



Tips to Create a Great Video

A short video can be a tremendously powerful way to share the impact volunteers are making at your organization. Whether you are borrowing a video camera, using your cell phone or engaging a professional videographer, here are some things to consider.

TIME

Whether you choose to make a video on your own, or seek outside help, consider how much time you're willing to invest during the entire process. No matter which approach you choose, you will most likely be involved in the planning, scheduling and distribution phases.

If you take the do-it-yourself route, make sure you budget for additional time to shoot, edit and distribute your video. Also, do your research! There are many good examples of non-profit storytelling videos. Take the time to find videos you like and consider incorporating some of your favourite elements into your own volunteer impact story.

STORY

You will need to script the story using the key elements of good storytelling, most importantly that your story needs to have a beginning, middle and end, and your story must create emotional impact. The length of your story should be no longer than 90 seconds.

ELEMENTS OF A QUALITY VIDEO

Even if you decide to leave the shooting and production to someone else, understanding some of these elements can help ensure that the finished product meets your expectations.

Think like Scorsese – Will your video be composed of your volunteer telling their story on camera? If so, consider shooting the video using a close-up shot where your subject is visible from the shoulders up (don't forget to leave a bit of room above their head, so they don't seem crowded in the frame).

Will you include other supporting visuals to keep the audience's attention? Incorporate this 'framing' approach for all the visuals you may want to capture on camera. Medium shots are ideal for scenes involving small groups of people (subjects are visible from roughly the waist up) while long shots are good for scenes where there is action (your subject's entire body is visible).

Borrow tips from photography – apply the "Rule of Thirds", use a tripod, and pay attention to all of the visual elements that will appear in your shot.

Lighting – if you don't have the professional supplies and knowledge of lighting, consider filming outside during the daytime or shooting inside with YOUR back to a window so your subject is lit by natural light. Remember to turn off any florescent lights in the room, as they alter the look of your subject's face.

Sound – Don't underestimate the importance of quality sound. Consider using a microphone or adding a voice-over effect if your video will include someone speaking. Remember to pay attention to any natural, ambient sound that may be present during your shoot such as wind when outdoors or indoor 'white noise' such as the hum of refrigerator. These will be very distracting to your audience. Also consider finding music to layer over your video. It can contribute significantly to the tone of your video story and increase the emotional impact.

EDITING TOOLS

Here are some free video editing tools to check out to help you put your story together:

Video Tool Box: www.videotoolbox.com/

YouTube video editor: www.youtube.com

File Lab Video Editor: www.filelab.com

Windows Movie Maker or iMovie (software often included on your Windows computer or as a downloadable app from iTunes)

Food for thought

Have you thought about approaching a sponsor to help finance your video? That way you can build a corporate relationship and acquire some professional services to help boost the quality of your video story. That's a win-win-win for everyone (your volunteer – your organization – your corporate sponsor)!

Happy Storytelling!

Get going and start capturing the amazing work your volunteers are doing at your organization and don't forget to post your stories on the SPARK Ontario website: www.findmyspark.ca