



We want this to be a positive experience for you and your team. Our goal is to make your video production process as efficient and painless as possible. After reading this, we hope you'll have a better understanding of our role and yours in this endeavor.

Please take a few minutes to read through this document. Feel free to call or email us with questions. We promise, there won't be a quiz.

The Production Process Outline

- **Pre-production** – everything before the shoot - scripted or unscripted
- **Production** – the shoot
- **Post-production** – everything after the shoot

Pre-production: everything before the shoot

85% of a video project is planning and preparation. Okay, maybe that's a *slight* exaggeration, but you get the point. Pre-production is key to making your video successful. Pre-production is all the work we do before the actual shoot or edit day – some of that work is done by you and some of that work is done by us. The time spent planning helps us to better understand your organization and its goals. It's also important that you spend time reviewing and giving your feedback on items we send you for approval. It's easier and more cost effective to make changes in this part of the production process than in any other

The process outlined below includes details that may not apply to your project.

Letter of Agreement – the written handshake.

This simple 2-page document describes what we'll do for you, what we'll deliver and what you'll pay. We will create this from our initial discussions. We ask that you review it, sign it and get it back to us as quickly as possible so that we can get started!

Kick-off Meeting – getting to know you.

This can take place in person or over the phone. Our goal here is to get a complete understanding of what you hope to achieve. We'll discuss your goals for the project, who we're talking to, the types of marketing/training/development you've done in the past – any information you can provide to help us get a better understanding of your organization, mission and goals. We then go over some basic questions:

- **Who is your audience?** This is critical and worth spending staff time identifying clearly. Why invest your time and money on a project that isn't speaking to your key audience?
- **What do you want to communicate?** Keeping it to 3 points always maximizes effectiveness, especially in today's short-attention span world.

- **What action do you want your audience to take after watching the video?** Is there an outcome you want? What does success look like?

- **How will this video be distributed?** Will it be posted to your website? To Facebook? Will you want a DVD? Will the video be self-contained, or will someone set the stage for the video (as in a sales call)?

We won't be the only ones asking questions. You should feel free to ask us for recommendations or for different options and approaches for your project.

At the end of this meeting, we should have a much better idea of what you're about and what you're trying to achieve with this project. Now we have some work to do!

Research – each project is unique.

Every project won't require research, but if time and budget allow, we'll learn more about you and your customers/clients/stakeholders through:

- **Phone interviews** – we may ask to speak to people who have some insight into the content of the video. If we're producing a video about a new service we may ask to speak to some of your current customers.
- **Researching competitors**

Scripted or unscripted?

The information we get from the kickoff meeting will help us determine how to proceed with the video. There are many styles and techniques, but basically a video is either scripted or unscripted. A scripted video often includes narration, a spokesperson or actors. An unscripted video often uses interviews and doesn't rely on a written script.

Scripted Video: the next steps in the pre-production process

Treatment – presenting our ideas to you.

This is a high-level one or two page document that describes what the viewer will see, what they'll hear and how we plan to present the information. Essentially, we're trying to tell you that we understand what you want to do and this is how we intend to do it.

It's important for you to give us feedback regarding the concept, direction and details of the treatment. We'll take the feedback and incorporate it into the first draft of the script. Timeliness is key to keeping the project on schedule and avoiding potential cost-overruns.

Script – the treatment with dialogue and direction.

The script is a fleshed-out version of the treatment. It includes everything going into your production: video images, voiceover, music, sound effects, transitions... The script is our roadmap for the rest of the production. It ensures everyone is in agreement about the message and how we'll tell your story.

At this point, anyone on your team with input on the project should review the script. It's best to make sure we're on the right track early on. We'll take your feedback, revise the script and submit it for another look by you. After another round of feedback, we create the final script and move forward with the next steps in the project. It's very important to finalize the script – it will be our roadmap for the rest of the production.

Talent – who appears in the video.

We use actors when the video calls for a specific role – spokesperson, a character in the production, etc. In most cases we'd choose to use professional actors. Acting is a specific skill and you get great results.

There are times when it's appropriate to use employees in your videos:

- The role they're playing is tied to the company – the CEO, for example
- You're portraying the character as an employee
- You need an authentic presence in your video
- The role requires technical or other skills that an actor wouldn't be able to portray accurately or realistically

If your project requires actors, we work with a casting company to get a pool of potential actors together. We do a casting session where the actors read lines in front of the camera. We rate their performance, share the best picks with you and together pick the best actor to fit your project.

A note about actors: As with any profession, professional actors have specific training for their craft. They're comfortable in front of the camera, they understand the process and they take direction well. We recommend using professional actors whenever possible.

Unscripted Video: the next steps in the pre-production process

Identify the Storytellers – who's in the shot or who's in front of the camera?

Choosing your storytellers is a critical decision for the project. We'll go over factors that may help you make your decision – such as how their story relates to the message we want to send to your audience, their approachability to your target audience and their availability for the project and loyalty to you. You will need to contact these folks to see if they are will to participate in telling your story.

Pre-shoot Phone Interview – can they talk?

Answering questions with a camera in front of you is not always an easy task. We call prospective interviewees and have a pre-shoot chat with them. This gives us a good idea if they will be good on camera or not. It also builds a rapport between the interviewee and the director before the shoot day, making the shoot day a less intimidating concept.

Treatment – the big picture.

After we talk with your interviewees we'll know more about what they can bring to the project. From this we'll develop a treatment for your video.

This is a high level one or two page document describing what the viewer will see, what they'll hear and how we plan to present the information. Essentially, we're trying to tell you we understand what you want to do and this is how we intend to do it.

It's important for you to give us feedback regarding the concept, direction and details of the treatment. We take the feedback and incorporate it into the questions we ask the interviewees. We may also need to find different folks to represent you.

Production - the shoot

Preparing for a Shoot – getting our ducks in a row.

If we've done all the groundwork, the actual production day or shoot day works like a well-oiled machine with a lot going on. There are a few things that can be done ahead of time to ensure the day runs smoothly.

We often do a location scout. Scouting the shoot location helps us understand the lay of the land and where the best locations are for shooting – before we get there with all the equipment. It saves time to make some decisions about where to shoot interviews or where to get the best b-roll before we get there and helps us create a shoot schedule for the day.

Some of what we look for on a scout:

- **Size of the room** – A larger room provides more flexibility for lighting and positioning the camera. A small room can feel cramped and that can influence how a person feels on camera.
- **Is it a quiet place?** If the space is on a busy hallway or near an elevator we may have to stop the interview and ask a question again. This can be frustrating for the person on camera.
- **Does the location match** the feel we want to communicate in the video?
- **Is it busy** with pedestrians or traffic?
- **Is equipment easily moveable** from one location in a building to another?
- **Background for interviews** – does it have a wall of windows? We can control our lights, but the weather changes every five minutes in New England and that can be challenging.

Create a Schedule and Shot List.

A schedule helps keep the production on track and helps make everyone aware of what's coming next. The shot sheet is a list of all the shots we're expecting to record that day. It's helpful to have this as a quick reference to make sure we capture everything we've planned to shoot.

Make Up – HD is High Definition.

We most definitely recommend it for CEO's and videos that feature professional talent. High Definition does not leave much to the imagination and when you're presenting your CEO or someone representing your brand it's important that they look professional and put together. The fabulous makeup people we work with are very personable and help the talent, (non-professionals and professionals), get relaxed and prepared for their performance... This is an optional add on to any shoot.

Production – the shoot

Shoot Day – lights, camera, action!

You should know right off – we need you on the day of the shoot. We'll have a monitor set up so you can review shots. Should someone be wearing safety gear? Is that an approved logo? Do you really want the CEO to say that? These are all questions that can be answered quickly if you're present during the shoot.

The size of our crew can vary – from 2 people to 10 or more (Don't worry, you'll know how many people to expect!).

We budget for a 10-hour day portal-to-portal for most jobs. That means from the time we leave our offices to the time we return, we're on the clock for you. We schedule 10-hour shoot days when we create our estimate for you. If, for any reason, something goes wrong or we're behind schedule, we'll give you plenty of notice so we can adjust our plans and stay on track.

Post production: everything after the shoot

Our first step is to review all of the footage and begin to piece together the story. We do our own internal review and revision cycle before sending an edited version for your review. Logging (or cataloging) footage can be a tedious, detail-oriented process. We believe providing you with online reviews of your video is the best use of time – ours *and* yours.

Unless we specify otherwise, we budget for two rough-cut review cycles. This provides you with two opportunities to provide feedback and make changes. Because a good amount of work has been completed in the pre-production process regarding scripts, story lines and understanding the audience, there shouldn't be any surprises here. That's why it's so important to get input from everyone on your team and sign off on the script. Reshoots are expensive!

Review Round 1 – the rough cut:

Our first edit is posted to our password protected client area for your review. You can watch the video anywhere and share it with staff (if necessary). Videos are posted in WMV format unless another format is requested.

How to Watch your Video

First, get some popcorn... We know. We're going to tell you how to watch a video. But this really works. We've encouraged clients to use this method and we get great results when they do.

Watch the video three times. It's easy to get distracted by a soundbite, a graphic or music. Watching it more than once ensures you're getting the entire experience.

First time through – watch it for the big picture.

Does the message as a whole come across? Did we hit the mark? Sometimes we recommend actually looking away from the video and just listening to the soundtrack (seriously). If it works as a "radio program" the imagery will only add to the message.

Second time through – watch for the visuals.

Do the visuals support the story and what we're hearing? Are there any shots that distract from the story?

Third time through – watch it for the details.

Did we spell the CEO's name correctly? Is her title correct? Please check all the graphics for correct spelling. Are your logos correct? Is everyone wearing a hard hat that should be wearing a hard hat?

Take notes, because we'll need your feedback. We can supply a spreadsheet or word document if that's

helpful. Please include the time in the video (most video players show you the time of the video) when you send notes with changes or corrections. We will incorporate your feedback and post an updated version (v2) of the video for your review.

Review Round 2 – finalizing concept – moving to tweaks.

Version 2 (v2) of the video will be available in our client area. After you review the video, using the same video review guidelines, send us your feedback. We'll incorporate those changes and post an updated version (v3) for your review.

At this point, we should be very close to a finished product. You'll have an opportunity to provide us with final tweaks, but we shouldn't see big content changes.

Final round of editing – to create the video for distribution.

We will incorporate your final tweaks (usually a graphic or title change) and post the video for your final approval.

Once we receive your final approval, we'll prepare the video for distribution. That may mean creating a DVD, compressing and formatting the video for the web, YouTube, Facebook or Vimeo. You let us know what you want to do with the video and we'll create the file format.

Project Backup and Storage

This step doesn't require anything of you. We archive all raw footage and finished projects so that they can be modified at a later date if necessary. One copy is located in our offices, the other is located off-site.

Feedback:

We love knowing what your audience thinks too! We always welcome and typically get wonderful response to our work. We appreciate you letting us know that the video is achieving your goals.

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