# DMI PRODUCTIONS

Gloaming. There's a weird little word that no one really uses anymore... It means dusk: the part of the day between the afternoon and night. Those twilight hours often serve as a metaphor for slowing things down or winding things up – and it's not unusual for the last steps of creative thinking to feel like that, either. Here are some tips that help you make the best of ideas when time is running short.

## Revisit the Brief

If you read a lot of our Creative Info Sheets, you'll probably recall the value we place on having a clear brief before any ideation really happens. Then all the thinking, working, discovering and deciding takes place... Very often, though, a creative process of any kind can cause you to drift away from your original intention. One of the first things you should do when you start eliminating ideas is to double check which of the things you have actually fits the original brief!

## Overtaking the Brief

It is possible, of course, that at some point the original brief has become less relevant, and needs amending in itself. That happens a fair bit – the development of an idea sometimes causes people to discover a flaw in their earlier thinking and go with a solution that doesn't actually answer the brief! In any case, be sure you're meeting your needs.

## Six Thinking Hats

This system – from the man that coined the phrase 'lateral thinking' – not only helps you generate and improve ideas, but also helps you pick your best one, too. Check out our summary of it at www.dmiproductions.co.uk/info or buy the book here.

## Ask Yourself One Question

In a situation where you have more than one option of equal merit, ask yourself this: if you had to do this project *one week earlier* than you originally thought, which idea would you go with? Very often the answer is the same idea that you're going to end up doing *anyway*: you just don't know it yet! It may not be the simplest, the cheapest, or even the best – but it is almost always the most *realistic.*

## Rip it to Shreds

If there's one thing that is too often overlooked in the lead up to the final stages of ideation, it's robust criticism! Not the nit-picking silliness of the frightened egotist, mind, but legitimate, intelligent criticism. And there's only one way to get this from people in a sensible, manageable and productive way... You have to ask for it!

*"DMI's unique approach and distinct brand of creativity is both relevant and necessary, always adding value."* Lesley Singleton Playtime PR

dmiproductions.co.uk/info

You might think that it's going to be painful – and there's a good chance that it will be! Nevertheless, it's necessary. Try saying to your friends, colleague, boss – whoever – something like, "I've got a few ideas that I want scrutinized. Would you help me? I want you to look at this and tell me everything you think is wrong with it! I want you to think of every criticism that could *possibly* be levelled at it and tell me what they are before I hear it from anyone else…"

Now take out a notebook and pin back your ears. If you're asking people that trust you, you'll get a bunch of information on what still needs work. It's tough for some people to hear… But it's invaluable! Take a look at ['five things that stop creativity dead in its tracks!'](#) for more on this approach.

### Filter like a Team

When burglars enter a room, they see it very differently from the way an interior decorator looks at it, or a child, or a fire inspector. If you alone have to consider which ideas are most 'fit for purpose' in any given circumstances, you might choose to consider ideas from the perspective of others. What would a *client* think? What would your *accountant* say? What would your most ardent *critic* tell you?

Each one of these views creates a different perspective that could be more or less useful than the next. That's why asking this kind of question often throws up a couple of interesting points that you might not ordinarily think of… They might not entirely change the course of your decision making but they could give you a strong steer in absence of a full team of people to measure your ideas.

### A, B, C

After writing out a list of all the things that you want to get done, you can – in the world of time management – assign priorities beside them using the letters A, B, C, D and E… Next to the things that absolutely have to get done you write the letter A – for *Absolutely*. Beside the things that you'd *Better* get done, you write a B; a C goes by the things that you *Could* do, and a D by the things that you can *Delegate* to somebody else.

Finally, against the things that you realize you don't need to get done after all, or things that go away while you're working through the rest of your list, you write E for *Eliminate*. Your 'time management' then becomes no more complicated than running down the list and working on the A's first, then the B's and so on…

What has this got to do, though, with creativity? Well, much as this simple process proves useful in time management, it also comes in to its own during the final stages of complicated creative projects. Imagine you're producing a play, for example. It might be that you have, say, a list of 20 things which need attention before opening night… If you really can't get through it all, you simply go down the list and start prioritizing, and making *Decisive Compromises* along the way.

### Decisive Compromises?

Yes! Running out of time isn't usually something that happens quietly – you mostly know when it's happening! For that reason, when you start running out of time while using the ABC system, you should find that the things on your to do list are decidedly less important than the things that you already did. In other words, at the point in time when you have to start making compromises, you're making much smaller sacrifices – and deciding, very definitely, which of them are acceptable. It's a far cry from slinging out the best parts of a project because there's no time.

### Think like a Therapist to Make Decisions

If you ever visit a solution-focused therapist, you'll soon discover that they're trained to treat issues in a very efficient and effective way. If a client says, for instance, that they haven't slept well for weeks, can't be bothered to do anything new, and have put on weight recently, it would almost certainly be the sleep that a therapist addressed first...

That's because the sleeplessness itself is likely to be a fast thing to fix, and it would probably help address the other two issues. It's the same with making *Decisive Compromises*. For example, imagine for a moment that you're directing a play. In this play, there are two issues preventing it from being a creative success: one is that the lead actor is stomping round in a pair of heavy shoes while other actors are delivering their lines... The second is that he is over the top in his delivery, and his entire manner needs completely toning down! If you had only just enough time to attend to one of these, which one would you put right?

In those circumstances we think it would have to be the shoe issue! To us, that's not only easier to fix but also more *impactful*. If you address his bad acting, you *still* have an entire play full of dialogue that no one can hear being delivered! If you address the clomping shoes, then you effectively only have *one* bad *actor* instead of a bad *play!* Whether you agree with this example or not, it illustrates the way in which *Decisive Compromise* acknowledges that you can't execute *everything* perfectly – and encourages you to work out which last-minute changes will have the most impact.

**CLICK HERE TO VISIT OUR WEBSITE**

dmiproductions.co.uk/info