



PREPARING FOR YOUR FIRST VIDEO PROJECT

Communication is Key

Many companies working with production companies for the first time often suffer through a disappointing rookie experience. The sole reason for this is lack of communication. It is imperative that you know exactly what you want in a final project and that this information is translated to the production company. What you as client may see in your minds-eye as the final product may be vastly different from the view the producer or director has in mind. Make sure everyone is on the same page from pre-production through final editing.

Do You Prefer to Shoot on Location or in a Studio?

The location can have a direct impact on the aesthetics and bottom-line costs of the video. In-studio shooting is sometimes less expensive, but on-location shooting is more interesting and provides background setting in and around you facilities. On-location shots give a more realistic look to a production.

What is My Role?

"What sort of help will you need from me?" may be one of the most important questions you can ask. Does the total cost of the video include script writing? If not, you may be expected to produce a script, whether in-house or through an outside consultant. The production company may also need your help on coordinating other elements of the shoot, such as finding locations or briefing interviewees. Remember, you may not be an expert on video, but you are an expert on your company. Your insight into corporate culture and mission, internal issues and management philosophy are critical to the success of the video. On the other hand, you are hiring a production company for its expertise. Take full advantage of it by listening to the crew's advice and by enabling the crew to make the bulk of the production decisions, even when you don't understand or agree with them.

Do your homework. Good planning is key to the success of your video. Outline your objectives before you embark on the process of creating a video.

Use care and foresight when selecting employees to appear in the video. Watch out for jealousy and hard feelings from those not selected. Try to get a fair mix of male and female employees from various age groups and cultural backgrounds. Don't overlook the potential for future personnel changes.

Schedule the video production at a time that is convenient for your company. Timing is everything. If your company is changing its logo or corporate colors, or is remodeling the building, any aesthetics that may appear in the video, postpone production until after the changes are made. Nothing makes your video more obsolete than yesterday's image.

Be accessible to the production company during the production process. It is important that you, or a designated person, be on-site during shoots. As a first-timer to video production, you may not understand the editing process. Ask the production company to include you at the crucial times. Generally, minor changes can be made early in the production process for little or no extra charge. By attending the final edit, when you can select or approve colors shades and specific effects, you can avoid charges for changes requested later.

Establish a process for approving production elements, so that signatures and dates create a map of progress. At the beginning, establish decision-making responsibilities and a formal means to "sign off" on production elements. Don't make the production company answer to two or three bosses. Approvals will be required throughout the scriptwriting or at the very least, on the final draft of the script. Decision-making responsibilities that are unclear early on can result in problems and finger-pointing sessions later.

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