



DESTINATION THAILAND

**FILMING & DOING BUSINESS IN THAILAND
WHAT NO ONE TELLS YOU (UNTIL IT'S TOO LATE)**

**A REALITY CHECK FOR FOREIGN PRODUCERS AND
BUSINESS TEAMS – AND HOW TO AVOID THE TRAPS.**



WELCOME

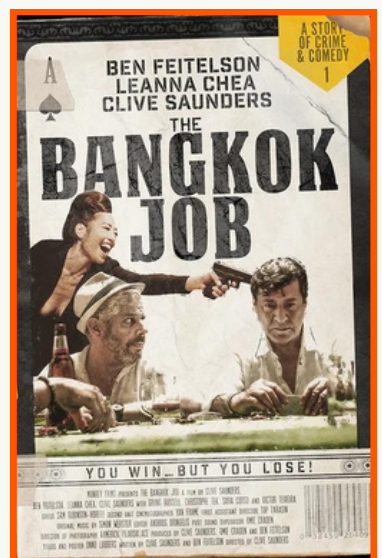
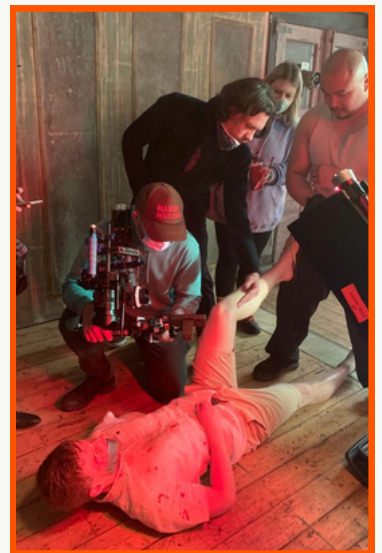
1. Why Thailand Is Not Plug-and-Play

Thailand looks like a dream location: beautiful, affordable, friendly - but under the surface it's a maze of permits, authorities, cultural red lines, and moving parts that can derail projects if you arrive unprepared.

Foreign film crews, event teams, and business visitors often discover too late that:

- **You cannot apply for national film permits on your own; a registered Thai coordinator is mandatory.**
- Multiple agencies can claim a say over the same shoot or event - Film Office, local authorities, national parks, temple committees, CAAT (for drones), immigration and labour.
- Cultural mis-steps around topics like the monarchy, Buddhism, politics, or sex work can get content blocked or force late script changes.

This guide is not a step-by-step manual. It's a realistic overview of what's involved - and how I help you navigate it with my Thai partners so you don't lose time, money or footage.



2. Film & Content: The Hidden Complexity

2.1 The Thailand Film Office bottleneck

All foreign film and video productions must be cleared through the Thailand Film Office (TFO), under the Department of Tourism. You cannot apply directly; you must work through a registered Thai coordinator or production service company.

For most projects, you should expect:

- A full script or detailed treatment, plus synopsis and sometimes storyboard, to be submitted for review.
- Thai translation of key materials (at minimum synopsis and often treatment/script).
- 3-5 working days for straightforward commercials/docs, and 5-14 (or more) for drama, features or sensitive content.

2.2 Layers of permission

A national film permit does not mean “you can shoot anywhere”. For many projects you may also need:

- Location permissions (malls, hotels, restaurants, private land, public streets).
- Access approvals for temples, monasteries, historical sites, national parks and beaches.
- Drone permits and registration with the Civil Aviation Authority of Thailand (CAAT).
- Local police or municipal coordination for traffic control or crowd scenes.

Each of these involves different owners, forms, languages, expectations, and timelines. Coordinating them from overseas is where many productions burn time and money.

2.3 Cultural red lines and script approval

The Film Board reviews content for cultural, religious, and political appropriateness. Themes that often trigger questions or revision requests include:

- Thai monarchy and national symbols.
- Buddhism, monks, temples and sacred objects.
- Thai military, police and state institutions.
- Drugs, crime and sex work - especially if glamorised.
- Supernatural storylines involving temples or graveyards.
- Historical politics, coups and protests.

This doesn't mean these topics are impossible - but they must be handled with care and explained clearly. Local guidance here is critical.

2.4 Where I fit in

I work as your creative producer and local fixer in Bangkok, with relationships to registered Thai coordinators who handle the legal paperwork.

My role is to:

- Pre-screen scripts and treatments for Thai sensitivities and practicality.
- Prepare clear synopses and documentation that translate well into Thai.
- Coordinate with registered Thai production service companies on your behalf.
- Source locations, crew, talent and logistics; act as cultural and communication bridge on set.

You deal with one point of contact - me - while my Thai partners and I handle the invisible machinery.

3. Business Events & Corporate Communication

Thailand is a regional hub for conferences, seminars and launches – but pulling off a professional, culturally on-point event as a foreign team is harder than it looks.

3.1 The event stack

A typical business event in Bangkok may require separate coordination with:

- Venues and hotels (contracts, deposits, F&B, room blocks).
- AV suppliers (sound, projection, LED, livestream, recording).
- Interpreters and simultaneous translation booths.
- Graphic designers, printers and signage providers.
- Photographers, videographers and social media teams.

Each vendor has different English levels, processes and expectations; making them all play nicely together is half the battle.

3.2 Localization traps

Slides, booth graphics, handouts and POS material that work in your home market can easily fall flat – or cause confusion – in Thailand.

Common issues include:

- Literal translation that misses nuance or politeness levels.
- Visuals or taglines that clash with Thai cultural norms.
- Over-dense English slides delivered to mostly Thai audiences.

What you need is not just translation, but bilingual storytelling: making sure Thai and non-Thai audiences receive the same message, framed appropriately.

3.3 How I help business teams

For international businesses and event organisers, I provide:

- Concept and content support for seminars, panels and keynotes.
- AV production and recording via trusted local teams.
- Design and localization for booth graphics, signage and POS.
- Venue scouting and on-site event coordination.

Again, the details depend on your project - but the principle is the same: you brief one senior partner in Bangkok, and I orchestrate the rest.

4. Business Setup & Professional Liaison

Some clients want more than a one-off shoot or event; they're exploring Thailand as a regional base. That's where the complexity jumps again.

4.1 What's involved in "setting up"

Depending on your model, you may need to think about:

- Choosing between a standard Thai company, representative office or BOI-promoted entity.
- Foreign business licences, shareholding structures and director requirements.
- Visas and work permits for foreign staff (often tied to BOI or capital/employment ratios).
- Office or studio space (serviced, co-working, long-term lease).
- Accounting, tax, payroll and company secretarial services.

Each of these are handled by different professionals - lawyers, BOI consultants, accountants, office providers and landlords.

4.2 My role (and what I don't do)

I'm not a lawyer, BOI agent or accountant.

Instead, I act as your business communications and coordination partner in Bangkok:

- Introduce you to vetted BOI and corporate law firms, accountants and office providers, matched to your needs.
- Brief them on your business model and objectives so you don't have to explain from scratch.
- Sit in on key calls/meetings (in person or online) to translate cultural issues and ensure everybody really understands each other.
- Help you keep momentum when time zones, language and different expectations would otherwise slow everything down.

You retain specialists for technical work; I make sure the whole thing hang together.

5. Executive & Concierge Layer

For some clients – founders, executives, high-profile creatives – the challenge is not just the project but life in Thailand: getting things done, without burning time or energy.

These clients often need ad-hoc help with:

- Curated shopping (art, fashion, furnishings, gifts) with Thai negotiation support.
- Restaurant and venue bookings, knowing where is appropriate for what.
- Golf days, informal networking, or scouting “third places” for thinking and writing.
- Airport runs, hotel choices and city orientation.
- Occasional filming, social content, talks and media opportunities.

When it makes sense, I act as a senior fixer/concierge – the farang brain on the ground – so you can drop in, get moving and focus on ideas rather than logistics.

6. Why You Shouldn't DIY This (Even If You Could)

Could you, in theory, piece all of this together yourself from embassy websites, Facebook groups and Google? Possibly.

But the real-world costs of getting it wrong can include:

- Delayed or refused permits; reshoots; missed windows with contributors or locations.
- Footage or equipment confiscated for non-compliant shoots.
- Offended partners, audiences or officials because cultural lines weren't understood.
- Wasted days in taxis, on hold or in the wrong government office.
- Internal stress and opportunity cost when your senior people are playing local fixer instead of doing their real jobs.

Working with a local producer/fixer doesn't just “smooth things out”; it changes the risk profile of your project.



For foreign producers, business teams and creative professionals working in or entering Thailand, One Create Agency removes the stressful moving parts so you can focus on what matters.

Our three service pillars

1. Film & Content Production

- Film permits, script approval and location coordination.
- Local crew, equipment and on-the-ground production support.
- Creative producing, fixing and cultural liaison.

2. Business Events & Corporate Communication

- Conference and seminar production (AV, livestreaming, recording).
- Graphic design and localization (booth graphics, signage, POS).
- Event logistics, venue coordination and hospitality management.

3. Business Setup & Professional Liaison

- Strategic introductions to BOI lawyers, accountants and office providers.
- Ongoing coordination and cultural translation for market-entry projects.
- Soft-landing support for companies establishing Thai operations.

This integrated approach means you work with one trusted partner across creative, operational and strategic needs in Thailand.

8. How to Use This Guide

This document is deliberately high-level. It's designed to help you:

- Understand why Thailand is more complex than it appears from abroad.
- Spot the main categories of risk and hidden work.
- Decide early that you want a competent local partner involved.

It is not intended to be a DIY recipe or legal advice. For that, you'll need formal Thai counsel and registered coordinators - which I can connect you with when we talk.



9. Next Steps

If you're considering Thailand for a shoot, event or business move:

1. Email a short outline of your project to info@onecreate.co
2. Include rough dates, what you're trying to achieve, and where Thailand fits into the story.
3. If you already have a script, deck or concept note, attach it.

I'll respond within 24 hours with:

- A realistic view on permits, timelines and key risks.
- Whether your plan is feasible as-is - and what might need adjusting.
- How I can best support you on the ground, and what that would broadly cost.

