

2016

Production Guide



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DIGITAL STRATEGY - Bob Roche

What is the strategic role video would play in a larger online campaign? How would you use the web, email, mobile and social media to promote your video and get your message to the right audience? How in turn would your video support the ongoing narrative of your college? Here are some tips to help you create a digital strategy.

Example: We had a video shoot recently where we shot a story for an online TV series. Besides the main story, we shot three additional short clips, took some photos and the host did four video blogs from the field. All will go online in different areas to support the main story and the series.

Identify the Need - What is the overall strategic goal you want accomplish? Why is it important? Is it realistic in terms of resources and time? What would success look like?

Audience - Identify your primary audience. Are there secondary audiences as well? You will need to address these different viewers in distinct ways. How you target students will be different than local industry people you may want to recruit for your program.

Research – Learn the demographics of your audiences, then go a step further and explore their lifestyles, values, interests and activities. This will help you craft your message more effectively and target ideal venues for your media. Take advantage of research tools available on sites such as Facebook and Google.

Partners - Enlist help. Develop collaborations with experts and organizations that can assist you in various ways such as funding, content, production, and dissemination. This will open up creative opportunities, build awareness and give your message additional credibility.

Optimize Online - There are overwhelming choices online now, so it is critical to select the right sites to promote your message. The good news is that you can tailor your media mix to specific audiences. Here are a few ways to optimize your online presence.

KEYWORDS: Tag your posts with keywords and include them in your content, titles and metadata. This will help them appear in search results and drive more traffic to your site. Develop a keyword list through research and analysis that you know draws the audience you want.

WEBSITE: Keep content on your website fresh and relevant with regular postings that are accessible, engaging, and understandable. This could be in the form of video, photos, articles, news and blogs. Dormant websites lose traffic and don't appear in searches.

SOCIAL MEDIA: Find the social media sites that attract your audience. Are they on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter or on a new site that is trending. Tap into where they are and post timely content that is customized for the venue. The idea is to build awareness and have your message take on a life of its own as it is shared, retweeted, and repinned.

Adapt Media to the Venue - You may have a 3-minute video on YouTube, a 15 second clip on Instagram, a GIF on Twitter, a photo on Facebook, a link on mobile, and a vlog on your website, all trying to persuade viewers to act upon your message. Just remember, the digital monster needs to be fed constantly to be successful. So plan to carry on a campaign for a period of time, and linked to other digital presences in your school.

Measurables and Analytics - There are lots of ways to quantify how well your message is being received. The important part is what do you do with the information once you have it. Are you able to use this feedback to help you refine your message and strengthen your presence in venues that work and eliminating those that don't?

Archiving - Prepare where your final video, original footage and supporting media will be saved after its online life is over. Have it all logged and easily accessible. You never know when you will need it again... and you will need it again.

Example: I had a major organization asked me to gather their videos from the past and combine them with the ones I just produced and put them all on a continuous loop. When I asked them where the files were for these old programs, no one knew. They looked and asked around for a week, and came up with nothing. I ended up having to download low resolution versions from YouTube. So you need to plan ahead.

VIDEO STORYTELLING - Bob Roche

Storytelling is one of the oldest and effective ways to communicate knowledge, insight and information. While the methods have changed, the art of storytelling has not. The reason why, is that it works. People like good stories, they remember them, they learn from them and they share them.

Today, sharing stories is important and easier than ever – It's how your message becomes known - it's how your information goes viral.

One of the best ways to tell a story is through video. It is one of the most powerful tools you can use to educate, inspire and motivate your audience.

Even Marketers and advertisers are moving away from the hard sell and using storytelling techniques to build relationships with their customers.

You can do the same. The first step is to decide who your audience is and get to know them.

Audience

You need to define your audience. While there is crossover between viewers, it is difficult to make an effective video if you are targeting too wide an audience.

Who do you want to reach? What do you need to learn about them? Possible audiences could be students, parents, employers, funders or others.

Your audience can be narrowed even further – instead of all students, you might want to focus on high school students, female students, minority students or older returning students.

So what is your primary audience? Once you have decided on that, the next step is to determine the goals of your video.

Objective

What is the purpose of your video? What is the overall message you want convey to your audience? What essential ideas do you want them to learn? What kinds of actions do you want them to take?

Less is More

Video is a medium that works best when you keep your message simple and concise. One of the most common mistakes is overloading your audience with too much information, too many details, in too many directions. If you do that your viewers will tune out.

One client gave me a lists of topics they wanted to cover in 4 minutes. It took longer to read the list then the length of the video. So focus your message, get to the point, less is more.

Length

With decreasing attention spans and competition for your audience's interest, the common wisdom is shorter the better. This is true to a point. However, make sure you have enough time to tell your story. If the pacing is too fast, you will lose your audience. Give your video some breathing room and it will have more impact. A 5-minute video will seem like 3-minute if it's compelling enough.

Approach

So how are you going to tell your story? With video, you work with both images and words. This allows for a variety of engaging and effective ways to express your message.

Some common approaches are:

- Profiling a person or place
- Presenting directly to camera
- Using humor or music
- Creating a metaphor or analogy
- Making a documentary or How-to

There are many more, find what works best for you.

Your approach may be influenced by your resources, budget and know-how - which is fine. Working within restrictions is common in video. The idea is to brainstorm a creative way to express your story within your boundaries, and produce a relevant and appealing video for your target audience.

Scriptwriting

No matter what the approach you take, your script should be written in a conversational style. Use simple words rather than complex. Avoid jargon, whenever possible. Viewers remember and trust what they can more easily understand. Use action and emotional words when appropriate to accent images and build a strong connection.

If you are using interview quotes, don't let them ramble. Have them make a point and move on. Quotes usually average about 10 - 20 seconds. Tighten up quotes where you can, if possible. If you are writing narration, set-up quotes so they have more impact.

Finally, remember, video is a visual medium, it's not radio. Let the images tell your story as much as words. Build a relationship between the two, where both support each other creating a more powerful message.

Story Structure

Structuring a story is crucial to telling a good tale. Determining your beginning, middle and end can be the difference between creating a good story and a confusing one.

Your first consideration is the Introduction: You need to grab your audience's attention right away before they are distracted by something else. Some good ways to accomplish this is to begin with:

- Compelling video
- An engaging quote
- A powerful fact
- A stimulating idea
- An intriguing question

Something that is key to the story you are about to tell that hooks them in. This is why they have teases in front of shows – to capture viewer's attention. From there a typical story structure is often a variation of this classic:

- Character(s) and place introduced
- Problem to overcome
- Obstacles in the way
- Possible solutions and first steps
- Breakthrough
- Final Resolution and outcome

Call to action

It's important at the end of your story to give a call to action, such as a website, email, phone number to get further information, now that you have gained their attention and piqued their interest. Create a sense of urgency, you want them to act right now!

PRODUCTION BASICS - Bob Roche

Preproduction

Gather a team - Video is a collaborative medium and you will need assistance to get the job done. Consider how each person's abilities can best contribute to the production. Discuss story and style, talent and locations, logistics and equipment.

Create a Treatment - Decide the purpose of your video, who your audience is, the key points of your message and how best to tell your story. This is your plan of action.

Do research - Get to know your subject better, who to interview, and where the best places to shoot.

Gather media assets – Photos, logos, graphics, and video from earlier productions. Search our Custom Video YouTube Channel and find clips that might be useful. There are b-roll, quotes and short segments that might help you with your narrative.

Write scripts - Scripts can be written before or after you shoot depending on your story approach. For example, a presentation is written before, a documentary after.

Set-up shoot – Contact people, find talent, get equipment, scout locations, obtain clearances, secure releases, get directions and then double check everything.

Organize production - Make a production schedule, and on shoot days have a daily itinerary available with times, locations and contacts.

Production

Prepare equipment – Make sure camera is set up correctly (1080p 30fps works well) and the lens is clean. Have a good microphone, plenty of memory cards, extra batteries and gaffer tape. Bring lights if you need them.

Shoot video

- Fill the camera with the subject
- Check Focus
- Make sure the background is not too busy
- Shoot from different angles and distances
- Make smooth and deliberate moves
- Do not shoot into the sun or in front of a window
- Use lights in dark places

Post production

Copy media - To be safe, your media should live in two places, three is better.

Prepare to edit - Write or revise your script. Review and log video and media assets.

Edit (see next section)

Distribute - Create appropriate files that can play in different venues, like your website, social media, mobile, and/or live presentations

(See Shooting tips, Producing Tips, Interviewing Tips and Audio Tips for more information)

EDITING - Bob Roche

The art of editing is putting the right shot in the right place for the right amount of time.

- Basic kinds of shots:
 - Wide shot
 - Medium shot
 - Close-up
 - Extreme Close-up
- Basic camera movements:
 - Pan
 - Tilt
 - Zoom
- Traditional editing starts with a wide shot and works its way into a scene with medium shots and close-ups to tell the story
 - Wide shots establish the scene and gives viewers lots of information
 - Medium shots focuses the audience's attention and moves the story along
 - Close-ups create impact and intimacy, emphasizing a specific detail or idea
 - Pans, tilts and zooms add movement and visual interest while controlling the audiences point of view
- Cut between different camera angles, using more close-ups and medium shots then wide shots. Use pan, tilts and zooms judiciously to be effective
- Think how a shot moves the story forward, then choose the best take. The hardest part of editing is letting go of a scene you like for the good of the story
- Keep things moving, cutting at a consistent rhythm and pacing. Find the right tempo - If you cut too fast, it will be difficult to keep up, too slow and it will be boring
- Cut Sequences - show a continuous single action seamlessly through multiple shots
- Cut Montages – juxtapose different images together and create a new meaning that is powerful

- While cuts are the most common way to transition, there are other ways. Typical transitions other than cuts:
 - Dissolve
 - Wipe
 - Fade
- Do not overuse these kinds of transitions – they should have a purpose like a passage of time, change in location or an end of a chapter
- People speaking on camera are known as talking heads - Clean up their ums and ahs, long pauses, and unflattering gestures if possible.
- Put in titles, text and identifications (lower thirds). Watch for misspelling and grammatical errors - double-check!
- Review your edited video, let it sit for a couple of days and then review it again

There is a whole language to editing - cutting on action, L cuts, cross cuts, jump cuts, and cutaways for example – some of these you may know already, but we are stopping here, and leave that for another day.

YOUTUBE VIDEO EDITOR - Bob Roche

A simple, free and useful tool for those who need to edit together a video. Upload clips, photos and graphics or choose clips from our Video Library.

Navigate to YouTube Video Editor – Video Manager / Create / Video Editor

- Create a new Project and give it a name
- Choose an Icon from Menu
- Search for media
- Choose a clip or photo and drag to video timeline or click “+” sign
- Adjust length, volume, effects and other attributes
- Add a title or text by clicking text – default banner style
- Other title styles under “a” in the icon menu
- Choose text font, size, color and other attributes
- Expand timeline for more detail work
- Choose next clip or photo until finished
- Add audio track or music to audio timeline – search YouTube Audio Library
- Adjust audio length, volume and other attributes
- Add transitions to video timeline
- Playback video and make final adjustments
- If you get stuck in one mode – refresh page (you will lose search results)
- Click create video

Uploading media to YouTube

For Video

- Go to the Upload page
- Select privacy settings – private, unlisted or public (we use unlisted)
- Drag and drop your video files into the upload box
- While uploading, you can add a description, change title, choose a thumbnail and tag
- File will appear on the video manager page when done
- Click “edit” to add or change clip’s information

For Photos

- Click camera icon on the Video Editor and click “Add photos to project”
- Choose photos you uploaded previously or upload new photos from your computer
- YouTube will except jpg, png and tif files

- To create a photo slideshow, go to the Upload page / Create Videos / Photo slide show / Create
- Click Advance Editor and it will transfer slideshow to the YouTube Video Editor

For Audio

- Audio should be recorded with video (or attached later) to be uploaded
- Go to Upload page and drag and drop audio/video files into the upload box
- Choose Music and sound effects from the YouTube Audio Library

Copyright

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