

**How to succeed in MrBeast production (leaked PDF)**. Whether or not you enjoy MrBeast's format of YouTube videos (here's [a 2022 Rolling Stone profile](#) if you're unfamiliar), this leaked onboarding document for new members of his production company is a compelling read.

It's a snapshot of what it takes to run a massive scale viral YouTube operation in the 2020s, as well as a detailed description of a very specific company culture evolved to fulfill that mission.

It starts in the most on-brand MrBeast way possible:

I genuinely believe if you attently read and understand the knowledge here you will be much better set up for success. So, if you read this book and pass a quiz I'll give you \$1,000.

Everything is focused very specifically on YouTube as a format:

Your goal here is to make the best YOUTUBE videos possible. That's the number one goal of this production company. It's not to make the best produced videos. Not to make the funniest videos. Not to make the best looking videos. Not the highest quality videos.. It's to make the best YOUTUBE videos possible.

The MrBeast definition of A, B and C-team players is one I haven't heard before:

A-Players are obsessive, learn from mistakes, coachable, intelligent, don't make excuses, believe in Youtube, see the value of this company, and are the best in the goddamn world at their job. B-Players are new people that need to be trained into A-Players, and C-Players are just average employees. [...] They arn't obsessive and learning. C-Players are poisonous and should be transitioned to a different company IMMEDIATELY. (It's okay we give everyone severance, they'll be fine).

The key characteristic outlined here, if you read between the hustle-culture lines, is learning. Employees who constantly learn are valued. Employees who don't are not.

There's a lot of stuff in there about YouTube virality, starting with the Click Thru Rate (CTR) for the all-important video thumbnails:

This is what dictates what we do for videos. "I Spent 50 Hours In My Front Yard" is lame and you wouldn't click it. But you would hypothetically click "I Spent 50 Hours In Ketchup". Both are relatively similar in time/effort but the ketchup one is easily 100x more viral. An image of someone sitting in ketchup in a bathtub is exponentially more interesting than someone sitting in their front yard.

The creative process for every video they produce starts with the title and thumbnail. These set the expectations for the viewer, and everything that follows needs to be defined with those in mind. If a viewer feels their expectations are not being matched, they'll click away - driving down the crucial Average View Duration that informs how much the video is promoted by YouTube's all-important mystical algorithms.

MrBeast videos have a strictly defined formula, outlined in detail on pages 6-10.

The first minute captures the viewer's attention and demonstrates that their expectations from the thumbnail will be met. Losing 21 million viewers in the first minute after 60 million initial clicks is considered a reasonably good result! Minutes 1-3, 3-6 and 6-end all have their own clearly defined responsibilities as well.

Ideally, a video will feature something they call the "wow factor":

An example of the "wow factor" would be our 100 days in the circle video. We offered someone \$500,000 if they could live in a circle in a field for 100 days ([video](#)) and instead of starting with his house in the circle that he would live in, we bring it in on a crane 30 seconds into the video. Why? Because who the fuck else on Youtube can do that lol.

Chapter 2 (pages 10-24) is about creating content. This is crammed with insights into what it takes to produce surprising, spectacular and very expensive content for YouTube.

A lot of this is about coordination and intense management of your dependencies:

I want you to look them in the eyes and tell them they are the bottleneck and take it a step further and explain why they are the bottleneck so you both are on the same page. "Tyler, you are my bottleneck. I have 45 days to make this video happen and I can not begin to work on it until I know what the contents of the video is. I need you to confirm you understand this is important and we need to set a date on when the creative will be done." [...] Every single day you must check in on Tyler and make sure he is still on track to hit the target date.

It also introduces the concept of "critical components":

Critical components are the things that are essential to your video. If I want to put 100 people on an island and give it away to one of them, then securing an island is a critical component. It doesn't matter how well planned the challenges on the island are, how good the weather is, etc. Without that island there is no video.

[...]

Critical Components can come from literally anywhere and once something you're working on is labeled as such, you treat it like your baby. WITHOUT WHAT YOU'RE WORKING ON WE DO NOT HAVE A VIDEO! Protect it at all costs, check in on it 10x a day, obsess over it, make a backup, if it requires shipping pay someone to pick it up and drive it, don't trust standard shipping, and speak up the second anything goes wrong. The literal second. Never coin flip a Critical Component (that means you're coinflipping the video aka a million plus dollars)

There's a bunch of stuff about communication, with a strong bias towards "higher forms of communication": in-person beats a phone call beats a text message beats an email.

Unsurprisingly for this organization, video is a highly valued tool for documenting work:

Which is more important, that one person has a good mental grip of something or that their entire team of 10 people have a good mental grip on something? Obviously the team. And

the easiest way to bring your team up to the same page is to freaken video everything and store it where they can constantly reference it. A lot of problems can be solved if we just video sets and ask for videos when ordering things.

I enjoyed this note:

Since we are on the topic of communication, written communication also does not constitute communication unless they confirm they read it.

And this bit about the value of consultants:

Consultants are literally cheat codes. Need to make the world's largest slice of cake? Start off by calling the person who made the previous world's largest slice of cake lol. He's already done countless tests and can save you weeks worth of work. [...] In every single freakin task assigned to you, always always always ask yourself first if you can find a consultant to help you.

Here's a darker note from the section "Random things you should know":

Do not leave consteatants waiting in the sun (ideally waiting in general) for more than 3 hours. Squid game it cost us \$500,000 and boys vs girls it got a lot of people out. Ask James to know more

And to finish, this note on budgeting:

I want money spent to be shown on camera ideally. If you're spending over \$10,000 on something and it won't be shown on camera, seriously think about it.

I'm always interested in finding management advice from unexpected sources. For example, I love [The Eleven Laws of Showrunning](#) as a case study in managing and successfully delegating for a large, creative project.

I don't think this MrBeast document has as many lessons directly relevant to my own work, but as an honest peek under the hood of a weirdly shaped and absurdly ambitious enterprise it's legitimately fascinating.

---

Posted [15th September 2024](#) at 2:37 pm

## Recent articles

- [Notes on OpenAI's new o1 chain-of-thought models](#) - 12th September 2024
- [Notes from my appearance on the Software Misadventures Podcast](#) - 10th September 2024
- [Teresa T is name of the whale in Pillar Point Harbor near Half Moon Bay](#) - 8th September 2024

youtube 34

management 55

leadership 5

**Simplify infrastructure** with MongoDB Atlas, the leading developer data platform

Colophon © 2002 2003 2004 2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013  
2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019 2020 2021 2022 2023 2024