



## **How to Produce a Television Commercial Without Spending a Fortune (or Wasting Money) And Still Get the Results You Want.**

*Read this report to learn the 7 things you must know before you produce a TV spot.*

As technology keeps making the world smaller, it seems like communicating with your customers, vendors, employee's - even your family - can be a challenge. Yet, over the last 60 years, nothing has shaped our opinions or affected our lives as much as television. Today, television is just one *distribution medium* for supplying video programming. The Internet, cellular phones, and other handheld devices are others. And, as technology keeps pushing us further and further into the information age, more and more distribution media will allow us to distribute our video programs, or otherwise communicate, in more creative, effective and efficient ways. Television advertising plays an integral role in getting a message in front of captive potential buyers.

Along with the benefits of choosing video as your preferred method of communication, you face several risks. Video Production is a very competitive business. Technology is moving at a dizzying pace. It allows video professionals to do a lot more than they used to be able to do in a lot less time... and for a lot less money. It allows video producers to own equipment that a few years ago they could only dream about working with.

The downside of this technology is that the barriers of entry into the video production business have been lowered. As a result, more and more people are buying equipment, printing business cards and calling themselves production companies. Unfortunately, many of these companies are not qualified to serve people like you.

On the flip side television stations or cable companies usually have in-house production departments who are willing and eager to produce your next spot. Of course, ultimately their goal is to sell you lots and lots of air time and consequently the production of your spot may become secondary. As an incentive they might throw in the production of your spot for free or at a price that's too hard to pass up. Unfortunately, the old saying, "you get what you pay for" comes into play here and the results are often disappointing. Either the quality is poor, which reflects directly on your business, or you get little or no return on your investment - or both! If you've tried television advertising before and quit, these are probably the reasons. So how do you choose a production company and still get an effective commercial produced?

### **Preparation and knowledge are everything in TV commercial production.**

There are three main phases of television commercial production and several parts of each phase. I haven't described every specific service here. You may not need all of these services or you may need some not listed here. But, if you are creating a TV spot from scratch, these are the general steps you should take.

## **Phase 1 - Pre-Production**

### **Consultations**

In a series of meetings between a qualified Producer from the production company and key representatives of your organization a creative approach for your TV spot should be defined and agreed upon. Then, costs should be quoted by the production company and deadlines set.

### **Scripting**

The most important part of the pre-production process is the script. Script writing for TV is different than writing print copy and serves as a plan for the actual production work. It's not something a salesperson should do in 10 minutes. Your writer should write and rewrite drafts of the script, complete with detailed audio and video notes, until you are satisfied with the script's content and understand how your commercial will look and sound when it is completed. It is at this stage where you can separate your commercial from all the others out there.

### **Casting**

If you are using on-camera talent for your commercial or if you are going to use a narrator, your production company should have access to a wide variety of actors and voice specialists for you to choose from. If you need to see or hear demo tapes, they should be provided to you by the production company.

### **Rehearsals**

Your actors and voice people should have copies of your script well ahead of their performance dates. Talent should be well rehearsed before they are asked to perform. Rehearsals can cut production time by as much as 50%. This can mean huge cost savings for you.

## **Phase II - Production**

### **Shooting**

Your production company should assign a qualified video crew to record all required materials outlined in the video and audio portions of the script. Make sure the crew assigned to your project has a history of working together and finishing jobs on time.

## **Phase III - Post-Production**

### **Editing**

With today's non-linear editing systems (computer based editing) most production companies are able to combine what was once two separate processes: Off-line editing and On-line editing. Off-line editing involved creating a rough cut of your finished project. The purpose of this first cut was to make decisions on timing, scene sequence and shot selection. The rough cut might not contain music, audio sweetening, or fancy effects. In the past this was done using simpler pieces of equipment or less sophisticated technology. Once the off-line edit was complete you'd move into the more expensive on-line edit suite with all its bells and whistles. The On-line edit, or the final video, would contain all of these things and any other visual

specifications that were outlined in the script. In some cases these steps are still employed but for the most part, with today's computer based editing, production companies can skip the off-line process and create something much closer to a final version (if not the final version) while retaining the flexibility of easily making changes. This saves time and loads of money.

#### **Phase IV - Delivery**

##### **Duplication**

Your production company should be able to deliver the final version of your commercial in whatever form the television station or cable company requires.

All of this may sound like quite a bit of work, and it is. But a qualified company like Aperture Studios can put a 30 second television commercial together for you from scratch in as little as 2 days if you are ready to go when you call.

#### **Here are Some Tips on Creating *Effective* Television Commercials**

It's not hard to spot most locally produced TV commercials. Most of them look and sound the same. You've seen them. They often go something like this: Here is our business. Here are our "widgets". Our "widgets" are the neatest! We are great! Come see us!

By keeping the following tips in mind when you plan your TV commercial you can create more effective commercials and get a much better return on your investment. By the way, these tips are applicable to other forms of advertising including print and radio.

##### **What's Your USP?**

A USP (Unique Selling Proposition) is that thing (or things) that makes you stand out from the crowd and your competition down the street. Preferably it's something that only your business does but it must be specific and quantifiable. For example, saying you make the best burgers in town doesn't cut it. Every burger place says that. On the other hand saying, "4 out of 5 customers prefer our Mega-burger over (your competitor's fare here) does. Be prepared to back up your claims.

##### **Stress Benefits not Features**

Good USP's stress benefits not features. The fact is, the only thing your customers really care about is what's in it for them... how it will benefit them. Look at the message you want to send customers, then put yourself in their shoes. Can it pass the "Who cares" test? Sure, you want customers to know about the features of the product or service you are selling but the benefits of your product or service are what matter most to them.

## The Call to Action

Unless you have deep pockets then “image ads” or “top of mind awareness” advertising probably isn’t for you. (Remember those Nike ads?) This type of advertising often does not ask the viewer to do anything specific (no call to action) so consequently it’s very difficult to measure the effectiveness of the ad. Reminding customers that you’re “there” is fine but it can get very expensive. If you don’t want to spend a fortune on advertising then lead with the message - follow with the image. And don’t forget to tell your customers exactly what you want them to do.

## These are The Seven Things You Need to Know Before You Hire a Production Company

- 1. Your production company should guarantee its services.** At Aperture Studios we give you **A Unique “Nerve Soothing” 100% Money Back Guarantee.** If you don’t think we delivered on any promise we made to you, we’ll give you your money back. No questions asked.
- 2. Your production company should be able to specifically demonstrate to you that it can perform the work you need done effectively - on time and on budget.** At Aperture Studios we’ll take the time to learn about you and your project; show samples of similar projects we have done for other people; tell you how much those projects cost; explain to you what the time lines were and if we met them; and give you the telephone numbers of the clients who produced those projects so that you can ask them questions about our performance.
- 3. Your production company needs to have a mastery of state of the art video technology.** Aperture Studios owns and uses broadcast quality cameras, computer based non-linear editing equipment and non-linear digital audio workstations.... perfect for your production needs.
- 4. Your production company needs to be able to prove to you that it has a wide range of experience to draw on when the inevitable problems that arise during any production come up on your project.** Aperture Studios has been in business since 1989. We do a wide variety of corporate work, specializing in training, marketing, and public relations. We have an extensive list of happy clients and we will be more than happy to provide references for you if you would like to call some of our customers.
- 5. Your video production company should be available to you for FREE ADVICE before you begin your production.** At Aperture Studios we encourage you to call us to discuss your project or any idea you may have for a future project. You’re welcome to tour our office at any time and we are always more than happy to send a producer to meet with you at your convenience.
- 6. Your video project should be handled by an experienced producer.** Video production is not an assembly line type of process. One person needs to supervise the project from the

very beginning to the very end. That person is your producer. If you are not going to produce the video yourself you need to be comfortable with the person from your production company who is going to do that for you. At Aperture Studios we take the time to get to know you and your process or product before shooting the video. There is no other way to get it done right.

**7. Your production company should have a diverse talent pool to draw on for your project.** No one company can be everything to everybody. Every video project is different and requires unique talents. At Aperture Studios we pride ourselves on being able to find the right people for your project. But we go one step further... Our “nerve soothing” guarantee covers everyone we recommend for your project. To complement a full-time staff, Aperture Studios maintains a talent database that features a variety of freelance talent. These people specialize in different styles of production.

Most people don't have time to teach themselves to become television producers. Others have a lot of questions that need to be answered and nobody seems to want to take the time to figure out what is really needed to produce an effective TV commercial.

It doesn't have to be that way anymore because NOW there is a better way to get all of your questions answered once and for all. If you have a good idea for a TV spot, there are plenty of ways for you to get it made. And leaving it in hands of those who really only want to sell you air time is not the best answer. You just need to arm yourself with knowledge before you start. This alone will dramatically increase your chances of success.

You need to hire a company that knows exactly what you are going to do and how you are going to do it before you start taping. You need to hire a production company that knows exactly how to make the commercial you need and how to do that in a timely and cost effective manner.

These are some of the things that we ask our clients to consider before they start their projects.

#### **This is just a partial list of what we can help you with...**

- How to decide if you need a producer for your commercial or if you should produce it yourself.
- Whether you should write a script yourself or find a writer who can translate your thoughts into a coherent script with detailed audio and video notes.
- Exactly what types of services you need to complete your commercial.
- What equipment your commercial should be produced with.
- What a sensible time line for your production should be.
- What a sensible cost for your spot should be.
- How to come up with a unique creative approach to your TV spot if you don't already have one in mind.
- How to find and use exciting and inexpensive music for your video that is legal for you to use.
- How to find voice talent that will add life to your TV spot.
- How to cut your shooting time in half without sacrificing any creative quality.

- What kind of camera and lighting package you need to get the look you want.
- If you are selling food products, how to make it look appetizing.
- Whether you should tour your production company's facilities or whether they should come to you.
- How to educate yourself in video production in one hour so you'll never feel out of the loop again.
- What you need to do before you start your commercial to ensure that it comes out the way you want it to at the price you want it for.

I'm sure some of these issues are on your mind as you consider using television to help you achieve your goals. Please call me so we can talk more about your commercial. I hope this report has made you a little more comfortable about video production.

Sincerely,



Preston Herrick, Producer

**P.S. We give free advice.** We have a mountain of experience in film and video production. If you need advice on the best way to get a commercial done, call us and we'll be happy to help in any way we can.

**Here's how to reach Aperture Studios:**

**Phone: 509-667-1414    FAX: 509-667-1414    E-mail: [Preston@aperturestudios.com](mailto:Preston@aperturestudios.com)**  
[www.aperturestudios.com](http://www.aperturestudios.com)

© 2010 Aperture Studios