

Using a Smartphone or Tablet for Content Creation

Best Practices

We have all been put in the unique position to figure out how to advertise our businesses, organizations, brands, and more by ourselves. While this can seem daunting, let me assure you that the chances are more than likely that you have everything you need to create engaging content right at your fingertips. Here are some best practices we have found over the years to help clients creating the highest quality videos possible, from the comfort and safety of their own homes and businesses.

If you have a newer (last several years) iPhone or Android device, you are already more than half of the way there. Any of these devices have the ability to record high quality video and audio with greater ease than professional equipment. If you have a smart phone or tablet, you have almost certainly used it to take personal videos in one form or another already! The thought process here is exactly the same as that, but with a little more forethought added into the mix.

1. Shoot landscape (horizontal) whenever possible for longer content

- Facebook and YouTube videos are meant to be seen wide screen like any commercial, tv show, or movie. Make sure your phone is horizontal! The vertical/selfie style video is perfect for Instagram, Snapchat, or Tiktok videos, but not so great for longer form content such as what is found on YouTube and Facebook.

2. Invest in a Selfie Stick/Tripod!

- Tripod's for your phone are inexpensive (under \$20) and are the perfect way to make sure you have a steady & level shot through your entire video!
- It is better to get one that is a solid rod instead of something with multiple bendable legs that can change shapes. This helps guarantee an even smoothness that adds a more professional feel to your video.

3. Use the "rear facing camera"

- Typically speaking, a device's rear facing camera is nicer than the selfie style front facing camera. If you are filming this yourself, it might be a good idea to set up your shot before hand with your tripod and do a quick test to make sure you are framed well. If you have to, or feel more comfortable using the front facing camera because you are alone, that is fine... but the rear camera is always preferable.

4. When available, use a cameraman

- Do you have a business partner or loved one who can hold the camera for you? This would be the ideal situation! Someone holding the camera for you allows them to follow your action, allowing you to do demonstrations, gesture, walk around, or whatever the content of the video calls for.

5. Leave a few moments of space at the beginning & end of every take

- When filming content, it is important to give your editor a few moments of silence before and after the speaking or action begins on a video. This allows the editor the wiggle room to cut and use transitions, making your video have a more professional feel. This also ensures that you don't cut off anything important, including introductions or moments at the end you would wish to get back later! Always give yourself extra time!

6. Framing your shot correctly

- It's important to think beforehand about what the content of your video will be, in order to decide how to properly set up the framing of your shot.
- Interviews or "talking heads" are typically done in a "bust shot" meaning that the bottom of the frame is around halfway on the torso, around the top of the chest. This shot includes the shoulders, and has some space above the head.
 - Different styles of this shot might include having the person in the video directly centered (e.g.: intro to video). Or slightly off to one side, with a bit of empty space left on the side to which they are looking (leaving room for graphics to be added later) For examples of these, check out any news interviews or tv shows such as "The Office" whenever someone is speaking directly at the camera.
- For content involving demonstrations, it is perfectly fine to move the camera from showing someone's face to their hands or the item that they are speaking of. Follow the action the same way you would if you were filming something for fun. Try to stay away from camera movements that are too fast or have a jerking motion. This should most likely feel natural, as everyone now has some experience filming friends, children, pets, etc.

7. Audio

- As long as the area you are filming in is relatively quiet, audio should not be an issue. While there is certainly equipment you can purchase such as external lavalier microphones made specifically for mobile devices, this is not a requirement. Being conscious of the background noise and the distance between the speaker and the device is the most important thing! You can test this beforehand by taking a short video and listening back to the sound, to see if you need to make any adjustments.

8. Plan out your video!

- Above all else, the most important thing is to have a plan for what you would like your segment to look like PRIOR to shooting. Make a note, draw a picture...talk it out amongst the people involved in the shoot. This doesn't have to be a long and complicated process, but it is invaluable to know what you're aiming for before you hit record!

- Exporting Video

- To send this video to your editor, simply upload from your device using one of the following services:
 - Google Drive (preferred!)
 - Dropbox
 - WhatsApp

Please send all created content, along with any questions you may have to me. We look forward to receiving your footage, and remember to have fun!

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