

FREE RESOURCE · BRAND FILM PREPARATION

# THE BRAND FILM BRIEF.

How to prepare for your brand film — and why most brands get it wrong before the camera ever turns on.

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A 7-page guide to the story extraction process, visual direction worksheets, and a preview of what the FOTC 8-step system looks like in practice.

# WHY MOST BRAND FILMS FAIL

Before you brief a filmmaker, you should understand the three reasons most brand films don't work — because they happen before the shoot day, not during it.

## 01 They Start With Visuals, Not Story

Most brands walk into a shoot with references from other brands' films. Beautiful images, great — but whose story are you telling? A brand film that starts with aesthetics and works backward to meaning will always feel borrowed. The camera captures what's real. If there's no real story underneath, the camera will show that too.

## 02 They Try to Say Everything

A 90-second brand film cannot introduce your product, explain your process, share your mission, establish your team, and make someone feel something. It can do one of those things well. The brands that win with film choose one emotional truth and tell it with precision. Everything else is noise.

## 03 The Brief Was Too Vague — or Didn't Exist

When a filmmaker asks "What do you want this film to feel like?" and the answer is "cinematic, professional, modern" — that's not a brief. That's three adjectives that describe almost every brand film ever made. A real brief has a specific emotional tension, a defined audience, and one thing the viewer should feel by the final frame.

### THE FOTC PRINCIPLE

*"Truth before aesthetics. Always. The story extraction session is not optional — it's where the film is actually made."*

# THE 5 QUESTIONS A BRIEF NEEDS

These five questions are the foundation of every FOTC story extraction session. Before any camera is picked up, every founder goes through this process. Read them. Sit with them. Your answers are the film.

## QUESTION 01

### What problem made you start this?

*Not "what inspired you" — what frustrated you so much you decided to build something? This is where the emotional core usually lives.*

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## QUESTION 02

### What do most people miss about your brand when they first find you?

*This reveals the gap between how you're perceived and what you actually are. That gap is usually the most compelling story you have.*

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## QUESTION 03

### What would you lose if this brand disappeared tomorrow?

*This forces specificity. "Revenue" is not an answer. The real answer tells us what you're actually building and who it matters to.*

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## QUESTION 04

### Who is it really for — and who is it not for?

*Every great brand film speaks directly to one person and implicitly excludes everyone else. Specificity is not limiting — it's how you earn loyalty.*

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## QUESTION 05

### What do you want someone to feel in the final frame — not think, feel?

*Not "informed" or "interested." Emotions: seen, proud, hungry, inspired, nostalgic, understood. The answer anchors every creative decision.*

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# STORY EXTRACTION WORKSHEET

Fill this out before any creative conversation. Come with specific answers — the more honest, the better the film. There are no wrong answers, only vague ones.

## YOUR BRAND

Brand name + what you do in one sentence (not your tagline — your actual answer):

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## THE EMOTIONAL TENSION

What is the central tension or conflict your brand resolves? (What was broken before you existed?)

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## THE PERSON

Describe your ideal viewer/customer as a specific person — not a demographic. What do they care about? What do they look like? What do they avoid?

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## THE FEELING

Circle or write the ONE emotion you want someone to feel at the final frame:

Seen	Hungry	Proud	Nostalgic	Inspired	Understood	Moved	Curious
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Other:

## THE ONE THING

If this film can only do ONE thing, what is it? Complete this sentence: "After watching this, I want people to \_\_\_\_\_."

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# VISUAL DIRECTION WORKSHEET

The visual language flows from the story, not the other way around. Use this worksheet to start building the look before your first creative conversation.

<p>PACING FEEL</p> <p><b>How Should the Film Move?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Slow &amp; meditative — long takes, stillness</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Deliberate &amp; rhythmic — editorial pacing</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Energetic — quick cuts, kinetic energy</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Mixed — slow openings, energetic build</li></ul>	<p>LIGHT MOOD</p> <p><b>What Light Do You Live In?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Golden hour — warm, natural, cinematic</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Overcast — soft, even, melancholic</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Low light — intimate, textured, moody</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Mixed — location-driven</li></ul>
<p>COLOR FEEL</p> <p><b>Brand Color Temperature</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Warm — earthy, amber, skin tones</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Cool — desaturated, teal, minimal</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Contrasty — rich blacks, bold accents</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Soft — muted, nostalgic, film-like</li></ul>	<p>SOUND DIRECTION</p> <p><b>What Does the Film Sound Like?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Voiceover — founder narrates the story</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Music-driven — score carries the emotion</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Ambient — natural sound, minimal music</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Silence with punctuation — slow build</li></ul>

## VISUAL REFERENCE (OPTIONAL)

List any films, photographers, brands, or images whose aesthetic resonates with your brand. Be specific — "cinematic" is not a reference.

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## WHAT TO AVOID

What visual styles, tones, or approaches do you NOT want? (Just as useful as what you do want.)

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# THE FOTC 8-STEP SYSTEM

Once your brief is ready, here's exactly what happens at FOTC. This is the process every project follows — no exceptions, no shortcuts. This is what you're buying.

<b>01</b>	<b>Story Extraction</b> 45–60 min recorded interview. Five core questions. Emotional tension mapped before anything visual is decided.	PRE-PRODUCTION
<b>02</b>	<b>Script Development</b> Hook → Ground → Build → Shift → Identity. Written script + voiceover direction. Max 2 rounds of client review.	PRE-PRODUCTION
<b>03</b>	<b>Hybrid Visual System</b> Locations, color palette, shot references, and AI enhancement layers mapped to script beats. Look defined before shoot day.	PRE-PRODUCTION
<b>04</b>	<b>Prompt Engineering</b> Structured AI element prompts built in advance. Grain level, color temp, lens aesthetic — every parameter locked before production begins.	PRE-PRODUCTION
<b>05</b>	<b>Shot Sequencing</b> Full storyboard + prioritized shot list. Establish → Process → Detail → Emotion → Resolve. No surprises on shoot day.	PRODUCTION
<b>06</b>	<b>Editing System</b> Edit to emotion, not to time. Built around voiceover or music bed first. Pacing deliberate, every cut intentional. Picture lock before color.	POST-PRODUCTION
<b>07</b>	<b>Color &amp; Final Look</b> Graded to Kodak Portra 400 standard. Warm highlights, teal shadows, retained grain. Film grain composite as final layer.	POST-PRODUCTION
<b>08</b>	<b>Distribution Strategy</b> Master + all platform exports (Reel 9:16, Story, Square, Web). 3 caption variations. 2-week content calendar. 48-hour launch brief.	DELIVERY

YOU'VE DONE THE WORK. NOW LET'S MAKE THE FILM.

# READY TO BUILD YOURS?

If you've filled out this brief and your answers moved you  
— that's the signal. The film already exists. We just need  
to go find it.

[hello@fotcmedia.com](mailto:hello@fotcmedia.com)

@fotcmedia · [www.fotcmedia.com](http://www.fotcmedia.com)

ALL INQUIRIES HANDLED PERSONALLY. NO INTAKE FORMS.

*"If it doesn't feel like a scene from a film, it doesn't get published."*