



OUR 9.5 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW™

BEFORE BEGINNING ANY VIDEO

Created By: Ron Strobel, THE Steven Spielberg of Corporate Filmmaking

1. Get Focused - Realize that we live in a visual world. If a picture is worth a thousand words, then a moving picture is worth a million. Once you've decided to explore the concept of video, be as focused as possible as to what you want to accomplish with it. What's missing that you feel a video will help resolve? Who is your audience? In other words, who will view this and, once they've seen it, what do you want them to think or do? If the producer you are considering hiring does not ask these questions, you have the wrong person. Look elsewhere!

2. Choosing a Producer - Who do you get to help you with producing the video? We suggest someone with the following three credentials. First, someone with samples of videos they have produced that have the look and feel that you are expecting. Second, someone whose personality is in sync with your own. He or she should be knowledgeable about the process but also be nice to work with. It's a chemistry thing. After all, this is movie-making, the number one fun profession in our culture. Third, choose someone who has a proven track record of working within your time frame and budget by talking to their recent clients.

3. Budgeting - We suggest you tell your producer up front how much you would like to spend. Why? Because there are many tricks to this trade, many "guerilla" ways to achieve the same basic result without spending a fortune. Just be careful that your production values match the image of your company you wish to convey. It all comes down to shooting days and editing time. Our shows normally cost between \$1,000 and \$4,000 per running minute.

4. The Pre-Production Process - For those of you who have never made a real video, this is the daunting yet exciting part. Basically it comes down to three steps: pre-production, production and post production. Pre-production is when you decide on concept, style, pacing, what and who will be included. It is where all brainstorming occurs, and it is a good idea to allow anyone involved in the final approval process to give input from the very beginning. Also, you will need to address issues such as whether to have on-camera narration or just voice-over. A great producer will walk you through these and many other checklist options while keeping it exciting.

5. Production - This is when it really begins to feel like you are actually making a movie. Shooting locations are picked and the crew and director show up with all of the cool equipment. It's always best to work with

someone who has broadcast television experience as opposed to, for example, a wedding videographer. These experienced individuals will always have the best gear and the kind of sophistication that makes a day of technical decisions go smoothly. Most importantly, they will make your on-camera people feel at ease. They will get the right camera angles and exciting footage that people will WANT to watch.

6. Post Production - This is where the magic happens and normally you are not even there! The reason you are not there is two-fold: first, the process of logging and digitizing all of the footage into a computer software system is time-consuming and boring; second, if you've hired the right people...ALL GREAT EDITORS LIKE TO EDIT ALONE. Why? Because the creative aspect of story-telling is a personal one and is best done in a solo artistic environment. If the producer you've chosen clearly understood your expectations and goals during the pre-production process, you need not worry. Rely on the fact that he or she will use this knowledge, coupled with a plethora of filmmaking techniques, to communicate your vision in a way that will inform, inspire and influence your audience.

7. Timing Issues - These vary greatly depending upon projects currently in the works. But generally speaking, pre-production, script writing, and production take about a week each; for post production, allow two weeks. Then the approval process and further tweaking is entirely up to you. Make certain the Producer understands your timeline and get in writing that these requirements will be met. We send out V-Mails at specific steps in our unique process which keep our clients fully informed along the way. We usually ask for payment in installments as the project progresses, with final payment being due upon your satisfaction with the final approved show.

8. Flexibility - Once the show has been through what we call a "rough edit" you will get to see it. At this point we recommend you live with it for a couple of days, and show it to anyone whose opinion you value. Then, create a complete list of changes, suggestions and questions so you can sit down with the editor and further craft the show to become the best it can be. From this point we would put it in any format you wish and deliver a master to you, as well as keep a master for any future improvements or versions. This saves time and money and we always check back with our clients in six months to see what the actual results were.

9. Expectations - There's just no substitute for on-the-job experience. You want a Producer who understands cameras and people, who's able to perform under the worst conditions to get you beautifully framed, in-focus shots. These individuals always seem to have the right gadgets at their disposal, knowing many tricks of the trade that can only be learned through time. A video crew is expected to be fast and mobile, so a crew's "lighting package" needs to be of the minimum size to still be effective. They will use light to achieve the correct depth of field focus to produce an attractive shot. After all, they paint with light to make certain that the mood or style you

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desire is achieved. A great cameraperson understands that they are just a link in the chain of the complete story-telling process.

9.5. Sound - What's the most overlooked aspect of hiring a video crew? Sound. Sound is just as important as picture. Horrible sound automatically means unusable video. You want to make certain the Producer brings along someone proficient at this craft, not a neighbor or production assistant who simply holds the microphone. Since, just like cameras, microphones come in all quality ranges, a great crew will have the best ones...and plenty of 'em, because you never know when one will stop performing.

The most important thing to remember is, just because someone can record images in a camera, does not necessarily mean they can tell a real story. Someone has to have the expertise to arrange hundreds of images, along with visual and sound effects, motion and narration, coordinated sound and musical perfection, in such a way that your audience has a compelling, predictable reaction. This takes true talent and is remarkable when it happens! It is the distinction that separates the true professionals from the rest of pack.

A good Producer and video crew are the right combination of talented, business-like professionals with artistic sensitivity for great story-telling. Couple this with the right attitude and everyone wins. We hope this information was helpful. It was brought to you by Ron Strobel, Founder and Executive Producer of VideoNet, Inc. Contact VideoNet if you'd like Ron or one of his highly qualified associates to oversee your next video project.

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