STORYBOARD DEADLINES AND TIMELINES

Here are the facts: every panel for a television storyboard based on a written script takes 10 - 20 minutes AVERAGE per panel WITHOUT revision time included. This is also based on a board that is done on paper with out adding the timing or dialogue tracts required in Toonboom Storyboard Pro or Adobe Flash.

You usually need 5-6 weeks to make an 11 minute storyboard/animatic. Factors are:
-How clean do the boards need to be?
-How much action and complexity is in scenes and character performances?
-How many revisions will be handed to you? How much time will you have to execute them?

These are difficult questions, some, only your Production Manager or Associate Producer can answer. Others, only you can answer once you've started working and have hopefully had some discussions with the Storyboard Supervisor, Director, or Show Runner/Creative Producer.

My suggestions:

1. KEEP TRACK OF YOUR TIME. Get one of those little paper book diaries and write down how many hours you REALLY work every day. You will understand yourself how much you are working, and you will have physical proof to show anyone exactly what's going on.

2. TALK TO OTHERS. Don't just complain, get a **real** consensus of what is happening and get them to keep track of their time as well.

3. GIVE A COPY OF TV STORYBOARD TIME REQUIREMENTS to your Production Manager / Associate Producer. If you are afraid to hand it to them personally, slip it under their door. If they actually read it, It might give them an understanding why they can never seem to get "those slow board artists" to turn in their storyboards on time. ...

And now, the Veteran Board Artist estimates the time that the storyboarding will actually take. ...

TV STORYBOARD TIME REQUIREMENTS

NOTE: The following is based on the actual PHYSICAL time requirements to

create a storyboard for TV animation. Although there is some variance to the speed at which artists draw, the following is based on the AVERAGE time needed to create the necessary work based on a script with equal parts action and acting and NO REVISIONS.

The following is what is required in any fully cleaned-up panel of storyboard:

1. Suggested background
2. An on-model character – either a) establishing and/or b) acting / expressing story point.
3. Scene description, and camera action. special effects description.
4. Initial rough timing / animatic set-up (TB Storyboard Pro / Flash)

MINIMUM time required to complete panel: 10 minutes/panel

Average Time: 20 minutes/panel

(*A complicated action with camera moves and armies can take over an hour.*)

For a 3 Act script consisting of 36 – 40 pages:

#Panels / script page: 24 – 36 (8 -12 bd.pgs.) Time: 8 – 12 hrs, 1- 1.5 8 hr days*

#Panels / 1 minute of film: 60 – 72 (20 – 24 bd.pgs.) Time: 20 – 24 hrs, 2.5 – 3 8b hr days*

#Panels / 7 minute film: 420 – 504 (140 – 168 bd.pgs) Time: 140 – 168 hrs., 17.5 – 21 8 hr days (3.5-4wks)*

Panels / 11 minute film: 660 – 792 (220 – 264 bd. pgs) Time: 220 - 264 hrs., 27.5 – 33 " " (5.5 – 6wks)*

Panels / 22 minute film: 1320 – 1584 (440 – 528 bd. pgs) Time: 440 - 528 hrs., 55 - 66 " " (11 – 12wks)*

* *(Time is based on average time of 20 minutes x panel count WITHOUT revisions and going straight to cleanup. If revisions are required, multiply all times above by 1.25X)*

!!(Special Note: ACTION takes at least 2-3 times the amount of drawings that acting does. If the show is heavy on action, multiply numbers given above by 2X to compensate for the additional drawing and panels needed)!!

If working in Toonboom Storyboard Pro add .25X to the equation for the additional amount of work added to create a working animatic.

Simple formulas for calculating adjustments to the average time:

Average Show

Hrs x .75 thumbnail and rough only
Hrs. x 1 finished board no revisions
Hrs. x 1.25 finished board with revisions on the roughs
Hrs. x 1.5 finished board with revisions on the roughs in TBSBP

Action / Comedy Heavy Show

Hrs. x 2 action heavy board no revisions
Hrs x 2.5 heavy action board with revisions the on roughs
Hrs x 2.75 heavy action board with revisions on the roughs in TBSB

TV STORYBOARD TIME REQUIREMENTS

Parameters of 10 – 20 minutes for each panel described above is not an arbitrary figure. Consider the analysis below for the explanation of why it takes this amount of time for a professional storyboard artist to produce each frame for a cartoon's blue print. Consider that every panel of storyboard requires the three steps: **Planning, Drawing and Description.**

Usually a board artist considers a minimum of a scene at a time (3-10 panels) and how that scene works within a sequence (1/4 – 1 script page) and how that sequence works within a section (1 – 3 script pages) then how the sections work into each other and to the full script.

Storyboarding for animation is NOT just rapidly drawing a sketch. Even if a story artist is doing a pitch session and is quickly throwing up post-its, those sketches have to be taken down, reworked, and put into a blueprint like format so that the team working on the film can use them effectively.

Storyboarding for television requires that the artist do the following jobs: storyboarding as layout; writer of all action and gags and clerk for scene descriptions dialogue, action and camera action; and initial acting, action, camera, and timing direction. Also, sometimes, they are background, prop and character designer. All characters are required to be as close to "model" as possible, many times without the artist ever having drawn the characters before.

Every panel created requires the following:

1. Planning: reading the script to decide on the image

A. Staging – where and how to set up the shot in relation to:

1) Location choice
2) Camera position
3) Composition
4) Camera motion
5) Emotional Note
6) Cutting, timing and transitions

B. Acting - How the character(s) are to act in the shot with relation to

1) Personality of the character
2) Style of the show
3) Event taking pace
4) Actual action the character must commit
5) Point of dialogue delivery
6) Plot through line
7) Break down of action over successive panels
8) Action of relationship between multiple characters and their reactions

C. Continuity – maintenance of continued visual plot points

1) Correct costumes, props and locations
2) On-model / character proportions and physical attributes
3) Maintaining continued existence of Point of Interest characters, props or costumes not associated with on screen action but necessary for story through line or plot (Example: Evenrude in
the Disney series "Tail Spin")

2. Drawing : creating the image

A. Thumbnail – initial skeletal composition, staging, continuity, acting and action – work out unresolved story
and action neglected in script.

B. Rough – rework of initial ideas, draw in backgrounds, refine acting and action.

C. Cleanup – tighten all character acting and visual information.

3. Description: verbally describing the panel

A. Scene Description

1) Verbal description of action

2) Camera information
3) Staging requests (i.e. overlays, animating BG's, Bi-pack)
B. Dialogue
C. Special Effects
3) Sound FX
4) Visual FX
5) Special timing requests

Here's a given line of script: "The warriors attack the fort." What has to be added that the writer left out? How many panels do you think it will take? How long will it take to execute? This could be easily 3 drawings, or it could be 100. It's up to you to decide, with help from the audio track, the director, your supervisor, and how much time you think the story has… and how much time you think YOU have to make this happen.

TV STORYBOARD BUDGETS

Even as a new Junior Storyboard artist - Don't ask for anything less than $1000 per week. This includes the often entry-level position of 'storyboard revision artist'. An assistant artist or revisionist has you doing clean up on approved roughs and correcting clean storyboards from the clients/producers' notes.

Once you are a more seasoned storyboard artist with some experience, ask for no less than $1,200 per week. More veteran storyboard artists that work on more action-heavy and complex scripts can do at least $1,500 per week.

For a a typical animated series you have two episodes per half-hour, they average at about 175 scenes per 11 min. story (about 450 panels), if it's got a nice balance of action and simple talking shots bit of action to it. Shows for younger kids tend to be slower in action and therefore will have fewer scenes since the shots are longer, the pacing is slower, the action is less. The average comes to 3.7 seconds per scene, more or less, depending on what's happening on screen. There were usually 3 panels to a scene (again, depending on the action involved) so there's around 450 panels (drawings) in a show.

Just to give you a better sense of this, let's say each storyboard panel took you 20 minutes to draw (keep in mind; 20 min. per panel is leaning more towards a difficult show). That would take you 10,500 minutes to complete the whole script. That's 175 hours total. Working 7 hours a day (no breaks included) it'll take you 25 days to complete, not working weekends, that's 5 weeks total.

Add 2 days at the beginning for thumbnails and 3 days at the end for making an animatic out of your own storyboards and you've got a full 6 weeks of work.

An assortment of variables can be at play. If you work 9 hours per day, then you can complete the main body of work in 19.5 days. That's just under 4 weeks of time (not including the preliminary thumbnails, animatic assembly and any revisions through out the process).

Either way, you're looking at 5-6 weeks for the entire process.
The range can vary; from an easy, simple, revisions-free script only taking 4 weeks. To an action-heavy / revision-heavy script taking 7 weeks.

Your storyboard budget can nearly double depending on how many changes, re-writes, and revisions can happen to the story and staging

Now from a money point of view, let's go back to the 450 panels per episode scenario: If it takes you an average of 20 minutes to draw a panel, that's 3 per hour. If they offer you $16.00 a panel, you'd get paid $7,200.00 to produce the entire 11 minute storyboard in 6 weeks. It includes the preliminary thumbnails and the final animatic as well. It comes to about $48 per hour.
$7,200.00 is the high end on a hefty budget (a more difficult than average show).

In comparison, on a simpler-to-draw series, with less action and complexity, where it can take you 15 minutes per panel, you're looking at $5,400. Taking you only 4.5 weeks to complete the storyboard from start to finish.

There's many ways to cut it.
$1,200 / week or…
$7,200 for an action-heavy storyboard
$5,400 for a moderately difficult storyboard
$4,200 for a very easy storyboard

Of course many of these scenarios don't account for any revisions, which you usually don't get paid extra for, unless there's a major story or design change. This usually takes another week to do (for two rounds of revisions).

In total, it's 5-6 weeks to complete an 11 minute episode.

Salaries:
• Junior Storyboard Artist (revisionist, assistant, or overall newbie): **$900-$1000/wk**

• Senior Storyboard Artist (more experienced, strong draftsmanship): **$1100-1500/wk**

Invoicing & Payment

If you are working Freelance - not being paid a set salary (bi-weekly) amount, you'll need to invoice your client/employer for each storyboard job you complete.

When dealing with clients it's important to have a contract in writing and an agreed upon sum before beginning any work. Ask for a deposit or retainer up front, which can be half to 1/3 of the total job. Do not begin any work without having first received the deposit. In your written quote or contract, be specific about the services you provide, including the number of drawings you will create or the number of hours you promise to work. You can charge more for weekend work and overtime hours (anything past 48 hours within a 7 day period).

Anything not specified in the quote or contract should be an overage charge, and authorized in writing by both parties before any work begins.

At the end of the job it is standard practice to send the client a bill or *invoice* to the client. Unless otherwise agreed upon, the standard payment terms are full payment within 30 days of receiving the invoice commonly called '*net 30*'. Keep this in mind and have money reserves on hand, knowing it could take a month before you see the payment arrive. Be professional with your billing and invoicing, as it will reflect on your work and overall customer experience you give the client.

Here are some payment resources that can help when invoicing clients:

www.paypal.com

www.squareup.com

www.freshbooks.com