

THE 5-MINUTE GUIDE TO

VIDEO PRODUCTION

for
NON-PROFESSIONALS



Video Production for Non Professionals – A Five Minute Guide

Video production is one of the very best tools available for any business looking to promote itself online. In fact, when used correctly video production can help to make a small business look far more professional and can lead to far more conversions than any other medium.

Think about your own experience. If you land on a website's homepage and the first thing that happens is that you see a professional video play with a well-spoken voiceover telling you what that business does, how will that color your impressions of the company? Of course we think they're more professional and this as a result makes us more likely to buy from them. Anyone can create a website – especially with tools like WordPress – but creating a professional looking video is considerably more difficult.

At the same time, video has an uncanny ability to reel us in. This works very well and we see it in all kinds of situations in our own daily lives. For instance: when you're talking to someone and there's a TV in the room and you just can't look away! Or how about when you're up late at night and 'The Top 100 Useless Songs' comes on and you sit up and watch the whole thing through to the end... even though it doesn't matter at all what number one is! That's because videos are highly engaging and almost hypnotic. What's more, they're *dense* and they allow you to cram much more information into a short span of time than any other medium. Some of this will even be unconscious – such as the signals you send your audience merely by choosing certain items to leave in the background. Imagine how powerful this could be in converting sales and getting people to join your mailing list! The short answer? Very.

Choosing the Right Type of Video

This short guide and the larger e-book of course teach you to make stunning videos that help your business to achieve all these things. But before you go ahead and do this, you need to think about what *type* of video it is you're going to create. In fact, the skills involved in creating a video range drastically depending on your answer here and this in turn will depend on your goals.

Here then are a few different types of videos you can create:

Vlog: A vlog is a blog that is in video form. You'll likely upload these videos to YouTube or Vimeo and here you can give people insights into your life, into a niche or into any other subject. This is a type of content marketing and the idea is to build trust, familiarity and more with your audience to encourage more sales and leads.

Advert: A video can also just be a straight up advert. You can then use this in a range of different places – for instance on a popular website that you pay, or on Facebook. Facebook video advertising is actually a particularly interesting option as you can target your audience precisely by their age, sex, location, hobbies and even job title and you'll only have to pay when someone clicks your ad. *Or* you can go one step further and use CPA advertising (cost per action) and only get charged when your video actually converts! Other forms of adverts include things like Kickstarter videos for interest.

Sales Video: If you have a sales page selling an e-book, a course, a piece of trading software *etc.* then you can benefit greatly from having a video at the top to engage the audience and to push the 'value proposition' and the emotional angle of your pitch. You can create such a video with something like OptimizePress and then talk about the merits of your product.

Introductory Corporate Video: As mentioned, a video can work wonders when embedded onto a homepage. This way you can instantly tell your audience what your product or service is and why they should care. This is particularly important bearing in mind what short attention spans most web users have.

Viral Videos: Whether you create a cute animation or set-up an amazing stunt, some videos exist purely to go viral. These are great for social media or platforms like Vine.

Tutorials: A tutorial can be used as part of a vlog, it can be included with your product to improve the user experience or it can be used as a stand-alone advert.

There are many more options besides but these will cover the vast majority of situations.

Different Styles and Different Tools

So why does this matter so much?

Simply put, because the ideal video on your homepage will be entirely different from the ideal video for Facebook or for a vlog that includes lots of updates.

In a vlog for instance, you will likely use jump cuts, casual speech and a less professional environment and aim to build a relationship with your audience. For an advert or something similar, you will likely want to look and sound smarter, you will probably want read without stuttering and you will probably use inspiring music in the background. A corporate promotional video for a homepage will be similar but likely more scripted still and won't necessarily include you in it – instead it could be a slideshow or an animation. Sales videos are almost *always* slideshow videos and then you have tutorials which can take a range of formats – including screen captures. A viral video for vine meanwhile might be something completely unique – such as a stop-motion animation made from shoes if you're a shoe store!

Now the tools you'd use to create these videos and the methods of course vary widely, so think about what you're making and what the goals of that video area *before* you invest too much time or effort going down one particular avenue.

Creating Videos Without Picking Up a Camera

As well as thinking about your goals, you should also think about your capabilities. What type of video are you actually able to make?

This is a particularly pertinent question for a small business that perhaps doesn't have access to a high definition camera or somewhere to film. The good news, is that if you choose to make a slideshow video or a video that consists of a hand-drawn animation on a whiteboard (a popular conceit currently) then there's no need for you to necessarily even *pick up* a camera. This means that video editing is truly something anyone can do and which can be very easy.

In short then, sometimes it's worth 'bending' your goals and vision slightly to be more in-keeping with what you're realistically capable of creating.

Useful Hardware

With that latter point in mind, you won't necessarily need *any* hardware other than a good computer. When it comes to that, all you need to do is ensure you're running at least an i5 or i7 with 4GB upwards of RAM. It's also useful to have a high definition display with good color accuracy so that what you're making will look professional.

Otherwise, the following hardware can be very useful, though not necessarily a requirement:

Camera: A good camera will be at least HD quality and preferably higher. It should have a wide angle lens, an optical zoom and the ability to use macros to blur the background. This latter effect can create very professional looking shots.

Microphone: Don't neglect your sound as this is often just as important as the footage. The best way to get crisp, audible sound is to invest in a mic that you can attach to your collar. This will avoid the acoustics of the room taking an effect and will ensure everything sounds as good as it looks.

Lamps: Some stage lighting can really elevate your video to the next level if you have it and is a great way to get a high contrast look that makes your video look like it cost a lot more to make. You don't necessarily have to use a proper light box – you can achieve a similar effect with a desk lamp or two!

Canvas: A white canvas is very useful for creating white infinity backgrounds. Again though, you can accomplish a similar effect in other ways too – for example by using a white bedsheet, stretching it taught against a wall and then using your lighting to avoid creating a shadow.

Useful Software

Just as important as the hardware though is the software. Here we will look at some of the best software packages you can use to make video production that much simpler...

Video Maker FX: This is a great piece of software for businesses looking to make corporate videos. It allows you to combine a lot of different features to quickly and easily create videos that conform to industry standards and are sure to convert.

Easy Sketch Pro: For those not wanting to step in front of a camera, this is a fantastic choice. Easy Sketch Pro essentially allows you to create animated whiteboards that look like you're drawing on them. They look very professional because we see them a lot in other corporate videos and this ensures a professional result without you having to put in *too* much work.

Explaindio: Explaindio similarly lets you create professional videos for your business without needing to be a pro at video editing. It has a lot of features, all of which are available in a simple drag-and-drop set-up.

Explaindio Video Converting: Explaindio also provide video conversion software that's excellent if you need to change the file format of a video.

PowerPoint: Want to create a slideshow video? With Office365 this is super easy as you can simply save your PowerPoint presentation in video file format. These look great, are easy to make and save a lot of time. Just add a voice over.

Adobe Premier: Adobe Premier is the most powerful video editing software out there and is used by top professionals (in conjunction with Adobe AfterEffects which is part of the same Creative Cloud package). This software is complicated and expensive *but* when you master it you'll be able to create pretty much anything you can think of.

Top Tips for More Professional and Effective Videos

Depending on which of the above types of video you try to make and which tool you use to make them, these tips may come in handy and help you to make even more professional looking videos...

Don't overdo the transitions

Transitions are great for a professional video but this is a scenario where less is more. Avoid looking like someone who has just discovered them!

Use a video opener

For a vlog, a short animation at the start of each video with some music can do wonders to increase brand awareness and to introduce people to your videos.

Add your logo

Your logo in one of the corners is again great for brand visibility *and* for creating a professional look.

Film more, cut more

The more you film, the more you will have to work with. *But* when editing, try to leave more out of your end product than you initially feel inclined to.

This keeps up the momentum, avoids awkward pauses and really helps to create something engaging.

Add music

But not too loud! The levels here are crucial – your audience should never be straining to hear you!

Pause between sentences

However you record your audio, make sure you pause between sentences. This way, you can edit it more easily and you'll reduce your stutters and filler noises.

Use a narrative

Unless this is a corporate video, using a narrative structure can help a lot. That's because it's compelling to listen to and at the same time, lets your viewers imagine what you're saying. Add in rhetorical questions and a conversational manner for added credits.

Have two cameras

If you can afford it, have two cameras filming you at any time. Then you can reconstruct the footage on your computer and you'll have more options for editing.