

How to Review a Video Script

If you are new to reading video scripts, here are a few tips to help you get the best results.

The writing style for video is very different from typical text.

Pictures tell part of the story, but video scripts are written for the ear. Sentences are short. Simple, direct, active language is ideal. Space is important. Proper grammar - not. While reviewing the audio portion of a video script, read it aloud slowly, or better yet, have an actor read it for you while you listen with your eyes shut. The rhythm, pacing and phrasing in a well-written script allows actors to make full use of their vocal techniques to bring the meaning to life.

Spoken words in your video program rarely communicate alone.

Narration, video, graphics, music and text each make a unique contribution to the communication. These elements should work together harmoniously to stimulate emotions and tell the story.

The big picture.

Does the script speak to the intended audience? Is the tone appropriate? Though many people may view your video, only one person at a time will see it. Does the script speak in the second person to "you"? Is the script not too ambitious or convoluted? In other words, does it focus on only one main objective with perhaps a few sub-categories? What could be communicated better another way and therefore be removed from the script? Does everything make the message easier to understand? Is the order of the segments logical? How are the transitions? Does the script flow gracefully from one segment to the next? Are graphics simple? Do text pages have five or fewer lines? Do text lines have five or fewer words? Is there enough breathing room to let the audience catch up with the content? Are the sound effects and music appropriate?

Seeing only a written script, you may find it difficult to imagine the finished video.

Trust the pros — directors, actors, videographers, graphic artists, editors, etc. — who will expertly bring your video to life better than it could ever appear on paper.

Video is fleeting.

Every image and sound will be gone instantly. Perfection is optional. Video is often a matter of taste; do not expect to please everyone. Just make your best effort to see through the eyes of the intended audience and ask yourself if it works as a whole. Do you think you'd want to watch this video? (Is it compelling, entertaining?) Do you get the main message?

Review the script one more time to see what can be tightened or eliminated. Why say blah, blah if all you need is, blah. If you feel compelled to add something, take something else out.

The best presentations have a strong beginning and a strong ending — placed as closely together as possible.

Enjoy.

CU = close up, MS = medium shot, WS = wide shot, VO = voiceover, CG = character generation

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