Money:

- ✗ **Sound & Lighting** – Bad sound makes videos unwatchable
- ✗ **Post-Production** – A good edit makes the difference between 'meh' and 'wow'
- ✗ **Music Licensing** – The wrong music can ruin everything
- ✗ **Project Management & Pre-Production** – Clients often push back on planning costs, but good preparation saves money later by preventing chaos, delays, and unnecessary reshoots.

## 5. SO, WHAT DOES A FILM COST?

# The Only Honest Answer: “It Depends.”

Nobody likes hearing this. But it’s the truth.

- A realistic price range for different types of productions helps set expectations.
- Thanks to our lean, global setup, we often offer better pricing – without compromising quality.
- Want a real number? Just ask us—we’ll break it down transparently.

## And Here’s the Best Part ...

A great film isn’t an expense—**it’s an investment.**  
One that pays off in attention, engagement, and credibility.

You now officially know more about film budgets  
than most marketing teams. **(Congrats!)**  
And if you’ve made it this far, **you’re probably  
serious about getting it right.**

So, what’s next?

**LET’S TALK.**

Before you burn  
money—or worse,  
end up with a bad film.

## 6. WHY WE'RE OFTEN MORE AFFORDABLE

# Without cutting corners. Without cutting quality.

Yep, there's another elephant. And no, we didn't fly him in. Turns out, global film production doesn't have to be expensive – if you do it right.

At mmpro, we've spent the last 20 years rethinking how to produce films for companies around the world. **Not just cheaper – but smarter, faster, and with less environmental impact.**

**Here's how we do it:**

1

### 1. Central brain, local muscle.

All productions are planned and coordinated by our multilingual team in Berlin – but executed by hand-picked local crews around the globe.

#### **That means:**

- minimal travel costs
- no unnecessary flights or emissions
- no cultural missteps or permit chaos
- maximum efficiency and flexibility

We were climate-friendly before that was a thing.  
And we still are – **with less drama and more delivery.**

2

### 2. Truly scalable.

We don't just survive complexity. We thrive in it.

Need five parallel shoots on three continents next week? Done.

Our setup is designed to scale up quickly – **without losing control or quality.**

3

### 3. One hub for post.

No matter where your footage comes from, it ends up in the same place: our post-production team.

Edited to German quality standards, with a consistent look, feel, and narrative clarity.  
**You get a clean result – and peace of mind.**

## 7. BECAUSE SOMEBODY WILL ASK ...

# Where These Numbers Actually Come From

Yes, we're fun. But we're also thorough.

**The price ranges in this whitepaper are based on real-world data:**

- ✓ **20+ years of experience** across all budget levels
- ✓ **Industry-standard** rates from trusted crews, agencies, and post pros
- ✓ **Market research** and benchmarks from premium providers

Naturally, prices vary—depending on scope, location, and specific needs.

Want a custom quote? **We're quick, direct, and uncomplicated.**



**Let's make your numbers  
make sense.**

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