

10 Keys to Effective Marketing Videos

Producing an effective marketing video requires more than just lights, camera and action. Here are ten basic elements of video production.

1. Objectives

Be very clear on what you want the viewer to think, feel and do. Try to summarize the goal of your video in five words or less. E.g. - Highlight product features and benefits or Provide company history and overview.

2. Script

Consider design, duration, deadlines and budget, before drafting your blueprint for success. Choose an appropriate style -- dramatization, narration, humor, etc.-- to fit your audience and objectives. Elaborate creative treatments often dictate higher budgets. Conversely, budget limitations may restrict you to a relatively simple program treatment. Unless you understand the art and craft of video scriptwriting, hire an experienced professional to write -- or at least edit-- your script.

3. Producer/Director

The producer coordinates details, gathers resources and oversees projects. The director shapes the creative concept into a coherent vision and orchestrates a team of artists, actors and technicians to bring that vision into reality. Though each role requires different strengths and skills, one person can do the job of both. Find someone who can share your vision, take charge of your project and help guide it to completion.

4. Talent

Acting, whether on-camera or voiceover, requires tremendous skill, training and expertise. As humans, we communicate through what we

see and hear much more so than the actual words selected. Don't turn on the camera until you are prepared to turn on the audience. For talent, hire professionals --they will work smarter, harder, faster and better.

5. Lighting

Video is lighting... period. Expert, artistic lighting makes people, places and things look normal --or better than normal-- on camera. Never scrimp on lighting.

6. Camerawork

Skilled operators know the rules and when to break them. They are experts in framing, composition and anticipation. Hire the best people with the best possible equipment.

7. Audio

Use the right, high-quality microphones for the job. Control ambient sound when possible. Include appropriate music and sound effects during the edit to maintain viewer interest.

8. Format

Choose the highest possible tape format to fit your requirements. DigiBeta, BetacamSP, DVCAM, DVC-PRO are all good formats. Of course, shooting on film creates an even richer impression.

9. Graphics

Graphic design makes videos both interesting and coherent. Graphical support should be used judiciously. Textual elements serve to reinforce spoken ideas. Animation, where appropriate, adds excitement and depth to your videos --though it can be costly. Good graphical elements capture attention, make a favorable impression and communicate image or brand messages.

10. Effects

Less is more. You want viewers to remember content rather than all the bells and whistles. Just because you can make the image spin or flip, it doesn't mean you should. Avoid video vomit. Simple wipes and dissolves are very effective. Editing is where the magic happens. A skilled editor is your most valuable asset.

If you fail to follow these minimum guidelines, you may still get an adequate program, but you won't have a seamless piece of high-quality communication. Your video presentations reflect your level of commitment to quality and professionalism. High-quality video is great public relations. Done right, it can also save you time, money and aggravation.

The advent of desktop video has lowered the cost of certain aspects of production. Beware of people touting the latest toys. They may lack the directorial skills, hard-earned experience and business savvy for effective video communications. If you are in a position to manage your company's marketing communications, establish a relationship with an experienced producer. He or she can serve as your virtual video department to meet your exact media needs as they arise.

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