

## Enterprise Video Basics – Top 10 Preproduction Tips

### Your Preproduction Plan Will Help You Save Time And Money And Create A Better Final Product

Preproduction is the most important step in the video development process. Preproduction could be best described as, “solid planning and preparation.” By planning your video production and preparing well ahead of time, you are much more likely to create high quality video with reproducible results.

#### Top 10 Preproduction Questions/Tips

1. Who is my audience? Will this video be shown to employees, partners, clients, customers, etc?
  - a. You need to speak the same language as my audience, both literally and figuratively. i.e., if the video is for customers in Asia it needs to be in their native language (if possible).
  - b. Also if your audience is the customer service team, you should be careful to not use the same terminology that would be in a video for the accounting operations group.
  - c. Will the video be distributed inside or outside your firewall?
    - i. You need to know what information this group should have access to.
    - ii. You do not want to give my customers the same information I give to my employees.
2. What is the purpose of the video? Why are you creating this video? What is the need? What’s the news? And most importantly, what’s the hook?
  - a. A video can be used for a myriad of purposes
    - i. Education
    - ii. News announcement
    - iii. Company updates and milestones
    - iv. “Changecasting” → Communicating company trends and information
    - v. A new HR or health benefits program
    - vi. Promotion video for the Web Site
    - vii. Promotion for a trade show
    - viii. Safety or compliance
    - ix. New regulations
    - x. New product upgrade
    - xi. Corporate communication – from the top
  - b. Determining the purpose for the video in advance will help decide the pace, tone, content and presentation of the video.
3. What are my video assets?
  - a. Do I have pre-existing video to include? Do I have music? Do I have slides or graphics?
  - b. Knowing what assets you have available will help shape your script, as well as help you identify what needs to be created.

4. What is my location?
  - a. Do I have one or more locations that I need to shoot? What is the location like? Studio? Office? Set? Outside? etc.
  - b. Shooting outside will add countless variables to the mix. Weather, position of sun in the sky, noise, where to get power for the equipment, travel, getting people to/from the video “set,” etc.
    - i. Will weather be a factor?
    - ii. Will there be noise, sunlight or other factors?
  - c. The location will dictate necessary equipment and influence cost and timeline.
  - d. If you are shooting on location you will need to take into account the time both setting-up and breaking-down equipment, obtaining necessary permits and permissions, and in large-scale productions, you’ll need to have (as part of a permit or city contract) available police/fire/emergency services.
  
5. What is my timeline?
  - a. When does the video need to be completed?
    - i. Is it for a specific event?
    - ii. Will it need to be produced in multiple formats for different systems (Macintosh, PC, Handheld, or Video-on-Demand)?
    - iii. Will it need to be distributed to global regions? How? And will it require subtitles or language support?
  - b. Will there be a review process? Who’s involved? Can we post versions online for review, comments, and editing?
  - c. What order do the different sections need to be completed in?
  - d. What is the availability of my talent (people in the video)? Is the studio/location available?
  
6. Script development: who are the contributors? Who are the stakeholders who’ll need to approve the script – legal, corporate communications, product management, sales, training, etc.?
  - a. Your script needs to include everything you plan to have in the video. All dialog, action, inserts, etc.
    - i. Many people ask whether they need to script all the words, or simply develop an outline – this depends on
      1. The “comfort-level” of your speaker(s)
      2. How accustomed speakers are to presenting or reading from a script
      3. Whether your speakers use transitional words and phrases when speaking from an outline, that will need to be edited out, (e.g., “Uh,” “As I was saying,”
      4. The importance of the event and the specific words,
    - ii. The timing for specific speakers and props/presentations?
  - b. At the top of the script should be listed everyone that will be in the video. Including a list of props of assets that will be used is also a good idea.
  - c. Even if the video is meant to look live or spontaneous it is important to at least outline the order of everything in the video to make sure you do not miss anything.
  - d. How do TV programs look polished? The actors rehearse → It’s equally important to (get the participants to) rehearse. And it’s important to rehearse video cues, timing, pans/zooms and content introductions.

7. Do I have a production crew? Are they experienced?
  - a. Depending on the complexity of the video I could film and edit it myself or I may need many people.
  - b. Who is on the crew? Do I have everyone/skill I need? Do I need to bring in a freelancer? Do I need to farm some of the work out?
  - c. Do they know one another or have they worked together before? Have we rehearsed our takes, sound positions, camera positions and lighting so it comes off seamlessly?
  
8. Do I have the equipment I need?
  - a. Lighting equipment – enough lights of the right type to create a professional looking video.
  - b. Audio equipment – enough microphones to hear all subjects speaking clearly and evenly.
  - c. Camera – do I have the right camera for the final output? Can it shoot at a high enough resolution and high enough quality for the format I have chosen to present it?
  - d. Editing – Do I have what I need to edit the piece, either live editing or in post production? Can I compress the video to all sizes and formats I need for my entire target audience to be able to see it as I intended?
  - e. Can I rent the equipment or do I have to buy it?
  - f. Do we have insurance to cover the equipment (purchase and rental)?
  
9. What is my budget?
  - a. How much money do I have to address any or all of the needs discovered while asking the previous questions? Do I have enough to complete the project as planned?
  - b. Do I need to modify my script to fit my budgetary constraints or is it necessary to try and increase the budget.
  
10. Finally, what's the schedule? What's the breakdown of activities, where, when and how?
  - a. Take the data and compile and publish a shooting schedule.
  - b. Outline the schedule for your shoot. Include a breakdown for the individual days and what will be covered on those days.
  - c. If you are planning to shoot everything at one time it can be helpful to be more detailed in your schedule.
  - d. List all roles and responsibilities – so that presenters and crew will be fully prepared, and know what is expected of them. Also, this will reduce the chance that you will be missing specific hardware, specific lighting, microphone, filter, cables, etc.
  - e. Keep in mind many things will take more time than you expect so schedule space in between each section you have schedule in case you go over.
    - i. It is better to make the estimate for the scheduled “take” longer than you think – that way, you can shoot multiple “takes,” and get a better, more natural version to use in your final production.
    - ii. If you end up ahead of schedule everyone will be happy but if you run long people may have booked something else in that time slot and will have a conflict.
  - f. Schedule post-production evaluation -- analyze both what went right and the challenges