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USING VIDEO FOR BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

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Video is an effective business tool that can be used for the solo entrepreneur on a tight budget as well as for large companies. Because the technology has become extremely affordable, however, there's a gamut of lousy video out there. What might be OK for a makeshift music video on YouTube is not OK for business professionals. Following are some ideas to help you create video that produces the best results possible.

Beware the talking head

The retention span of the average viewer is very short. These days, people like their information passed on in short and entertaining bites. Professionally, when you're on camera, this is called "A' roll." When you cut away to something else that compliments what you're saying, it's called "B' roll." B roll really tells your story.

For example, if you've just invented and brought to market a retinal scanner as an option to avoid long security lines at the airport, I, the viewer, will pay much more attention to your invention if I can see your product and understand what that product does to and for me. If you can't afford a professional production company and are producing a DIY (do-it-yourself) video, think about adding just a few, but extremely significant and visually interesting, "cutaways."

If you're a corporate executive and wish to communicate with your employees via video, you should also heed this rule. They can be forced to watch you and your dicta, but I can guarantee, they won't be listening to what you're saying (unless you are offering a large, across-the-board raise or major dividend). Edit in some visually enticing B roll and, *voila*, their attention span will escalate and your message will be remembered.

B roll and still shots

So what footage should you add? In the case of the above-mentioned scanner, focus on the ease of the scanning process by showing a happy user. If this option were a fee-based alternative to the now notorious TSA scanners and/or pat downs, a user satisfaction shot, coupled with a typical airport security shot, is all you need to tell the story.

Now back to the more mundane, but no less important. In the case of the CEO, don't cut to another shot of that person from yet a different angle or to the company logo. *Yawn*. What about a shot of the loyal employees sweeping the streets at the annual community clean up day, with the CEO working alongside them?

Video tips

A note of caution: Being outrageous is not something that belongs in a business video. Rather, being innovative is. Unfortunately, slightly off-color has become popular lately for a bit of "shock and awe," especially on Web videos and with PACs (political action committees). It's always an unacceptable and unprofessional way to tell your story and it may come back to haunt you again and again.

Often, still photography shots work fine in this sort of situation. People in the film and video industry refer to non-moving pictures, such as photographs or illustrations as "still shots," or "stills" as opposed to our own shots, which are moving. While using still shots throughout an entire production can glean results that look more like a slide show than a video, a few well-placed stills are an economical solution for B roll.

In all cases, the basic tenet remains the same: entertain while informing or promoting.

Wardrobe and makeup

Here's a simple tip to deal with wardrobe issues: Don't let what you wear compete with what you're saying. Don't wear patterns that bleed or moiré, as the camera will pick up this visible distortion. Don't wear bright colors like red or yellow, as they may cause a "halo" effect.

Regarding makeup, use it, even if you don't like it. Use an anti-shine product such as Corn Silk on areas around the nose and forehead and, with men, give a good application to receding hairlines or balding heads. Again, the camera likes to pick up reflections and these are unattractive distractions. If you're shooting outdoors, make sure you carry hair spray because the pesky video gods will always provide a strong wind right at the very moment you're shooting. Prepare for this, for it will surely happen.

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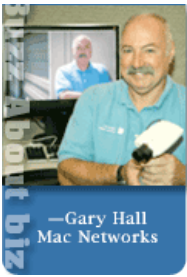


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[Edit in the camera](#)

While editing a video is another topic unto itself, I want to share one final tip that might help you save hours of time after you finish shooting your video. Most amateur videographers get hung up in the postproduction process, where all this great A roll and B roll must now be assembled with music, narration, titles and such. It can be a painfully lengthy and tedious road. But, with all the great new technology available, you can avoid a lot of potholes by "editing in the camera." By this I mean simply check out what you just shot, scene-by-scene, with your camera monitor. If it's no good, get rid of it and try it again another time or two. Often, you'll get a much better shot the next time and you won't have to review all that bad footage during postproduction while trying to put the pieces together. When you have the shot you want, shout, "Cut!" and move on.

Video is an important asset for corporate communication, search engine optimization and social networking sites. It connects you with your customer or client in an engaging manner. By reviewing these tips and having a game plan before you start shooting, you can produce a quality video that will well represent your business.

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