

Now you can direct your boss on film - all in the name of team building

“The process Hollywood goes through to create a film is the most intense example of teamwork under pressure,” says Guntis Sics, co-creator, with Peter Wilkins, of 15 Minutes of Fame.

Encouraging companies to ditch paintball and golf for something a little different, the pair claim short-filmmaking is a far more effective and fun way of team-building.

Wilkins is a sports commentator, best known for his appearances on ABC’s The Fat. Sics is an Academy Award-nominated sound engineer whose credits include The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert and Moulin Rouge. After making a short film together, they realised what a powerful learning and bonding experience it was.

Now their company, Screendreams Entertainment, offers corporate workshops in short filmmaking. Filmmaking hones skills usually required by team-building tasks - decision-making, leadership and time management - but it’s a creative exercise and participants can take copies of their film home.

The workshop begins with organisers bringing in a professional film crew, which often includes leading cinematographers and editors. Employees are divided into groups and then choose a director, writer and actors. They brainstorm an idea, write the script, then make the film, which is edited by industry professionals. Each film is shown at a gala dinner and awards ceremony hosted by Wilkins.



“That’s what really puts a smile on faces,” Sics says. “It’s much more than a team-building exercise. They laugh and boast about how great they were.” Company employees identify potential in themselves that they may not have recognized. With various roles in front of the camera and behind the scenes, there’s a function for everyone.

“Some people immediately come up with a concept, others you need to prod a bit, but the idea will still emerge,” Wilkins says. “It’s natural, the ability in everyone to tell a story. They’ve written scripts featuring alien births, unrequited love and death. Stretch your imagination: you can come up with anything.”

He recalls one memorable scene: “One prop was a superman cape and (the participants) managed to get Superman to fly in front of the camera. He was simply lying on a bench, the camera was on his face, someone was fluttering his cape and they were shooting from the ground looking up. It was a terrific shot. In essence, that’s what it’s all about - a creative burst that turned out to be visually quite spectacular.”

The company’s clients have included Lend Lease, Commonwealth bank, Sanitarium Health Foods and beverage giant Diageo - and the feedback has been tremendous. “We’ve had people say it’s the best team-building exercise they’ve done,” Sics says.

“It’s a simple concept, hopefully delivered well and in a short space of time,” Wilkins says. “that’s the challenge. You get a project and a length of time. You’ve got to be creative, inventive and complete the project.”