

THE HANDS-ON, HANDS-DOWN 11 BEST WAYS TO CREATE VIDEOS

There's a reason video continues to dominate social media and online content – it's the best medium for telling your story. But creating a quick or compelling video can be a struggle. The following are some tips I've picked up throughout my career. There are 11 here, but there could be 1,000.

Because at the end of the day, everything is subjective. However, you don't need to spend Hollywood bucks to make an effective video. Your phone will do just fine. But there are a few things to guide you through the process.

1. Stop. Don't shoot.

First, always start with a strategy. Ask yourself the following:

- Why are you doing this video?
- Who are you talking to?
- What do you know about them?
- What are you saying?
- What do you want people to do or think after they've seen the video?
- What platform are you launching it in? For instance, if it's Instagram, you'll want to make it square.

2. Write a good story.

When you know your strategy, you can take your complicated issue and simplify it. As a rule of thumb, the best videos have the best stories. Since this is advocacy, there's usually a bad guy or good guy, which makes it easier to write. Always keep your audience in mind too, as in, why should they care?

3. Make your video emotional

Anger? Joy? Fear? Surprise? Disgust? Anticipation? We work in public affairs, so leading with some emotion can certainly compel people to do something. Fear, anger, and disgust are good triggers.

4. Determine what kind of video you want.

These cover the range for any production you might be considering:

- Talking heads
- Edited
- Live action – interviews or scripted with actors
- Computer animated
- Man on the street
- All text

5. Count de money

Have a realistic sense of what things are going to cost from all stages of production (pre-, during and post-production). If you have all the equipment in-house, it's much cheaper, but you should know the costs of hiring freelance production crews, editors and talent. What's also crucial is remembering to leave money for promotion.

6. Understand all steps in the production process

The most important part of the process. This is where all the planning and scripting come into play. You want to organize things so well that when it comes to production – filming – you know exactly what you're doing and aren't sidelined by surprises. For post-production, your story truly comes to life in the editing room. You can add music, sound effects, and graphics. Then, when it's ready to go, you can ship it off to the right platforms.



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7. Listen up.

Everyone is focused on what's on camera, but often the most overlooked component is sound.

- Show instead of telling. Video is a visual medium.
- Remember: You're not filming a radio commercial.
- If you're talking, make sure people can hear you clearly. People can tolerate the shakes, but they won't put up with poor sound.
- The mute test: If the volume's off, can people understand your video? Many people watch their social media feeds without listening to audio.

8. Action!

If you're going to shoot the video with your phone, that's perfectly acceptable. Chances are it's 4K. Pretty impressive. Here are some tips:

- Shoot it vertically. That's how most social media feeds are scrolled, but Instagram is square.
- Avoid the shakes with a stabilizer.
- Make sure we can hear you. So speak up. Or have a lav mic connected to you. Generally, shooting a video inside is better than outside for sound.
- Play around with lighting. We want to see you.
- If you're reading a script, save yourself and get the Tele-Prompter app — promptsmart pro.

9. Edit.

You can do it yourself on your phone. And there are perfectly good apps to use, like iMovie and premiere pro/after effects. I recommend hiring a professional editor. But you might want graphics, music, and type. An editor is so much quicker.

- Be careful with stock imagery. It can look and feel fake.
- Think about your length. I generally make a longer version (:60-:90) with several short (:06, :15, :30) ones for social.

10. Share.

You did it! You have a masterpiece. It's time the world knows just how great your video is. Just think about all the wonderful places you can put it.

- Email
- Digital
- Native video (Used to be YouTube and Vimeo, now it's Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, LinkedIn, TicToc, etc)
- Websites
- Social platforms
- Ads – pre-roll

11. Promote.

You've created the Picasso. Don't just leave it in the basement. Spend the money so people will see it.

- Promote to your followers.
- Target any first-party data that you might have.
- Make sure you're remarketing.