



A Professional's Introduction To Making A Film

Making a film or video is an AUDIO /VISUAL experience. This means images and sounds are equally important to the success of video. Treat them with equal respect!

Making a video is a collaborative process, ie requires a team effort. This means 2 things:

- If a member of your team is having troubles, helping him/her resolving the issue will directly improve the quality of your film.
- It also means that each member of the team has to put in his/her best effort to achieve the best result.

Making a video involves 3 stages:

1. Preparation (*aka Pre-production*)
2. Shooting (*aka Production*)
3. Editing (*aka Post-production*)

The Idea

Take control - The best camcorder in the world will give you excellent pictures and sound - but it can't think for you. That's the bit you have to do yourself.

- a) What story do you want to tell?
- b) Whose story is it? Who is your main character?
- c) Think in advance what would you like to see as your end product.
- d) PLAN in advance what/how you are going to shoot. Suggestion: You can structure your movies into a series of "segments"

Filming Techniques

You are the one with the camera – you are the one that will direct the attention of the viewer. These principles will help you to NOT DISTRACT the viewer from the story you want to tell them! Please read on for some...

...Filming Top Tips

Visuals

CAMERA – Try to make your **shot as stable as possible** – unless you have a specific reason.

It will help the audience to follow the story and not feel 'sea-sick'

1. Use a TRIPOD
2. Hold your camera firmly (and make yourself comfortable)

CAMERA – Make sure you **charge your batteries**. If possible always have a spare battery on charge.

CAMERA – Make sure you have plenty of tape / memory / disk space for your footage – you don't want to have to stop shooting because you run out of tape!!

CAMERA – Avoid zooming. It never looks as good as you think.

CAMERA – Make sure you leave some "space" around the edges of your frame. It will help keeping the action in shot.

CAMERA - Make sure your main subject is properly in focus.

CAMERA – If subject moves, make sure you are leaving some room in the frame for the movement and be ready to move promptly the camera when required.

CAMERA – Try to move the camera smoothly, panning left or right, tilting up or down. Remember someone will have to see what is happening on screen.

CAMERA – Head room – make sure the subject of your shot does not have too little or too much room above his/her head. If you want a close-up of someone's face, always crop the forehead and never crop the chin.

CAMERA – Left-to-right movement is more engaging than right-to-left movement, like reading (this may change in countries where text is read right-to-left.)

Lights

LIGHTS – Make sure the **main subject** of your shot has the **best light**.

LIGHTS – Beware **lights get very hot** very quickly. Professionals always wear protective gloves.

LIGHTS – Try to **avoid** having any **loose cables** around the set – tape them onto the floor! Someone could trip over them and bring heavy equipment down with them.

Sound

SOUND – Make sure you record a silent buzz track, aka the noise of the space you are filming in. It will be useful in the editing stages.

SOUND – Make sure you record wild tracks for any sounds relevant to the film, aka an independent recording of any sounds that are important in your story (the CD playing in the background, the birdsong, the keys dropped...)

SOUND – Always make sure the **mic** is **pointing towards the source** of the sound, and is **as close as possible** to the source (without creeping up into the shot!)

SOUND - Remember to **keep quiet** whilst camera is shooting

1. Mics are more sensitive than human hearing and pick up every little sound
2. If actors are involved, silence helps them keep concentration

SOUND – Try to switch off all possible electrical equipments around the set to avoid interferences.

In all of the above HEALTH & SAFETY issues are of the utmost importance. Please do not put yourself or any other member of your team at risk. The risks outweigh the benefits by far !!!

Check out this link to see some examples of what **NOT** to do:

<http://www.5min.com/Video/Common-Video-Shooting-Mistakes-192272929>

Post-production

EDITING – editing works with juxtapositions.

- When you put 2 shots together the viewer creates a connection between them
- The result is a new idea that wasn't in either of the shots to begin with

This is the basic principle of editing.

EDITING – When you want to tell a story, try to think of the images that will create the idea you want to express.

EDITING – Make sure you save your project frequently. Nothing worse than losing your hard work because of the computer crashing!!!

EDITING – The brightest objects and/or moving objects will be the first to draw the viewer's attention.

EDITING – Watch your footage carefully, and note down anything you like.

EDITING – Watch your footage again – you might have missed something the first time!!!

EDITING – Find the shot you think tells the story best. Use it as starting point of your film.

Editing also works in stages:

Log and capture – capture your material, divide each shot, organize them, use your script or storyboard as a map to navigate through the footage.

First Assembly – put your main shots (MASTER SHOTS) on your timeline – don't worry about fine cutting, leave them loose.

Rough Cuts/Edits – go through your first assembly and fine tune it, try different ways, try to tell the story you want, make mistakes, correct them, ask people's opinion, see if it matches with what you are trying to say.

Locked-off Cut / Edit– At the end of the fine-tuning process, once you are happy with the visuals for your video, you stop the visual editing.

Soundtrack / Sound FX – Now you can lay the music, any wild track or buzz tracks, any sound effects (foley sounds).

Final Cut – export the video and show it to the world

TAKE IT TO A FILM PRODUCER AND GET RICH & FAMOUS – NOT!!!
ACTUALLY UPLOAD IT ONLINE AND IF YOUR WORK IS GOOD PEOPLE WILL NOTICE IT.

Remember the audience is always who you are talking to, they are the ones that will have an opinion of your work.

A Bit Of Video Jargon

IRIS – The hole in your lens that lets the light in. Can be adjusted according to what you need.

APERTURE – the size of the hole in your lens. The bigger the more light will come in – obviously!

SHUTTER SPEED – The amount of time for which you allow light into the lens of your camera and onto the tape.

EXPOSURE – the amount of light that is allowed by you to enter into the camera and get on tape. You control that. It is the combination of your selection of Aperture and Shutter Speed.

WHITE BALANCE – video is digital, records images in a electronic signal. The camera needs to be told what color is white in the scene you are shooting. Remember to set it correctly or you might end up with a completely orange or blue image!

TILT – term used to describe vertical camera movement (up to down and viceversa)

PAN – term used to describe horizontal camera movement from (left to right and vice versa)

RUSHES – the raw unedited footage of your video.

MASTER SHOT – the main shot with which you decide to cover the action

CUT-AWAYS / INSERTS – shots of something that is not part of the main action, or that is particular importance to the action, or both.

FRAMING / COMPOSITION – how you decide how to place the camera in relation to the subjects you are shooting.

BOOM – long pole with microphones attached, used to get the mics as close to the actions (but still out of frame)

CALL SHEET – timetable for the shoot, with people involved and places to be designed to everyone to the shoot on time.

TRIPOD – divided in 2 parts, legs and head, is the fixed support on which camera is mounted. For video shoot the head is generally a fluid head, which means it employs a friction system for smooth camera movements.

DOLLY – the moving platform on which the camera is placed. Can be used with wheels or with tracks.