



Video Tip Sheet | February 2017

Good to the last second

An introduction to nonprofit issue advocacy videos

PART ONE: CREATING A STORY

Begin by putting your video vision to paper in the form of a creative brief, which includes:

- The goal of the video, your intended audience and the message you want your video to convey.
- An authentic and relatable main character, the hero of your story.
- The desired mood or tone for the video. What are the emotions that you want to tap in your audience as they react to the story?



CONTACT

Liz Banse
Vice President
206-374-7795 x100
Liz@resource-media.org
www.resource-media.org



Employ the classic narrative arc.

- Time and time again, the story structure illustrated on the right has proven effective because it lets your audience become emotionally invested in your hero's journey.
- Start by setting the scene – where does your story take place?
- Then build a story that has tension. Name what's at stake. Take your hero on a journey filled with challenge. Force them to make a choice at a pivotal point. Show how this choice leads to a resolution. Or, put the onus on the viewer to determine how this story will end, depending on what action (or not) they take to address the problem.



Apply the six elements of an effective video.

1. Create a hook at the beginning of your video to immediately draw in your audience and establish relevance. This could be an element of surprise that grabs their attention.
2. Choose an authentic and relatable main character.
3. Identify the emotions you want your audience to feel at each point in the storyline.
4. Incorporate values that resonate with your audience. Meet them where they are.
5. Develop a narrative arc and add in tension, so that your audience hangs on until the end.
6. Communicate your message through the main character and end with a call to action.

PART TWO: VIDEO PRODUCTION BASICS

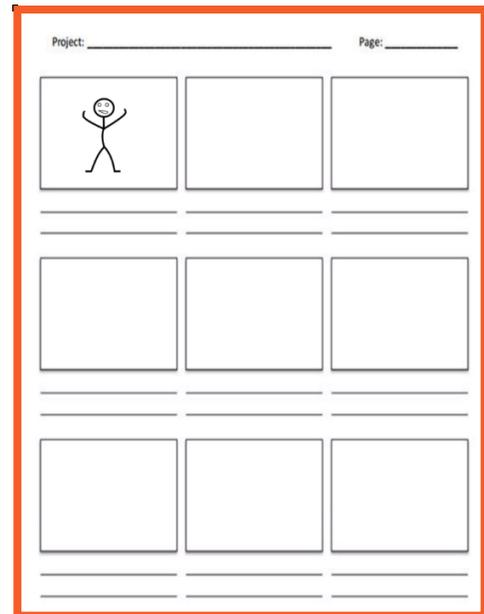
Starter questions.

- How you will capture your video? (Smartphone, DSLR camera, etc.)
- How much time and money you are willing to invest? (Consider the cost of crew, equipment, travel and post-production labor.)
- How much can you complete yourself and how many people will you need to hire?



Make a storyboard.

- A storyboard is an essential part of the process to draw out your scenes; it helps you get organized and gets you to better visualize your story idea ahead of time. A good tip is to map out the end first – it’s the most important part of the story for getting the audience to take an action and, oftentimes, is the hardest part to figure out. Once done, the rest will often fall into place.



Follow the five basic rules for interviewing people.

1. Come prepared with questions.
2. Let people get comfortable with the camera. Start by asking about their day or what they had for breakfast (this also helps you test your sound).
3. Ask open-ended questions to get more interesting answers, and to avoid the “yes” or “no” answers that don’t make for good video clips.
4. Don’t be afraid of silence, sometimes the best emotions come out of these moments.
5. Allow for spontaneity. If your interviewee brings up something that is interesting, follow that conversation thread for a potential magical moment.

Incorporate a wide variety of shots.

- Consider using a variety of camera angles: 1) close-ups 2) wide shots 3) playing up the depth of field or what’s in focus and 4) showcasing different parts of the person speaking – e.g., a close up of a person’s hands as they talk.

Lighting can make or break your video.

- Use a key light to highlight your subject, a fill light to lessen the shadows on your subject and a background light to give depth to your shot.

Ensure good audio. Bad audio is the fastest way to get people to stop viewing your video!

- Nowadays, there are a plethora of mics. You’ll want to do some research and keep in mind *how* you’re capturing your video.
- See the next page for microphones to consider. Read reviews and ask for recommendations. Most mics are also made for [smartphones](#).

- [Lavalieres](#) (aka the tie clip mic)
- [Shotgun mics](#) (aka directional mics; e.g., [rode mics](#))
- [Handheld or tabletop mics](#)
- [Digital Recorders](#)
- [On the go mics](#)



Gather plenty of b-roll.

- Extra footage allows for more flexibility at the editing stage and can be critical during transitions. (Watch an example [here](#).)
- Think about what you want to shoot in advance. Create a “shot list” to remind you when you’re on-set or in the field.
- If you are thinking about using vintage footage from YouTube, here’s a [website](#) to record and download footage right to your computer.

Use the video-editing program that best fits your skill level and distribution technique.

- Beginner: [iMovie](#), [Adobe Spark](#), [YouTube](#), [Biteable](#), [WeVideo](#)
- Intermediate: [Final Cut](#)
- Advanced: [Avid](#), [Premiere](#)
- Apps: [iMovie](#), [Cameo](#), [WeVideo](#), [Splice](#), [Video Editor for YouTube](#), [Adobe Premiere Clip](#), [Adobe Spark](#), [Final Cut Pro](#), [FilmoraGo](#) (Android versions also available)

PART THREE: DISTRIBUTION

Initial questions when you begin to think about distribution.

- What are your goals with this video?
- Who is your audience? Define what they do, if they’re tech savvy, and if they’ve ever heard of you before.
- How does this film fit into your wider campaign or organization’s marketing?
- Where will this video appear?



Carefully choose your distribution platform.

- YouTube is a great site for DIY videos, as these films align with the platform’s original purpose. If you are an organization, create a YouTube channel. You can also easily embed YouTube videos into online content platforms

(e.g., WordPress) and add links to your website within videos. In terms of promotion, YouTube is often the best bang for your buck.

- Facebook, however, is more mobile-friendly and allows you to quickly share videos, even go live. The Facebook formula for successful videos is to create natively-uploaded videos that play content on silent, with text on the screen, or with subtitles. Facebook’s profile-based community and super-targeted ad network allows you to reach specific audiences.

Make your video findable with these four free SEO strategies.

1. Make titles inquiry-based. Think about how a first-time viewer would describe your video to a friend.
2. Create tags that describe the people and places in your video, look for common misspellings.
3. YouTube channel housekeeping.
 - Get your channel verified by Google.
 - Showcase your main video.
 - Create a playlist.
 - Descriptions:
 - Your YouTube description is the place to include links to your organization’s website and social media networks, info about your organization and calls to action. Make sure to use it!
 - Build goodwill by thanking people and organizations who have helped you out.



Don’t forget the power of organic.

Most people don’t have a huge budget to dump into a paid promotion campaign, so relying on organic views is necessary and healthy for a good video distribution strategy. Here are a few organic promotion ideas:

- Rally your supporters, partners and funders to post in newsletters, share via social media, post to their website, etc.
- If possible, time your video release to correspond with a specific event or day associated with the content of your video.
- Pitch to news outlets and blogs that your target audience reads/watches.

Beyond watching: moving people to action.

Integrate a realistic and high-impact call to action with your video with annotations (e.g., added-in explanations), social post language, a microsite, etc.

- Understand their video-watching environment (e.g., do they watch videos on the bus on silent or on a desktop at work?)
- Entice immediate action.
- Reduce the barrier to taking action and make the pay-off high.
- Don't get too greedy by asking them to do too many things.
- Follow a ladder of engagement with a new audience: just getting them to take one new step with you is progress.

Analytics: What and how to measure.

Know how you're performing so that you know where to go next. Here's an example of how to tie what you measure to specific goals:

MY GOAL	MY DISTRIBUTION STRATEGY	WHAT TO MEASURE
A lot of views	Simplify message, invest in creative creation and paid promotion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Views over time • View comparisons to other videos • Volume from traffic sources
Current audience engagement	Make content relevant to a smaller group, invest in highly targeted promotion and mobilize existing coalitions and networks for organic promotion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Likes, comments, shares • Web traffic, donations • Video's audience retention
New, diverse following	Dive into analytics and create target audiences and benchmarks, reward new followers with deeper engagement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audience demographics, geographics and psychographics • New traffic sources • New followers/subscribers

Please contact us at info@resource-media.org with your ideas and questions.

Lights, Camera, Action!

