

Video Shooting Tips



Mistakes most people make

- * Trees or telephone poles sticking out of the back of someone's head
- * Interview subjects who are just darkened blurs because there was bright light in the background
- * Boring shots of buildings with no action

* Avoid those common mistakes and others by paying attention to this presentation. :-)

Plan your shoot

- * Talk it over with other members of your production team if you have one.
- * Make sure you are clear on what you need to tell the story
- * Write up a list of shots you need
 - * Write the story beforehand in your head, then list the elements you want to get video of to do that story
- * Think about what's going to look good visually and how your shots will come together sequentially
- * Your piece is a skeleton, you are shooting the flesh for all those bones

Roll Blank Tape Before You Shoot

- * Leave the lens cap on and roll your tape for 30 seconds before you shoot
- * This avoids having any crinkles at the start of the tape appearing in the video you want to shoot
- * Gives you some “play room” for capturing video into the editing software

Check Your Audio

- * Plug a set of headphones into the camera and check your audio to make sure you are getting an audio feed
- * Good audio is just as important for your final film as your video

Shoot Selectively

- * Think before you shoot and don't waste tape; don't roll tape unless you are taking a shot
- * Don't roll tape when you are focusing or changing from one shot to another
- * This saves a huge amount of time later when you are capturing your video to the computer
- * Saves you from going through an hour of tape to get the 20 minutes you need.

Shut Up When You Shoot

- * When you press the record button, shut up!
- * The camera picks up all the ambient sound when its rolling and you won't be able to separate the unwanted audio in the editing process
- * Don't talk while the camera is rolling, not even a whisper to other members of your team and *no humming or snapping gum.*

Hold Your Shots

- * Hold your shots for at least 15 seconds, before you pan, zoom or go into another shot.
- * Gives you enough video of a scene to work with later when you edit.

Excessive Panning and Zooming

- * Don't constantly pan and zoom; hold your shot and look for the one moment that's really captivating
- * Shots lose impact with all the movement by the camera
- * It's better to get closer to the subject than to zoom in most cases

Shoot in Sequences

- * You will be determining what the viewer sees and how the story unfolds; try to shoot discrete segments that can be assembled into a story when you edit
- * You can't shoot enough details
- * Follow the action; shoot wide, medium and close-up
- * Good ratio is 50% close-ups and extreme close-ups, 25% medium shots, and 25% wide shots

Framing and Composing Your Shots

- * Be aware of composition in your shots and how you frame you shots
- * Pay attention to surroundings and don't be shy about improving the setting or asking the subject of your shoot to change positions to make the shot look better
- * Keep plants from growing out of people's heads 😊

Headroom and Noseroom

- * Leave a proper amount of room in front of and above the person you're shooting
- * There should not be excessive space above a person's head, but don't crop off their head either.
- * If you are shooting a person standing, don't chop them off at the knees – get their entire body in the shot
- * If the person is looking to the side, add space in the direction in which the person is looking, in front of their nose
- * Use the Rule of Thirds

Rule of Thirds

- * One third of the frame should be above the person's eyes
- * One third of the frame should be the person's face and shoulder area
- * One third of the frame should be the person's lower torso

Depth of Field

- * Be aware of ways to increase the sense of depth within your shot, since video images are inherently flat
- * Try to include other objects in the background or foreground that give the viewer a sense of depth

Change Angles and Perspectives

- * Try to change point and/or angle of view after every shot. Look for interesting perspectives.
- * Don't shoot everything from eye level – boring
- * Don't rely on zooms to get different perspectives – move the camera closer or farther away

Get People in Your Scenes

- * People almost always make videos more interesting
- * People animate a scene

Tripods for Steady Shots

- * Tripods help get steady shots
- * If you lack a tripod, find a way to steady your shot like leaning against a tree or placing the camera on top of something sturdy
- * Wider angle shots are usually steadier

Anticipate Action

- * Try to predict where the subject/action will go and be ready to shoot it when it moves into the frame of your shot
- * Let the action happen within the frame, don't move the camera in an attempt to catch everything

Interviews

- * Ask the person you're interviewing to look at you, not the camera
- * Try to avoid straight-on shots of interviews – shoot the person from a slight angle to the left or right
- * Don't have interviewees sit in chairs with wheels or squeaks
- * Watch out for nervous activity that creates noise
- * Don't pre-interview - Produces canned responses.
- * During an interview, relax and listen. Don't nod or make gestures

Avoid High Contrast in Lighting Situations

- * Avoid shots of areas that have high contrast such as sunlight and shadows
- * Don't place an interview subject against a bright window or white wall or with sunlight behind the person
- * If the sun is directly overhead, hold your hand over the top edge of the camera lens as a sun screen

Get All the Shots You Need

- * Get all the requisite set-up shots, cut-aways, and so on, even if you don't think you'll use them
- * Shoot a variety of B-roll to supplement your film