

TRANSCRIPT

What NOT to Film

Anyone remember that show from the 90's, What Not to Wear? No? Bueller? Okay, I'm clearly dating myself with these ANCIENT tv references...

Anyway, in the show, the two fashion forward hosts would take someone from frumpy to fab in the course of a 42 minute show.

Well, this week, I'm doing my own version called: What Not to Film! Just...go with me here.

This week, I'm talking about what to do, and what NOT to do when it comes time to turn on the camera.

As I've said previously, I'm not going to spend much of the precious time we have here talking about all the equipment I use. I've got some other places where I've talked about that and where I walk through some basic recommendations. But basically, any phone or tablet should serve you just fine, unless you're looking for much higher production value.

So, moving on. Once you've got your script or storyboard, you've edited and revised and are in your final draft, then you're ready to film, (or record audio voice over.) I'll talk here about filming dos and don'ts for some of the most common types of videos, and how to take them from Frumpy to Fab with a few easy steps.

So, we'll start with the most important part of your video...the audio.

Interestingly, though video is a visual medium, people are actually more likely to stop watching your video if the audio is poor quality, than if the video is

poor quality. It is really important to set up your audio right, *before* you hit record.

A peek behind the curtain...I've used all kinds of microphone set ups to do filming - directional mic connected to my camera, a USB microphone, lav mic, mic on my cell phone...you get the idea.

To give you a sense of what this sounds like - here is me talking into my lav mic, that is clipped to my shirt, out of frame. This is what it sounds like using the directional mic on my camera. This is what it sounds like using my USB mic that I use for podcasting. This is what it sounds like if I use the audio from my cell phone placed a few feet from me.

As you can probably hear, there are some pretty significant differences in how they sound, and the amount of room noise these mics pick up. So play around a little bit to figure out what kind of sound you want to go with.

Pro tip - this lav mic I've used for most of my videos is really inexpensive and plugs in to the audio jack of my phone so I can record directly from there using the voice memos app on my phone. It's worked really well and was pretty inexpensive.

The point is, you don't need a degree in audio engineering, or a bajillion dollars to get good enough sound for your video.

Framing & Lighting

Okay, now let's turn to setting up your camera to get good video footage. The most essential parts of this are framing, and lighting. Framing refers to how the subject (be it a person, or object) of your shot is framed in the image. A good rule of thumb here is what's called the rule of thirds.

So if we take this clip of me talking and we divide the screen into thirds both horizontally and vertically, you can see that, in general I'm placing my face - the primary thing I want you to look at in these videos - where the top horizontal line meets one of the two vertical lines. Being slightly off center is actually pretty standard, and you might think even looks better than if I'm directly in the center of the shot like this. Similarly, your gut is going to scream NO! When I place myself either up here, or way down here in the framing. It just looks WRONG - because it is wrong. So when you're setting up your shot, think about the rule of thirds.

The second essential part of setting up your shoot has to do with lighting. Basically you want to think about your light source, and how it's hitting your subject. Direct light might wash them out, overhead light will be too shadowy, back light means you may not be able to clearly see their face - so strike a balance. There are a zillion videos about there about different techniques for lighting. The key thing to consider is making sure your subject's face is well lit. Grab a desk lamp if you don't have fancy lighting kit, or place them in a bright room with lots of natural light. Basically if you make sure your subject looks well lit on camera, and avoid large changes in lighting throughout your shoot (like the sun going in and out from behind the clouds for example), you'll be in good shape.

I'm guessing many of you are going to be doing videos where there is someone on the screen. Maybe you're doing a scripted direct-to-camera or vlog style video, or perhaps you're doing an in-depth interview with someone important to the project you're talking about. If that's the case, then there are a few basics you/they should know:

- ◆ Think about the surroundings. In general, you want to film somewhere quiet if you can. Avoid outside on a windy day, avoid noisy cafes or packed conference halls. You get the idea. You also want the space you're recording in to be visually interesting. So you've probably noticed I, and

lots of other folks, will film in front of a bookshelf. This is because bookshelves can be visually interesting without being overly distracting. Plus you can infuse some personality in there as well. When you're out on location though, you might not have that kind of control. In general, try to avoid stark white backgrounds (I've done this in interviews before, and it's always something I regret) and really busy or distracting backgrounds.

- ◆ What not to wear: Do NOT, I repeat DO NOT wear small patterns. As you can see, they can look wobbly and weird on screen. Generally go for colors that compliment the person's skin tone. For some skin tones, if you get too light, it can make the person look washed out, for others, if you go too bright, it can make them look odd, or sometimes downright florescent.
- ◆ Energy, energy, energy! You may feel like you're being energetic when you're saying your lines, but just like the old adage about the camera adding ten pounds, it also subtracts your energy by a factor of 10. For example: This is me talking as I would if I were talking to one other person directly in conversation. You'll see that I have pretty subtle movements - maybe hardly noticeable - and my hands aren't involved at all. Now, this is how I talk on camera. Now, I feel like I'm flapping around like a bird, but I actually just comes off as emphasis on particular points...or at least, I hope so. Also, my tone of voice has more range to it, and I emphasize main points a little more than I would if I were just chatting with a pal. Basically, you have to pretend you're on stage, or giving a presentation in front of a crowd, even when you're alone in your room talking to your camera. It can be a weird feeling at first, but you get used to it the more you practice.

For Interviews:

- ◆ Be kind to your editor. Your video editor is going to have to review all of this footage, so there are a few things you can do to help them (or your future self if you're doing the editing!) when doing interviews.

- ◆ First off - It can be really helpful to have a little time before you turn on the camera to talk through the conversation a bit with the person you're interviewing. Perhaps you've shared the questions you're going to ask ahead of time (I recommend this!). Maybe you've even had a pre-conversation about the points you'd really like to capture on video. Now, as you settle in to the recording time, let your interviewee know that you might coach them a bit and might have them rephrase things if they're not quite clear. You might request multiple takes of the same point or question. You might ask them to repeat things, and ask for fewer 'uhs and ums'. This will (likely) have the effect of making them a little uncomfortable, so be sure to be complimentary and positive. You want them to feel as comfortable as possible with the filming process.
- ◆ When you do get the camera rolling, first have the interviewee introduce themselves on camera, and say a little about what they do, or whatever is a relevant connection to point out about their role or involvement in the subject matter of the video. You may not use this footage, but trust me, it's way better to have it than NOT have it.
- ◆ Then, the biggest thing you as the interviewer can do? KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT. When we talk with others in normal conversation, we want to affirm what they're saying, and sometimes this means agreeing with: "yep, uh huh, totally" But guess what, your mics WILL PICK THIS UP and it's a pain in the tush to edit out later. So, best to stick with nods, smiles, and other non-verbal cues that you're listening and engaged with the conversation. Even better, if YOU'RE emoting heavily with your face and non-verbals, then the person who is on camera is likely to be more lively as well (and this is a good thing!)

What about when no one is on screen? Enter B roll, images, graphics, text, animation.

B roll - B roll is a term that refers to footage you've filmed that is supplemental to the main shot or point...like this for example. So you hear me

talking - the disembodied voice phenomena - while you see alternative footage that either underscores the point that's being made, or simply provides something visually interesting over top of the audio. B roll is REALLY HANDY when it comes to editing, so it's always a good idea to get some. One tip: Record for longer than you think you need too. I used to gather like 10 seconds of B roll at a time...which is NOT very much. I'd recommend a solid 30-40 seconds at least of steady camera b roll so that you've got enough to make it useable in editing.

Images, graphics, text, animation - I'll get into all of this more in an upcoming post, but when you're looking for something visual you'd like to use - photos, video, animations - you want to be sure you have the rights to use it. Copyright is a big deal, and becoming an even bigger deal - but we'll get into that soon. Regardless, images, text and graphics can be really handy tools, so be thoughtful throughout your planning and filming process of what might help get your point across.

This is not an exhaustive list of all the things to consider when filming, but it's a lot of the things I wish I'd known when I first got started.

Now that I've thrown a TON of information at you about the dos and don'ts of filming, take some time to think about the Questions to Ponder for the week, and then get some practice by doing the Jumpstart Activity. Those things can be found right over here: www.developplayllc.com/vyw-week5

Thanks for watching! If you're interested in some one-on-one guidance on how to meet your video-making goals, let's talk! You can reach out at this link for a free one-hour consultation with me.

If you're on the hunt for some resources about making videos, check out my How to YouTube and Video Production Basics Handouts, along with other resources over here.



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Thanks for watching - see you next time! Now, go forth and make some Video, Your Way.

Links mentioned in this video:

- Questions to Ponder and Jumpstart Activities: www.developplayllc.com/vyw-email1
- What tech do I use? www.developplayllc.com/articles/video-equipment-i-use
- Let's Talk! Sign up for a free 1 hour consultation: www.developplayllc.com/vyw-consultation
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