



VIDEO PRODUCTION GUIDE

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A PRE-VIDEO PRODUCTION CHECKLIST



THE KEY TO PAINLESS VIDEO PRODUCTION

Video provides companies and organisations with an unrivalled way to tell their story and promote products or services. Few other mediums allow for such a unique type of engagement and connection with the target audience.

While there is a great deal of evidence to support the use of video in your marketing campaigns, video production itself can be a little daunting. The process can be made stress free, if a number of simple steps are followed.

This planning will ensure you have no worries around cost, the production process, quality of output, and ensuring your video gets seen by your target audience.

We will provide you with a basic checklist, enabling even those new to the video production process to create a solid strategy and a complete plan so that your experience is as painless as possible.

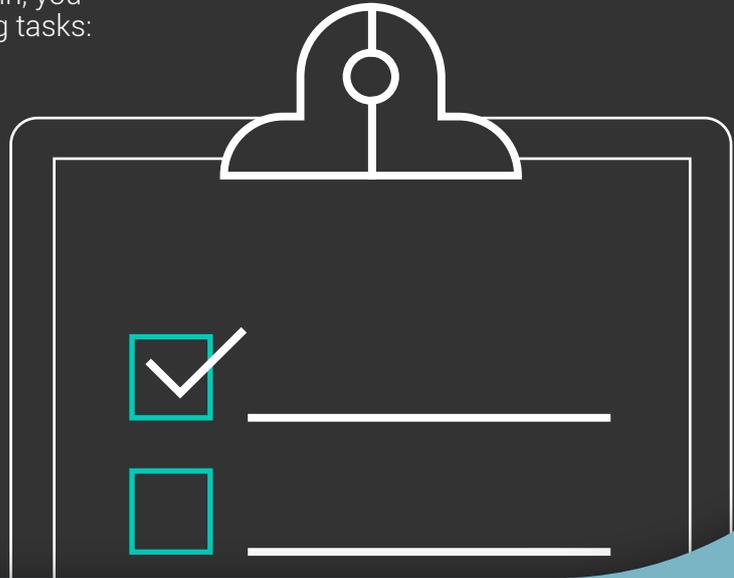
PAINLESS VIDEO PRODUCTION

Once you get into the actual production stage, there is little room to make changes. In other words, when work begins on the actual video, you will be committed to the end product agreed upon. At that point, additional changes will impact your project's budget.

Unlike other forms of digital marketing, which often require little in the way of investment, beyond time, video often includes an upfront cost, making it all the more important to go into the process prepared.

THE CHECK LIST

Before the video production process can begin, you should look to complete each of the following tasks:



- REVIEW EXAMPLES OF OTHER VIDEOS
- COMPLETE OR START THE SCRIPT
- COMPLETE THE BRIEF
- SELECT A VIDEO PRODUCER
- REVIEW THE EXTRAS
- DETERMINE THE TIME FRAME



EXAMPLE VIDEOS

The goal of this step is simple:

FIND VIDEOS THAT RESONATE WITH YOU!

Look for videos that match the tone and mood you'd like your video to encompass. Include these in your brief, as these videos will give your video producer a clearer idea of what you're trying to achieve. These examples will guide you throughout the process.

In addition to noting videos, techniques, shots and styles you like, include a few you don't like.

THE BRIEF

The brief is an overview of the video project and should function as a template for you and the video producer as you plan every aspect of shooting your video. We suggest the following format for your brief:



1. INTRODUCTION PARAGRAPH

– This should include information about your company or organisation and purpose of the video.

2. YOUR GOALS FOR THE VIDEO

– Which may not be the same as the goals for the entire campaign.

3. CLEARLY STATE THE ACTION YOU HOPE TO DRIVE A VIEWER TOWARD.

4. PROPOSED LENGTH

5. DESIRED STYLE

6. KEYWORDS TO BE INCLUDED

BRIEFS SHOULD BE EXACTLY THAT – BRIEF

Nothing puts a videomaker off more than having to trudge through 10 pages of customer personalities, focus group information and market research. By the time you're meeting with potential video producers, you should already have a good idea of what is required. After all, you are the marketer. The videomaker's job is to realise and bring your vision to life.

Of course, you may find it helpful to request creative input from the videomaker. That is fine, but bear in mind that such creative consultation is a separate issue and should be treated as such. Videomakers are generally great realisers of vision, capable of taking your message and delivering it through animation or video.

FOCUS AND PURPOSE

A good brief ensures clarity and should give the producer a straightforward vision of the tone, style, purpose and goal of your video.

The brief also sets boundaries for the production process. Clear boundaries aid your videomaker or animator in the delivery of your finished asset and help to avoid miscommunications. Briefs that lack clarity can be very difficult to deliver against, so take the time to get your brief right.

Additionally, good briefs make your project more attractive to potential producers. Clear thinking on your end shows the videomaker that you are able to communicate effectively, which ultimately makes their job easier and less frustrating.

THE SCRIPT

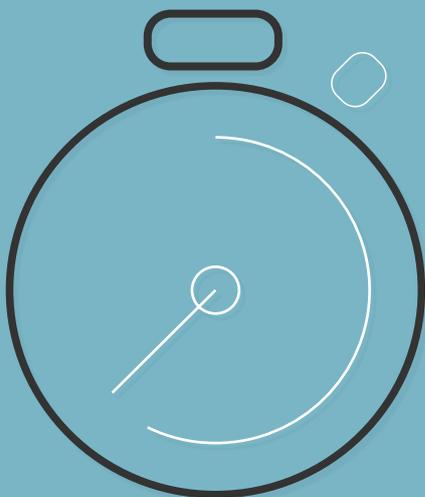
The script for your video project will give prospective video producers a good idea of the type of video you hope to produce. More than anything else, the script embodies the “voice” of your company or organisation. It is a representation of how you wish to be seen.

IS IT FORMAL? FUNNY? EMOTIONAL? DRIVEN BY DATA?

A talented video producer will gain a better understanding of your end goal by reviewing your script. While it's ideal to have a complete script prepared before you select a video producer, even a partial script will communicate many of these elements.

Additionally, good video producers will be able to comment on your script, making suggestions that may help to hone it even more. However, you should always go into the production process with a clear understanding of the message your video is meant to deliver.

Clarity on your end, upfront, will be invaluable when it comes to the production process.



CONSIDER LENGTH

There are numerous articles online that discuss the topic of length. In most cases, it's best to keep your videos short. For corporate / informational videos the ideal length tends to be under 2 minutes, but under 90 seconds is even better. For commercial videos you should likely plan for shorter videos, as the length will have a bigger impact on your budget, consider both the cost of production and buying airtime.

TIP: WHEN WRITING YOUR SCRIPT, EXPECT EVERY 3 WORDS TO TAKE UP 1 SECOND OF VIDEO TIME.

Video scripts should be written like good newspaper articles, with key information up front. Avoid the temptation to think like a movie maker, leaving twists and important information for the end. Every second of your video counts. The longer it lasts, the more likely you are to lose viewers. By placing the most important information early in the script, you ensure that as many people as possible get the gist of your message.

Ideally, the video should include a “hook” in the first 10 seconds--something to keep viewers interested and engaged. If you can hook viewers in the first 5 seconds, even better. (For commercial videos, the hook truly should be in the first 5 seconds.)

READ YOUR SCRIPT OUT LOUD

A tried and tested editing technique for all kinds of writing is to simply read the text out loud. Often, the written word sounds entirely different when spoken. By getting it off the page and into the air, you'll more easily hear sentences and phrases that sound awkward or confusing.



READ YOUR SCRIPT TO SOMEONE WHO CAN PROVIDE YOU WITH HONEST FEEDBACK

Feedback is invaluable. When seeking feedback, we suggest that, once again, you read the script out loud. This allows your volunteer to experience it in a way similar to how viewers will experience the finished video.

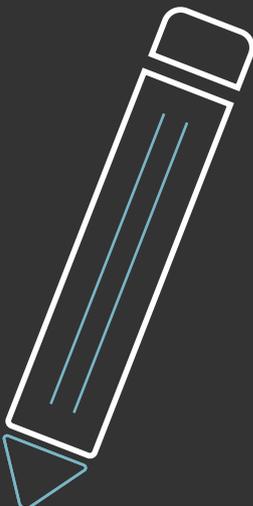
Be sure to invite your volunteer to be completely honest and candid in their feedback, explaining that honest feedback, even if it's negative, will help make the script better.

GOOD WRITING IS REWRITING

No one nails a script on the first attempt. Expect your script to undergo a transformation from the first draft through to the finished product. This is a part of the process.

ONCE YOU'VE FINISHED YOUR SCRIPT, EDIT IT ONE MORE TIME.

Along the way, question every single word. Keep in mind that shorter is better. If there are words, or even sentences, you can eliminate, do so. Trim it as much as possible without losing the intended voice.



SELECTING A VIDEO PRODUCER

The video producer you choose for your project will, of course, play a huge role in the overall process. They are your partner in this effort, and it's important that you consider a variety of factors before making a final decision. While cost will always be a significant concern, there are several other variables to keep in mind:

1. What is the overall quality of each producer's previous work?
(The best way to gauge this is to review sample videos.)
2. What type of work has each producer done in the past?
Does their portfolio match the style, look, voice and feel you're aiming for?
3. As you contact prospective partners, how quick is each to reply to your questions and requests for further information? Their turn-around times during the bidding process will give you key insight into what you can expect during production.
4. How do you feel about each producer?
You will be undertaking a complex project and you want to be sure you're picking a partner with whom you feel comfortable, welcomed and at ease.

You should include the following three things as you review each short-listed producer:

1. A PITCH OR BRIEF RESPONSE

- How have they responded to the brief?
Do they understand your requirements and have they a grasp on the key elements of your video?

2. PORTFOLIO

- Have they produced work in the past you like?

3. REFERENCES

- Are you able to determine how they have worked with previous clients and what those clients thought of your chosen videomaker?

REVIEW THE EXTRAS

As a buyer, you will likely see your video as a single unit of output. When you request quotes, you may expect the cost to include everything needed to produce a finished video. However, within the industry some elements, like voiceovers and music, can be seen as extra items and may not be included in the initial pitch or quote.



While flat fees are certainly attractive, it is vitally important that you make clear what you expect your flat fee to include. If your expectations do not match those of your videomaker, the process can become extremely frustrating for everyone involved.

**IF YOU REQUIRE ANY OF THE FOLLOWING EXTRAS,
BE SURE TO NOTE THESE IN YOUR BRIEF:**

1. VOICE OVER

- Do you require a professional narrator for your video?

2. MUSIC

- Do you require background music in your video?

3. GRAPHICS

- These are often referred to as motion graphics.

UNDERSTANDING THE JARGON

Like any industry, there are specific industry words videomakers and animators use daily. A broad understanding of some of these will help when talking to your chosen videomaker or animator, and may help to define costs and expectations more clearly.



Here are a few to get you started through the jungle of jargon you may encounter:

MOODBOARD

- Moodboards are often used by video makers to enable a person to illustrate visually the direction of style which they are pursuing. Mood boards serve as a visual tool to quickly inform others of the overall 'feel' (or 'flow') - Tend to be made up of pictures in a collage.

STORYBOARD

- A visual representation of your story. Often look like a comic strip. They show shots and what is happening on screen next to your script.

ANIMATIC

- A moving storyboard. An animatic is a rough, animated version of your video.

MOTION GRAPHICS

- Elements on screen that are graphical in nature. It may be as simple as moving titles or logos through to animated diagrams.

STOPMOTION

- Animation that involves physical objects. Motion is created by taking still images and slightly moving the object before the next frame is shot – think Wallace and Gromit.

VOICE OVER OR NARRATION

- A voice that describes the story off camera. Most frequently used within animation.

MUSIC BED

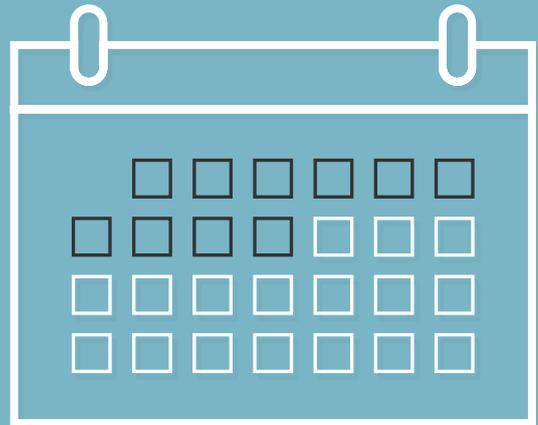
- Music that plays in the background of your video.

THE TIME FRAME

Similar to understanding the jargon of video production, it's important that you have a clear understanding the overall process, including the timeframe.

The process can often involve days of prep work. Once your video is shot or animation has been created, there is very little opportunity for adjustments without additional costs.

But don't let this put you off. Instead, ensure that you add several review points in the early stages, particularly during storyboarding. Adjustments at these early points are relatively low impact.



BE SURE TO:

- Ask your producer to lay out a production schedule.
- Include review points early, before going into production.

YOU SHOULD ANTICIPATE A FEW REVIEW POINTS AFTER PRODUCTION IS COMPLETE.

THE DUE DATE

Perhaps the most important element of your project's schedule is the due date. This is the date by which you would like a completed project in hand. Without question, it is essential that you and your videomaker agree on this date before the project begin. However, there are some other important scheduling details to consider, as well.

REVIEW PERIOD

It's wise to include a scheduled review period as a formal part of the production process. This is the time for you and your team to view the completed video and determine if it meets your expectations, or if there are any changes that need to be made.

(PLEASE NOTE, CHANGES AT THIS POINT WILL LIKELY INCUR ADDITIONAL COST.)

This period should be no shorter than 1 week, allowing you plenty of time to share the video with any and all team members whose approval is needed.

POST PRODUCTION

Those of us who are not professional videomakers can easily forget that much of the work of completing a video happens after the cameras stop rolling. Be sure to talk to your videomaker or animator about the timeframe for post-production work. If your video is scheduled to shoot on a specific day, don't expect a finished product the following day. It will likely take some time for your videomaker to edit and compile the footage.

DON'T HESITATE TO GET IN TOUCH

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