



CLIENT GUIDE TO THE VIDEO PRODUCTION PROCESS

Because many clients aren't familiar with video production, here are answers to some commonly asked questions about the process of creating a promotional, educational, or training video:

How much will it cost to produce a video?

Some video production companies make bids on a "cost per finished minute" basis. We've found that, because each project is unique, these figures are often misleading to the client. Instead, we generally provide "not to exceed" bids which take into account the many factors which determine a project's budget. This also provides you with a safeguard against unexpected costs.

After one or two meetings with a client we can usually provide a preliminary cost estimate. As soon as the details of the project are determined we will present a bid. For a very complex production the final "not to exceed" figure may not be presented until a rough script is completed.

If script writing is handled by the client or another party, production costs may be charged on an hourly or daily basis.

Can we do the taping first and write the script later?

Sometimes this works - for example, when the project is a documentary. In general, however, shooting a video without a script is like building a house without blueprints. It's been said that video production is 99% planning and 1% production. Without careful planning, a project will almost always wind up costing more than expected and be less successful in conveying your message.

What's involved in writing a script?

Script writing for TV is different than writing print copy. With video, visuals, not words, carry the message most strongly. In fact, research studies show that people remember far more of what they see, rather than hear, in a video.

Thus, a video script involves more than just a narrator's lines. It plots out all the visuals, contains the creative elements which will grab and hold the audience's attention, and serves as a plan for the actual production work.

If you want to write your own script, we can provide Script Consultation and make suggestions about adapting your message to video.

If you'd like us to write the script, we will work closely with you to develop a program that effectively communicates your message. Each project is a little different and there are no hard and fast rules to the process - but generally speaking there are four stages:

1. **Research** using your printed information, site visits, and interviews with your staff.
2. The **Treatment**, a condensed version of the script which describes in a general way what will be seen and heard.
3. The **Rough Script**, a draft which will help us decide in more detail what the finished program will look and feel like.
4. The **Final Script**. Like each of the above steps, this is subject to your approval.

How long should our marketing video be?

Keep in mind that we're all accustomed to watching fast-paced broadcast TV, with frequent changes in scenes and camera angles (and breaks for commercials). Remember also that many viewers won't sit through a lengthy sales or promotional video. You might be surprised to find how much material can be covered in a short period of time.

One of video's strengths is its ability to condense time. You can take advantage of this by thinking in terms of a program 8 minutes in length. Some very effective sales videos are only 5 minutes long. In this case, some of your more detailed, technical information might be better conveyed with print materials.

We've heard that there are several videotape formats. What's the difference?

This can be one of the most confusing aspects of video. You have the choice of originating on motion picture film and finishing on tape or originating on one of several tape formats for professional video production. Each has its advantages and disadvantages. We offer the following formats, and part of our initial conversations with clients involves choosing the right one for your particular needs.

16mm/35mm film provides the finest quality images possible. It is used in network television, most commercials, and of course, theatrical motion pictures. It offers the best color reproduction, range of tones, and image resolution. The cost is higher (in some cases only a little more than video formats) but your message may warrant its use.

24p DV is the next best thing to film origination. It's a digital format that mimics the look and quality of film very closely but at the lower cost of shooting on tape. This format is perhaps the best compromise between shooting on film and shooting standard video - digital or otherwise.

Professional DV (digital video) is one of the most common formats in use today. It offers the advantages familiar to those with personal Mini-DV camcorders but when coupled with the proper camera and used throughout post-production, offers big advantages in image quality and cost.

Other high-end digital formats, such as HD (High Definition) are available upon request.

What's involved in the actual production?

After the final script is approved we'll work with you to develop a production schedule. Some people are surprised to see how much time is needed to set up a scene, especially where additional lighting is required. We believe that good productions are the result of craftsmanship, and much of this involves carefully planning the shots. Please bear with us as we set up our strange looking equipment, check audio and video levels, and shoot a scene more than once.

What does editing involve?

Your footage is digitized or transferred to a computer for instant access to any shot during the editing process. Then, following the pre-approved script, your video is carefully assembled in the digital environment with decisions made about material to be included or cut, the exact placement of music, narration, graphics, titles, special effects and so forth.

Editing is usually the single biggest expense in a video project: it can take as much as an hour or more to edit a finished minute of video, especially if the client wants a large number of elaborate graphics and special effects. The finished presentation is, of course, subject to your approval.

What about narration and music?

We work with several local professional narrators who are highly skilled and work at reasonable rates. We also have access to a library of music for film and video producers that can be licensed at reasonable rates. Of course, if your budget allows, custom music can be composed and tailored specifically to your production.

Can you provide copies and packaging?

Yes. We'd be glad to show you samples of disk cases with artwork, different tape boxes, sleeves, and mailers available from our suppliers. Many of our clients have us provide these as well as custom labeling.

What will the payment schedule be?

Like most production companies, we ask for payment in installments. Typically, we will ask for a 50% down payment upon beginning a project, and the balance upon delivery of the completed project.

If you have any questions about how we can assist you with your organization's video, please feel free to call us at (509) 667-1414, or (800) 417-7684. www.aperturestudios.com