How to Approach a Video Production

Video production is not one of the simpler forms of mass communication to use. The addition of a moving photographic image adds a level of complexity not found in print or radio, and because of this, those not familiar with the process usually find themselves struggling from frustration and becoming over-whelmed. It is certainly true that more than one competent communicator has happily avoided this field, preferring black words on white paper.

It doesn’t have to be a totally maddening experience, of course. With the proper approach, video is a highly rewarding field that reaches more people for less money than any other type of media. And while the initial outlay in funding for TV is high, the cost per viewer is usually quite low—frequently in the pennies per viewer range. So if you are interested in lots of bang for your journalism buck, consider video.

With the video novice in mind, let’s look at how a skilled communicator—one who already knows how to create a message for the masses—can approach the field of television with a realistic expectation of success.

1) Have a Message

The same rules that apply to other forms of media apply to video as well—you must have a legitimate message and you must know what audience you are trying to reach. College freshman get these two points drilled into their head in J-School for good reason. These are the fundamental aspects of all effective communication, so it applies to video as well.

2) Be Conversational

It seems obvious to state that in TV you are speaking to the viewer, but it is absolutely critical to remember this fact when preparing your material. For the viewer, the more conversational the presentation style, the more interesting the information is. Friendly, informal verbal English works very well in video. Contrast this style with those newscasts that were broadcast out of the Soviet Union during the “Cold War”—the ones with one person reading from a stack of papers. It was not very compelling to watch. Today, however, CNN, Fox News, and the major
networks have anchors that read the news as much as the Soviets did. So why is it more interesting now? The difference is the use of a friendly, conversational style. In English, as in most languages, there are important differences between the more formal written style and the informal verbal style.

3) What Method of Production?

It is possible to simplify the TV production process as having two basic methods—single or multi-camera. Here are the differences and when to use each:

Single Camera—This is the style most frequently used to make commercials, movies, and most remote production. Like its name states, it involves the use of only one camera. To get different types of shots the camera is physically moved from one direction or locale to another. The elements of the production are shot individually and edited into a meaningful order later. It usually requires a small crew and would be more efficient for a small production.

These are the basic criteria for doing single camera productions:

a) The production is remote (not in a studio).
b) The expectation is that the footage shot will be edited later.
c) There is more time available for the production process to accommodate the moving of the camera and any lighting and the editing process.
d) Uses “Post-Production” in that any supplemental production needs are dealt with after shooting.

A single camera production can have a crew as small as one and grow up to about half a dozen people.

Multi-camera—This method of production naturally involves more than one camera connected to a switching device that selects which camera shot is recorded. It is most frequently used in a studio facility or from a remote truck that contains all of the necessary equipment. This type of production requires a larger crew and is more efficient for a larger production.

These are the basic criteria for doing multi-camera productions:

a) The production is in a studio or there is access for a remote truck.
b) There is a specialized space that can accommodate the lighting and the audio.
c) The production has many elements or programs that are identical, or at least very similar.
d) The production has a fast turnaround time.
e) The production is live to air.
f) Uses “Pre-Production” in that any supplemental production needs are done before the taping event.

A multi-camera shoot has a crew that will start with about six people, adding more as needed.

4) Crew Needs

Most productions require at least two people, although some budget-strapped local TV stations try to get by with just one. For the novice, understanding the roles of each crew member is vital to success. Not all crew members are needed for each position and some productions will have more than what is listed.

Producer—The person who wants to communicate a message to someone. Frequently also the writer.
Director—Makes the script into a video production, oversees the technical aspects of the shoot, and is usually in charge of the crew.
Audio—Responsible for all things sound related.
Camera—Points and focuses the camera.
Director of Photography (DP)—A single camera shoot, the person running the camera, if highly trained in film and videography, prefers this title to “cameraman.”
Makeup—Does makeup!
Teleprompter—Prompts the talent with a script, usually on a device mounted in front of the camera lens.
Studio Manager—in charge of the studio and the equipment found there.
Floor Manager—in charge of the crew in the studio during recording.
Lighting Director (LD)—Sets and focuses the lighting.
Engineer—Oversees the functionality of the equipment and the technical setup.
Are You Easter Ready?

I was filled with pride when the Easter banners were erected on the front lawn of our church. In a 2008 Gallup poll, 62% of respondents said they were planning on attending an Easter service.\(^1\) We hope to attract these seekers to our church doors.

Traditionally, Adventists have not celebrated Easter. This is a lost opportunity in reaching the people in your community who are searching for God. Studies have shown that the two times a year people are more likely to attend church are on Christmas and Easter. This is a compelling reason for Seventh-day Adventist Churches to take this evangelistic opportunity seriously.

One group of seekers are former Catholics. In a 2008 survey, the Pew Foundation found that one in 10 Americans now considers themselves an ex-Catholic.\(^2\) These individuals have been jaded by their childhood religion, and are seeking something else that can fill the spiritual gap. How will Adventists reach out to the unchurched in their community? Here are a few tried and tested ideas on gaining the attention of seekers during the Easter season.

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**Create web-friendly domains**—Create a web domain that is easy to remember for a motorist who may be driving past your church. This year, New Hope Adventist Church will use four different domains during the Easter season, based on the audiences we are trying to attract. All of your domains can be pointed to the same website. Some examples are:
- Lookingforachurch.org
- NewHopeLovesFamilies.com
- LiveBeyondtheEgg.com
- EasteratNewHope.com

**Order Church banners for your front lawn**—This is especially important if your church is located along a busy road or residential area. Be certain to order banners that are a minimum of six feet in length. Also, make sure the banner highlights your church web address prominently. To read more tips for ordering a church banner, go to [http://www.rajkumardixit.com/?p=803](http://www.rajkumardixit.com/?p=803).

**Facebook ads** may be the most successful option in reaching your targeted audience. It is relatively inexpensive in comparison to print or radio ads. You can target those you are trying to reach based on their demographic profile.

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1[http://tiny.cc/psrkbw](http://tiny.cc/psrkbw)
2[http://tinyurl.com/6qlsgzn](http://tinyurl.com/6qlsgzn)

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Joe Sloan is the Senior Producer at the Hope Channel.

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To learn more about the steps necessary when planning to produce a TV program, visit [http://www.ehow.com/video_2374504_preproduction-indie-filmmaking.html](http://www.ehow.com/video_2374504_preproduction-indie-filmmaking.html) and hear Corey Turner on expertvillage.com offer tips that will save you time and frustration.

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Writers, 25 tips for using AP style this spring

Writing about graduations, religious holidays, baseball and other hallmarks of spring? Better brush up on what the Associated Press says about the various terms. prdaily.com

Steven Vittorioso, account executive at Inkhouse Media + Marketing provides 25 useful tips beginning with the following three. Read his entire article at http://www.inkhouse.net/inklings-blog/.

1. alma mater

2. alumnus, alumni, alumna, alumnae: Use alumnus (alumni in the plural) when referring to a man who has attended a school. Use alumna (alumnae) when referring to a woman who has attended a school. Use alumni when referring to a group of men and women.

3. April Fool’s Day: Correct style of the April 1 event—no joke.

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