



## The 9.5 things you need to know

### **BEFORE you begin any video project**

**1. Get Focused** - Realize that we live in a visual world. A picture is worth a thousand words, and a moving picture is worth a million. So once you've decided to explore the concept of a video, be as focused as possible as to what you want to accomplish with this video. What's missing that you feel a video will help resolve? Then secondly, 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 the above two questions you have the wrong person. Look elsewhere!

**2. Choosing a Producer** - So 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 who's personality is in sync with your own. They 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. And 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 are right up front with your Producer as to what you would like to spend. Why, because there are many tricks to this trade. There are many "guerilla" ways to achieve the same basic result without spending a fortune. Having said that, be careful that if you are expecting to put out the aura that you are a trusted, cutting edge, reliable company then the video must convey that feeling or you're in trouble. 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 Process Itself** - 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: preproduction, production and post production. Preproduction is when you decide on concept, style, pacing, what will be included and who will be in it. It is where all brainstorming occurs and it is a good idea to have anyone involved in the final approval process, allowed to give input at the very beginning. Also, you will need to address issues like on-camera narration or a just voice over. A great Producer will walk you through these and many other checklist options while keeping it exciting.

**5. Production** - This is where you get to see everything and 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 actual 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 and most importantly, will make your on-camera people feel at ease. They will get the right camera angles and exciting footage that will make for a show 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 in 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 preproduction process, you need not worry. Rely on the fact that he or

she will use this knowledge, coupled with a plethora of film making techniques, to communicate your vision in a way that people will be informed, inspired and influenced.

**7. Timing Issues** - This varies greatly depending upon projects currently in the works. But generally speaking preproduction, 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 requirements and get in writing that these will be met. We send out V-Mails at specific steps in our unique process which keeps our clients fully informed along the way. We normally ask for payment in installments as the project progresses with the final payment being due upon your satisfaction of 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 whom you value their opinions. Then, create a complete list of changes, suggestions and questions that you will then 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 we always 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 desire is achieved. A great cameraperson understands that they are just a link in the chain of the complete story telling process.

**.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 his neighbor or a production assistant who simply takes on that task. Plus, a great crew also will have the best microphones, because just like cameras, microphones come in all quality ranges. And, with microphones, redundancy rules the day because you never know when one will stop performing.

The most important thing that people forget is that 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! And it rarely happens. It is the distinction that separates the true professionals from the rest of pack.

We hope this list has been insightful. A good Producer and video crew is the right combination of talented, business-like professionals with an artist's 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. Either Ron, or someone he's trained at VideoNet, may be available for your next video project.

## **VIDEONET, INC.**

### **Extraordinary Video Productions**