



## 10 TIPS FOR MEDIA RUNNERS

Runners! What a word. To some, it conjures the image of keep fit. To others, it's what makes a drawer slide out... To some, it just means beans! At DMI, though, a runner is defined in the 'Who's who on the crew' Info Sheet as "Someone who fetches people or equipment, and supports anyone on the team who needs help".

In the office, good runners are considered rare as hen's teeth. For that reason, we got to thinking: how useful would it be to advise would be runners, or people who are fresh to the role, on how to become outstanding ... So here are our '10 tips for media Runners'!

### I'm late! I'm late! For a very important date!

Woody Allen once said "Eighty percent of success is showing up." To be fair, he did say it somewhat facetiously, but he had a point and that point is sharpened somewhat if you add to it the words "On time"! For a runner, lateness is inexcusable, being on time is agreeable and arriving early is desirable! Do your best to arrive a little ahead of schedule and ask what you can do to help as soon as you arrive.

### Keep smiling through, just like you always do:

For every opportunity you miss through being too enthusiastic, there'll be a hundred you miss through not being enthusiastic enough! Let's be clear: some of the people on crews treat runners appallingly, and some of the jobs runners are asked to do aren't all that glamorous or much fun. You do have to keep chipper, though, and grin & bear it... Many of the people on the set will know each other and have worked with each other before. Sadly, though, you have almost no hope of impressing them all as one group! You have to do it one person at a time so, throughout the day, keep checking if individual people need anything whenever you're at a loose end.

### I'll name that tune in 2,146:

You won't get many better opportunities to see how things work than being a runner. It absolutely makes sense to take a notebook along with you... And use it! Not only can you write down anything you're asked to do, of course, but you can also jot down any thoughts or observations you have. One of the biggest mistakes any runner can make is to seem disinterested in the project around them. Given the choice between making too many notes and not making enough... Make too many!



"DMI get a 10 out of 10 from me and I have already, and will continue to refer them to my contacts" Gary Go. Recording Artist

**dmi productions**

[www.dmi productions.co.uk](http://www.dmi productions.co.uk)

Creative video. Inspired ideas. Passionate people.

**Listen to them – the children of the night. What sweet music they make!**

In the same way that making notes shows enthusiasm and interest, listening very carefully to the things you're told demonstrates attention and care. One of the best things you can do is repeat back instructions you've been given to ensure you've understood them correctly.

As you work, ask yourself if there's something else that you can do to help someone out. Does anyone need a bottle of water? A cable held? A person fetched from the station? Anything! The idea that everything that needs doing has been done is inconceivable to us – it should be to a runner, too.

**Measure twice, cut once** is the maxim of workmen the world over! In the case of an outstanding runner, though, this means asking questions if you're unsure about anything. Some people get a little irked, of course, when they're asked about things that they think are simple... But they're the kind of people who get furious if they're not asked and you get it wrong!

So if you're worried about people reacting badly to clarifying questions, preface them with something like: "I want to make sure I get this absolutely right for you; may I just check..." It's hard for people to be annoyed with you when your intention is so obviously to help.

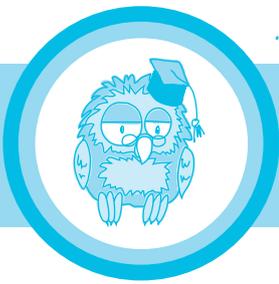
**Laugh and the world laughs with you. Cry and it mocks you. Cruelly.**

Well. No, not the whole world, but a few people. See, there are some people – egotists, mainly – who like to show off a little by raising their voices to runners, or assigning tasks to them in a holier than thou way, etc. It's the suckiest part of the job, actually, to know that, every so often, some belittling twit will abreact their feelings of inferiority in a way that makes them your problem...

The sad thing is that the best way to handle these people is to develop a thick skin and a sense of humour. That's not to say that you should allow yourself to be picked on or bullied; the law's still the law, of course, and only you will know where to draw the line. On those occasions, though, when someone's lording it over you just so that they can look big, it may be better to let them think they do look big. Why?

Well, simply put, anybody that needs to make you look small in order to appear big themselves will actually seem pathetic. Even one or two famous film directors are reputed to deliberately create a fracas on the first day of shooting in order that they can very publicly fire someone – anyone – and remind people that they're the boss. Don't get caught up in any politics, keep quiet whilst the cameras are rolling, do what you're asked when you're asked and then find out what else you can do to help... And accept that there are some complete plonkers in the industry, because that, sadly, will never change.

**Proactivity may sound like a vitamin supplement** but it's a frightfully important quality. In dictionary terms, being proactive means 'Creating or controlling a situation rather than just responding to it'. In practical terms, it means looking for ways in which you can help rather than waiting to be asked. Sound obvious? Since DMI Productions was founded in the year 2000, we can recall only three runners who've actually made a suggestion as to what they could do next.



## How fast were you going when Mr. Adams jumped from the car?

As you can imagine, one of the most vital functions of a runner is to collect people and things that are in the wrong place at any time. So for serious consideration as a runner, you must, in our opinion, be able to drive.

Now it may well be that people who can't drive for whatever reason still have a function on set – however, if you're putting yourself forward as a runner you must declare your immobility and be prepared not to get the job... A runner is required to nip off, lickety-split, and that means having a roadworthy car and the ability to drive it.

## Crime, chaos, pneumonia...

If they can all be organized, so can you! Whilst it's not necessarily expected that runners will be supremely well organized, they're often dashing about because organization is already lacking in some way... Let's not salt the wound! Off the top of our heads, for example, we suggest carrying spare call sheets, buying a map of the area you'll be working in, labeling and keeping all receipts, making sure your mobile is fully charged and owning a 'Leatherman' or other multi-tool, etc...

You'll realize that all these are just little things, but they could be the difference between being an okay runner and being an outstanding runner. In fact, you might be interested to hear that when Deej and Stu were young – we're going way back – they kept exhaustive 'Emergency Kits', filled with dozens of things they might need backstage and on set! In fact, they still have them, packed and ready to go, for those rare occasions that they leave the office!

## You're a superstar. Yes. That's what you are; you know it!

Finally, a tip that applies to almost any role, but one that seldom gets mentioned... As you go about your business, ask yourself: what is it that you can do that would make you indispensable? Once you've worked it out - do it! It may be easier than you think. Remember: you may only need to be a little bit better than the last runner in order to be the best, as this story suggests...

Two 'Runners' are walking in the woods. Out of nowhere, a large bear appears and makes ready to chase the hapless crew members. The first runner starts changing into a pair of trainers. The second says, "What are you doing? Wearing athletic shoes won't help you outrun a bear! The first runner says "I don't have to outrun the bear... I only have to outrun you!"