SOUND

“If it sounds good it is good”

When recording sound for film you should have a dedicated sound person who can monitor the sound at all times. Nothing is more frustrating that looking back at footage and finding there was a problem with the sound.
To get good sound you need to get a microphone as near as possible to the sound source. It sounds easy, but you also have to keep the mic out of shot.

The flow of audio:

Voice – Mic – Mixer – Camera – Headphones.

The sound person should listen to the sound at the last point in the chain. It’s happened many times where a sound person has listened to the mixer and found out later the sound that went to tape was useless.

If you monitor sound from the camera you can then use this simple rule:

“If it sounds good it is good”

Dialogue

While filming the most important sound is dialogue – if it’s no good you have to re-dub or re-shoot. Everything else can be added later quite easily and in fact makes for a better sound mix. When you watch deleted scenes on a DVD you will usually notice that the only sound there is dialogue. This is because the majority of sound is added later using effects discs or foley artists.

MICROPHONE CHARACTERISTICS:

All microphones have two determining characteristics: Pickup pattern and operating principle. The pickup pattern determines from what direction the microphone will capture sound. For the sake of simplicity, we will discuss the two most common patterns: Directional (or "Cardioid") and Non-directional (or "Omni-directional). The name "cardioid" comes from the shape of the pickup pattern on a directional microphone - it vaguely resembles an upside-down heart. Sounds at the front of the microphone are predominant, sounds at the sides of the microphone are much lower in volume and sounds at the rear of the microphone are barely picked up. Non-directional microphones pick up sound evenly from all directions.

BOOM MICROPHONE

The name "boom" actually comes from the pole that holds these microphones which is held by a boom operator. The microphones themselves are a highly directional type called a "shotgun mic". A boom is a special microphone pole that allows the mic to be hung over the subject(s) on camera. The boom mic is the ultimate way to capture sound for video. Because they are highly directional, they pick up very little background noise - they are not held by or attached to the talent, so there is a minimum of mechanical noise plus, they sound great! The only disadvantages are that they must be carefully positioned just outside the video frame.

When mounting to a boompole, you must use some type of "shock mount". This is a special microphone clip that is suspended by elastic or rubber straps to eliminate mechanical noise transferred through the pole. Always make sure there are headphones available to monitor the sound of the microphone prior to and during the shoot. Due to the highly directional nature of shotgun microphones, monitoring the mic will ensure the highest quality sound.