

Camera Shy?

BASIC GUIDLINES TO PERFORM
BETTER ON CAMERA

Backlot Media
DIGITAL | VIDEO | ADVERTISING



It is not too much work to start making your own video messages while you are isolating at home. But most people tend to be turned off quickly by a video that is poorly done. With a little work you can make your video look, and sound, really good.

This guide provides a basic outline on how to record great video messages on your own and without the help of professional equipment or staff.

As an introductory guide suitable for beginners, we have not gone into too much detail. If you need further technical support or decide to use our post production services, please do not hesitate to contact us. We will respond promptly with a quote that will best meet your needs.

Make Your Video Message Look and Sound Great at Home



STEP ONE

Get well prepared (like Alfred Hitchcock!)

In this section:

- Choose your “voice” persona
- Create a script or just bullet point reminders
- Keep your video short
- Wear something with color but not too bright

There are a few considerations when preparing to record a video message.

To decide upon the kind of language, or “voice” you want to use in an interview, you should first ask yourself what type of audience you are addressing: a group of friends? the staff of your company? An opening message for a website or for a social media platform? Different types of audiences prefer different verbal and non-verbal communication styles.

Basically, get ready to wear the “mask” that best represents your personality, based on the audience you are addressing.

For the length of the video, we recommend that you should plan for under two minutes (under ONE minute if you want to put it on Instagram).

Anything longer than that? You should plan on making it in sections, or “episodes”.

Regarding the content of the message, there are several strategies you can take. You can either improvise all aspects of the message, with a few references points that will keep you on track, or you can transcribe all the content of the message word by word and have it memorized.

But having a script that you constantly have to refer to can present challenges that may result in you looking unnatural. In fact, transcribing the whole message in textual form involves memorizing it or using paper mediums, elements that will divert your attention when recording. If your message is less than 3 minutes long, try to make it as natural as possible, avoiding a total transcription of the content. Write down the short “talking points” you want to cover,



and then wing it! You may have to start a few times, but it will always look and feel more natural.

In case you do decide to use a text, divide it into sections to better structure the dialogue, and just do one at a time. This ensures that the cuts are easily manageable in case a video editing session is necessary.

Finally, think about how you want to look. Make sure you are clean and coiffed. Don't use too much make-up. If you are feeling "shiny" with sweat, wipe your face with a soft towel throughout the process. And finally, wear something comfortable, not too pattern-y. A bit of color sometimes helps you look a bit more lively too, but not too bright!

STEP TWO

Set up your home studio (in 5 minutes!)

In this section:

- Choose where you want to shoot (in your home or outside)
- Use natural and electric lighting that is at hand
- Set up your camera or smartphone so that it is stable

Important: As previously indicated, this guide will focus on the successful delivery of your message, rather than on the aesthetic aspects of your video. You can get as creative as you want, while still following the basic standards.

First, take a good look around. Are you inside a room?

How large is it?

Do you have enough light (natural or from artificial sources)?

Are you far enough from possible distractions like your children or a noisy kitchen? Is the room quiet?

If you don't have a place to film in your home, an alternative is to go fully natural and escape to a local park or other outdoor setting. The two key points here are to make sure you find a spot that is shady but bright, and not in direct sunlight. And pick a quieter time of day, maybe early morning. This could be a time when that "assistant" could be very useful, holding the camera for you too!

If you're speaking on behalf of a company, all these elements could influence the seriousness and effectiveness of the message. On the other hand, it could also have the opposite effect! Most people are in the same boat, trying to deal with the challenges of working from home, and this could depict a familiar situation that the viewers can relate to.

In general, if an unexpected event occurs during the interview, it is best to improvise and use the unexpected in your favor, without getting stuck or intimidated. But if it is a big interruption, go ahead and start again.



In this guide we will not consider the use any professional equipment for light sources. You can always just use the things you have at home.

In your home studio, a window as a source of natural light can be a good idea, but make sure you have enough indirect light inside the room where you are shooting, so that one part of the face is not too dark compared to the other.

Never sit directly in front of a window. The “backlight” will cause you to be dark while the background is too bright, or “over-exposed.” Have the light filtered and coming in from the side and slightly in front, and avoid hard, direct sunlight. And

if the other side of you is dark, maybe try placing a lamp to the side (preferably with a cool white bulb to equal out the daylight a bit, but don’t make it too bright.)

It is also important to consider the time of day when you start recording.

It may be necessary to record the message several times to obtain the desired result. That will increase the time required to complete the recording. If the scene is based on a natural light source, such as light coming through the window, you have to take into account that the light conditions can change rapidly during the day, which could drastically affect the scene.



Once you have chosen the space in which to record the interview, it is now time to place the camera (or smartphone) in the correct position.

You can either purchase dedicated tools that will greatly simplify this procedure, like a mini tripod with adjustable legs and/or an elastic clamp that will hold your smartphone in place.

(see pictures above) You can also get creative and make your own stand by using objects around the house (books, boxes, glass etc.).

Most of the video cameras that are available in today's smartphones have a wide angle and/or a semi wide angle lens. To avoid distortion effects we recommend keeping a distance of at least 1.5 meters from the lens.



More and more smartphones are now including multiple camera lenses. If you own a smartphone like that, we suggest you choose the camera equipped with the medium focal lens, which is usually the best performing one.

Make sure the background is not too crowded or overly exposed, because it can be a source of distraction. And stand or keep your chair at least one meter away from the background, to help with "depth of field."

Another important aspect is to keep your eyes fixed on the camera while recording the video. Consider your smartphone as a real person. During a normal conversation, looking away from the person speaking in front of you can make you seem rude or uninterested, even disingenuous.



The most important thing is that the camera is positioned either at or just slightly above the level of your eyes. You shouldn't have the camera looking up at you, or down at you. This will help you maintain a good posture and not look awkward on camera. And people won't be looking up your nose either!



STEP THREE

Filming (like George Clooney!)

In this section:

- Put your personality to work
- Have an assistant to help if necessary (it can be fun too)
- Don't try to be a newscaster. Relax and be yourself

If this is the first time that you are recording a video message, having someone at hand (such as a member of the family) ready to assist you could help you to control your posture, help you to perform the way you want to, and set you free from looking at yourself while recording using your own smartphone. It can be a fun project for the both of you too. Just keep it to a single person though. Committees never work in this situation!

We talked about preparing the script and choosing your "voice". Now it's time to put this persona to work. AND this is important- remember that you are making a recording. It can always be re-done. So don't be anxious and think you have to get it right on the first take. You don't. In

fact, the first few attempts should just be considered rehearsals that will help you make your "final take" even better.

If anyone else is around, ask them to be quiet while you are recording. Or you can keep the sounds of home alive in the background if you want that environment as part of your message. Start your phone, iPad or camera recording. Get into position (you can trim this part of your video after you have finished. Relax, take a few deep breaths. Refer one last time to your bullet talking points or reminders, and think about what you want to say.

Then start talking, looking at your camera, as if you are talking with a friend. It's that simple.



You don't need to be a newscaster, you just have to be YOU.

STEP FOUR

Editing and finishing your epic video!

In this section:

- Posting it “as is” or editing and refining it
- Smartphone apps that are easy to edit with
- Getting help if you want to go to the next level

Now that you have recorded your speech, it is time to publish it. If you have managed to record your message in a single take, you can proceed with posting to the various social media platforms.

If your message needs further refinement, you can use one of the following editing programs directly on your smartphone. Here are some applications that you can use”

Quik

Inshot

PicPlayPost

Wevideo

Adobe Premiere Clip

Finally, music can drastically change the mood of the message. Below are some websites where you can download royalty-free music, at zero cost.

<https://freemusicarchive.org/>

<https://www.bensound.com/>

If you want to take your message to the next level, you can add motion graphics, b-rolls (video or image overlays) and opening titles. If you need any assistance with this part, we are here to help.

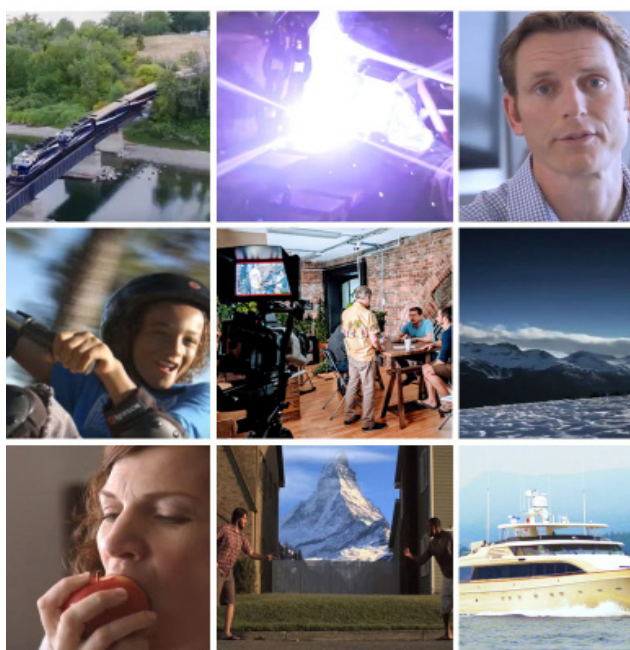
Making a video, even if it is a serious message, should be an enjoyable experience.

The first time will be the most challenging, but you will succeed! After that, each time will become easier.

And if you take the initiative and bravely step in front of the camera that first time, your colleagues will be proud and happy for you, and they'll want to see you again!

We hope this guide has been helpful, and we wish you all the best luck with your videomaking.

Congratulations on becoming a film maker!



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