

A Few Easy Steps to GOOD Video Production

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Brief Description: If you are considering using video in your outreach efforts, or simply for archiving, attend this basic video production training. Learn to capture your important people and events in clean clear picture and sound. Find out what you'll need to turn your recordings into professional-looking finished programs. Discover the easiest and least expensive way to duplicate and distribute your programs to the widest audience.

Topical Outline:

- I. The three steps to writing a useful script:
 - a. Identify your audience—Whom are you trying to reach?
For example, your client community.
 - b. Identify your message—What do you want them to know?
For example, “We can help you if you call us, and this is our phone number.”
 - c. Identify your goal—What do you want your audience to do?
For example, to call you.
 - d. Additional Helpful Tips
 - i. Think about what kind of format, style or approach you’d like to use. Think about t.v. shows as examples; “60 Minutes”, “ABC News”, “Charlie Rose”, “Saturday Night Live”, “Sponge Bob Square Pants”. Will it be news, comedy, instructional, a PSA, what?
 - ii. Use a two column audio/video script format (see attachment)
 - iii. Create a “shot list” from the script (see attachment)

- II. Tips for appearing on camera:
 - a. Don’t wear a white shirt. They are too bright for most situations
 - b. Don’t wear thin stripes. They cause wiggly “moire” patterns to appear on the tape and television.
 - c. Avoid red clothing—stick to pastels or muted colors. Blue and green are pretty good. Orange and brown can be okay but may cause problems if they’re too “red”.
 - d. Stand in one place, but don’t be afraid to move—be animated, especially with your head and face. Practice moving your head a little from one side to the other every other sentence or so.

- e. Enunciate clearly—make sure words have endings
- f. Act natural, act natural, act natural and don't be afraid to smile

III. What kind of camera to use:

- a. DV, cost performance ratio is unsurpassed. Digital video is compressed inside the camera and stored as digital data on the tape. During the editing "capture" process, the data is simply transferred to the editing system. The same thing happens when editing is complete and the finished program goes back to tape. So the final product is identical in quality to the original footage. This is only possible with digital.
 - i. Canon; "Eleura, Optura, GL-2, XL-1s"
 - ii. Sony, "TRV series, VX 2000"
 - iii. Panasonic "AG DVX 100"
- b. Format wars
 - i. There are always new and better formats being developed. For now, you only need to understand that the "DV" format was such a dramatic improvement over anything that came before, it's the only format you need to think about.

IV. What good audio is and how to get it: Signal to Noise ratio

- a. Camera mic—stand close
 - i. If you want to tape an interview with someone and you only have the mic on the camera, stand as close as possible to the subject. You will have to zoom all the way out (which is good because it stabilizes "hand-held" shots) and the camera mic will pick up the subject's voice more than any background noise. Conversely, if you stand back and zoom in to a close up, your picture may look find (if shaky) but you won't understand a word against the background noise.
- b. Wired mic's—best and cheapest
 - i. Handheld vs lavalier
 - ii. Mic to camera adapters
- c. Wireless mic's—most convenient, good sound, most expensive

V. How to make a good picture, controlling contrast:

- a. No camera is as good as the human eye—so avoid extreme contrast. Use your view finder. What you see is what you get.
- b. Office lighting, with and without supplemental light
 - i. Don't shoot in front of windows and other potential backlights
 - ii. Shoot with light source behind camera, above and to one side, facing the subject
- c. Outdoor lighting, with and without supplemental light
 - i. Diffuse the light with a "screen" or "silk", a large white "bed-sheet-in-a-frame" that goes between the sun and your subject, as close to the subject as possible without coming into the shot
 - 1. Buy one at a lighting supply store or make one with pvc pipe and thin silky cloth

- ii. Fill high contrast shadow areas with a “bounce board”, which can be any large (approx 3’ by 3’) white board, like art foam core.
 - iii. Again, place camera and subject so that the sun is behind and to one side of the camera.
 - iv. Try to find a background that’s not distracting but approximately the same brightness as the subject, maybe one shade lighter or darker.

- VI. How to make a good picture, composition:
 - a. “Headroom”—subject’s head should almost touch top of viewfinder
 - b. Types of shots – use lots of close-ups
 - c. Logical balanced shots – give your subject room “to speak into”
 - d. Uncluttered scenes—make sure your audience knows what you want them to look at

- VII. Editing—turning your tapes into finished programs
 - a. If you edit
 - i. Advantages
 - 1. You have total control
 - 2. You don’t have to pay an editor
 - 3. It’s fun
 - ii. Disadvantages
 - 1. You need to own or have access to editing equipment
 - 2. You need to learn how to edit
 - 3. It’s no fun
 - b. If you hire an editor
 - i. Advantages
 - 1. You benefit from their experience
 - 2. You benefit from their resources (for example, music and graphics libraries)
 - ii. Disadvantages
 - 1. It’s expensive—most editors charge by the hour
 - 2. Creative differences. They don’t understand your clients

- VIII. Labeling
 - a. How to make labels for your videos, CDs and DVDs
 - i. Use Microsoft Publisher or some other readily available software package.
 - b. Customizing labels, including pictures and logos
 - i. Most labeling programs allow you to import pictures including logos. Still images can be taken from video and used during labeling.
 - c. Do it yourself versus commercial printing
 - i. Do it yourself labeling makes it possible to do “short runs” of 1 or 2 labels. If you have to do several hundred, a small commercial printer such as a Kinko’s may be more practical. For orders of 1,000 or more, you should definitely go to a commercial duplication house. They will handle all labeling for you.

- IX. Duplication and Distribution
 - a. Do it yourself versus commercial duplication--depends on use
 - i. For broadcast distribution see handout, "Duplication and Distribution of Public Service Announcements"
 - ii. For distribution to CBO's, clients and other partner agencies, see attachment, "Do it Yourself Dubbing"
 - b. Web distribution
 - i. Format wars, standardization
 - 1. Windows Media, Quicktime, Real Media; which one should you use to distribute your content? What's most important is creating an infrastructure that works for your target audience.
 - ii. Collaboration
 - 1. For many uses, it's most important to be sure the same format is used throughout a network of similar users.

- X. Collaboration with other agencies
 - a. Create generic programs that can be customized and shared with partner agencies.
 - i. Basic valuable information can be presented in a format that leaves "holes" where partnering agencies can edit in their own program contact information. It only takes a willingness to do so.