



Ben Lucero
Sr Instructional Designer
Colorado Springs Utilities
blucero@csu.org

Video Production Tips

Before You Begin

1. Educate yourself – Learn as much as possible about the technology, workflows and geek-speak.
 2. Link your video production goals to company business. How does video production align with your business goals?
 3. Get management buy-in. Equipment and software costs can be significant. You'll have to provide a rationale for purchasing equipment.
 4. Make video production costs a regular part of your budget
 5. Befriend your IT department! They can make or break your video production plans. Work closely with them every step of the way!
 6. Develop and coordinate technology standards. Using an approved standard set of media delivery technologies will drastically improve your odds for success.
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Pre-Production

1. Know your customers and their business.
2. Involve decision-makers.
3. Communicate expectations.
4. Agree on the output – DVD, CD, Web, CD, LMS, blog, Facebook, YouTube, training course, etc.
5. Consider the possibilities of still imagery – Still image productions can cost significantly less and take less time to produce.
6. Consider shelf life – If possible, use captions to label people and/or their titles. Should the featured actor change positions, changing or removing the caption is a lot easier than reshooting.
7. Always write a script- Don't allow your talent to improvise. It doesn't work!
8. When writing a script, information alone isn't enough. Information will bore your audience to death. Try to tell a story.
9. Review script with **ALL** stakeholders.
10. Use a Storyboard.
11. Review storyboard with **ALL** stakeholders.
12. Carefully choose your shoot location. Are there issues that could negatively impact your production shoot? Things like safety hazards, noise, poor lighting, people not involved in the production who might get in the way, etc.
13. Video Shoot Location Survey - Conduct a pre-shoot visit and survey for possible issues.

14. Lighting – If shooting outdoors, avoid direct high sun shooting. If indoors, make sure there is plenty of “good” light.
15. Audio – If possible, plan on using lavalier and/or shotgun microphones and plan to monitor your audio input while shooting using a good pair of headphones.
16. Casting – Choose the right talent for the video. If you’re shooting a humorous production, avoid using a “serious” person with no sense of humor.
17. Attire – Strongly suggest what your talent should wear; even if it’s the big boss. Visit the following link for suggestions for looking your best on camera:
<http://www.barlowpro.com/video-production/dress-tips.aspx>
Generally speaking, your talent should avoid wearing:
 - a. Busy, patterned or bright clothing (including white)
 - b. Tight patterned clothing - tend to create optical illusions on camera. Simple no-patterned ties work better than busy ties.
 - c. Eye glasses that reflect light. Repositioning your actor or adjusting light might be necessary.
 - d. Jewelry that reflects light and/or creates unwanted audio noise.
 - e. Clothing that makes a lavalier microphone stand out on camera.
18. Pack hairspray and makeup. Encourage talent to bring a backup set of clothes. We keep a few company shirts in stock just in case.
19. Indicate to your talent that makeup might be necessary. You’ll want to avoid shiny faces or heads and sometimes makeup is the only solution. Pack at least some foundation makeup.
20. Consider hiring a voiceover professional. They work faster and provide better results. The cost of recording an employee or SME can equal or cost more than hiring a pro.
21. Consider a tapeless solution.
22. Estimate length of shoot and communicate to all participants. Consider adding 30% more time than you anticipate. Minor snags can increase production time.
23. Pack extra batteries and cables. If possible, use AC power.
24. Invite all involved in the project to the production shoot – ask them to arrive early.
25. Use a checklist – There are too many pieces of equipment to remember from memory.

Production

1. Arrive early
2. Bring copies of the script
3. Use a tripod unless impossible to do so
4. Be prepared to post the script for your talent, i.e. teleprompter, cue cards, etc
5. Conduct a pre-shoot briefing with production crew and talent
6. Test lighting before shooting- One actor to the next can look different under the same lighting conditions due to complexion, hair color, clothing, etc. Be prepared to adjust from one actor to the next.
7. Test audio before shooting- One actor to the next can sound different in the same environment due to voice quality, inflection, projection, etc. Be prepared to adjust from one actor to the next.
8. Log your scenes/clips – A notebook works.
9. Shoot for the best take as possible. Avoid accepting mediocre clips. Post production corrections, edits, and splicing multiple takes together to create a continuous scene can take an enormous

amount of time. “Pay now or pay later” is true when it comes to production/post-production time. Taking the time for good takes up front **will** save you time and money later.

10. Coach your talent – The goal is to make them look good while achieving the mission of the production. Explain this to them and communicate your coaching process/technique. This will sometimes mean being brutally honest. Regardless, always be positive and constructive when coaching. Nervous or tense actors typically project their state of mind on camera. Keep them as relaxed as possible. Kind humor always helps.
11. Shoot B-roll footage – Helps bring context to the production and allows for cutaways in case something doesn't look right on screen with your talent.

Post Production

1. Consider branding - consistency is best if you plan to rollout a series. Consider consistent introduction screens, logos, soundtracks, etc.
2. Gather graphics, clips, audio effects, and soundtracks including background scenery if using chromakey (green screen) prior to importing to your production tool
3. Use only assets that contribute to the production. Graphics or soundtracks that don't match the production will only deter from your final product.
4. Be aware of copyright laws.
5. Before you begin the editing phase, organize project assets including clearly labeling your video/audio clips, graphics, and soundtracks.
6. Output for customer review – Explain the review process to the team. Publishing to a server and sending a URL to team can work. Reviewing together works better. By this point, there should be no surprises if stakeholders were involved in the process.
7. Subjectivity can be your enemy – nitpicky feedback can significantly delay your project. Ask for constructive feedback.
8. Avoid becoming emotionally attached to your productions
9. Be flexible
10. Low-fidelity can work if the story is good. It doesn't always have to be a Hollywood-quality production!