



BASIC VIDEO PRODUCTION

TABLE of CONTENTS

THE VIDEO MAKING PROCESS

PRE-PRODUCTION

DEVELOPMENT, STORY AND CHARACTER STEPS BEFORE SHOOTING

BEFORE YOU PRESS RECORD

FRAMING FOR INTERVIEWS

SOUND AUDIO

CAPTURING THE ENVIRONMENT

THE VIDEO MAKING PROCESS:

**Development and Pre-
Production ▶ Production ▶ Media
Management ▶ Post-Production
▶ Distribution ▶
Audience Engagement = A SUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGN!**

DEVELOPMENT & PREPRODUCTION:

Getting Organized Before you Shoot

What is the story we are trying to tell?
Who makes a good character?
Crew positions and who will fill them?
What is the goal of the video?
Organization is the key to a successful video.

Steps Before You Shoot

- Define the Story
- Choose the characters? Contact them, pre-interview, get schedule, set up tentative time to film (allow time to set up and tear down at locations)
- Book crew and confirm shoot with everyone (request additional visual materials for characters to have ready for you to film/borrow)
- Write interview questions and practice them
- Create schedule for day/ shoot (allow ample drive time, set up and tear down time)
- Create a working shot list (think about visual moments you want to document, note any potential scenes you may be able to film...)

- Prep the gear (make sure batteries are charged, the cards are ready, the drive is prepped, etc)
- Review any notes or meetings on the story, purpose, audience--- always have your finished video in mind!
- Breath, relax and have fun...

GENERAL PRODUCTION GUIDELINES:

On Location: Before You Press Record

- Choose a Frame
- Adjust lighting
- Set up gear
- Discuss process with interviewee
- Sign Release form
- Begin

Interviews

- 1. Find your location, preferably a larger room with color so you can create some depth of field.**
- 2. Find your frame; where is the interview subject going to sit.**
 - Don't place your subject too close to a wall or backdrop. If you do, it will make your image seem very claustrophobic as well as cause unsightly shadows on the wall behind your subject. Instead, put at least 4 feet between your subject and the background.
 - Keep the camera at around eye level to your subject. Filming from above or below can create an uncomfortable or unintended emotion for the viewer
 - When shooting in a room with large windows, use this to your advantage! Don't place the subject so they are standing in front of the window. This will make their face look dark and the background too bright. Instead, place the camera by the window and use the light from the sun to shine on the subjects face creating a nice glow.

- When framing your subject, make sure there isn't too much headroom (empty space) above the subject's head. Also, level your tripod. Try to get a medium close up (MCU) and a close up (CU) on the subject.

3. Set your white balance, focus and iris.

4. Check your audio levels (see below)

The Interview

Before you start an interview, spend a bit of time in advance getting to know your subject and making him/her feel comfortable with you and with sitting in front of the camera. If you can have a conversation while you are both in position for shooting, so much the better. This is a good opportunity to check sound and lighting, etc. Don't ask interview questions, however, or you might get "off the record" answers, that don't sound as natural when they are repeated.

Ask your subject to look at you (and not the camera) when speaking.

Explain that your questions will not be heard in the finished piece – so you need your questions to be incorporated into the answers. Best to give a simple example, such as:

How long have you been doing this kind of work?

Bad answer: *15 years.*

Good answer: *I've been working at this agency for 15 years – ever since I had this amazing experience that ...*

When you are all finished with the scripted questions, ask if there is anything else the subject would like to add or explain in greater detail. Let the camera roll here – It's often where you will get your best sound bytes!

What about Sound?

The importance of good, clear sound is often under-rated. Sound is rarely noticed unless it catches your attention because it's bad – when levels are poorly calibrated, airplanes are flying overhead, radios or air conditioners are blaring in the background, mics are rubbing against clothing or somebody simply forgot to turn on the external microphone. The most compelling story will completely miss its mark if the words are garbled or viewers are distracted by ambient noise.

1. Make sure the setting is basically quiet

- Interior location (INT)- If you are in a controllable environment use this to your advantage! Ask your subject to turn off the phone, forced air heater or air conditioner, unplug the refrigerator (but remember to turn back on) and close the windows, if they live or work on a busy street.
- Exterior location (EXT) – unless the scene intentionally includes traffic, work, play or other sounds try to find a setting that is calm and remote.

2. Set up microphones

- Decide which microphone is better to use in any given situation. If you're using the lavalier, try to set it up so you can hide the cable. Give ample cable room so the subject can freely move around. If using the shotgun be conscious of mic movement and noise. These are very sensitive microphones designed to record human voice.

3. Check and adjust levels

- Look on the monitor to make sure levels are set correctly. **Do not adjust by listening to the volume on the headphones.**
- Levels should be between -12 and -20 but this can vary depending on camera. If you don't know look at the peak meter and when it goes into red you are over-modulating the sound.

4. While recording

Listen for on-coming traffic or airplanes before you ask your questions and wait for them to pass (this is both the sound operator and director's job). If your subject is speaking and it's not too far into the answer, ask her to begin again – reminding her to include the context of the question in her answer.

5. Record Room Tone

Room tone is exactly what it sounds like, the tone of a room or your shooting environment. As you will notice by now a room is not silent! Make sure to record 1-minute of room tone. This will be helpful in the edit by providing sound to fill in spaces between segments of dialog and to place as background sound for b-roll footage to maintain consistent sound tone throughout the scene.

Documenting the Environment “The good stuff”

Constructing a scene happens both while shooting and in the edit room. On the shooting side this happens by capturing coverage shots and footage that supports the interview and story.

Coverage is supplemental or alternate footage that is intercut with the main video. Shooting this footage enhances the story and makes it come alive, so you are not left with only “talking-head”. Don't forget to shoot varied shot sizes and active frames!

1. Types of Supportive Footage

- a. Shoot establishing shots and environmental footage so the audience gets a sense of location. Example:
 - a. Doctor interview, shoot hospital
 - b. Rabbi interview, shoot temple
 - c. Teacher interview, shoot school
- b. Shoot main subject while in action.
 - a. Doctor: with patient
 - b. Rabbi: giving sermon
 - c. Teacher: grading paper or in front of class
- c. Coverage: shots that relate to subject and support the story.
 - a. Doctor: medical instrument in room
 - b. Rabbi: Torah, arch, library/ office
 - c. Teacher: books, CU chalk board, students, desks

2. Pointers For Shooting Usable Footage

- Hold a steady shot for 10 sec.
- If doing the shot handheld, meaning you don't have a tri-pod, make sure to support your elbow with alternate hand or anything in your environment to steady the shot.
- If you have a decent tripod and feel comfortable, use the pan and tilt to add movement to the frame. The best shots have something happening. Ex. If you see a student writing get a CU over there hand and link that back up to their face concentrating.
- Avoid using the zoom. Zooming in on handheld shots = shaky footage. If you want to get close to your subject physically get closer with the camera.