

A Guide to Video Production by Russell Video Services

So you want to use video.....now what?

Video production can seem a daunting chore to the uninitiated. Don't worry—that's what RVS is for.

We have made the attempt to make this primer as complete as possible. Keep in mind while reading that not everything that is mentioned will apply to your project. In the same vein, we have left out various things from our lists because they don't apply to 99.99% of the video work that we do. (We don't get too many requests for us to build a full scale replicas of famous buildings)

There are three major phases to successfully producing a video: **Pre-production**, **Production**, and **Post-production**. Once your video is produced, there is **Duplication** and **Distribution**.

Pre-Production: *CAUTION: This phase of a video production can take some time because it is the most important part. The more prepared you are going into the production phase, the more you save in time and money.*

Pre-Production Meetings

This is where your video begins to take shape. Anyone can pitch ideas until they're blue in the face, but, at some point, decisions have to be made about what needs to be in your video. Often, the parameters of a video are established through a brainstorming session, performed either by yourself and/or your colleagues, or between your company and RVS. This is the opportunity to examine all of the various elements that you could possibly include in your video, and then choose those elements that will best communicate your ideas to your audience and fit within your budget.

Here's what we'll want to know the first time we talk about your project:

- 1) Purpose Questions
 - a. What is your topic product/service?
 - b. What do you want to say about it?
 - c. What is the purpose of your video project?
 - i. Does it fall into one or more of these categories?
 1. Corporate Image
 2. Motivational
 3. Historical
 4. Training (in depth)/Instructional/How-to
 5. Demonstration
 6. New Service or Product Announcement
 7. TV Commercial/Infomercial
 8. Trade Show/Sales (Show service or product in action)
 9. Tour Video
 10. Internal or External Communication/News
 11. Event Promotion
 12. Event Coverage/Re-cap/Documentary
 13. "Day in the Life" or Video Biography
 14. Live Event Broadcast
 15. Just for Fun
 - d. What is the message you're trying to deliver?
 - e. Who is your target audience? Are you trying to appeal to a certain characteristic or quality of your audience?



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- f. How do you plan on using/applying the video?
 - g. What do you want your audience to do after viewing your video?
 - i. What emotions do you want them to display? How should they feel?
 - ii. What actions do you want them to take?
 - h. What do you envision the final running time of the finished program?
 - i. Can the topic be covered in one video, or would a series of shorter videos do the trick?
 - j. How long do you plan to use the video?
 - k. Does the information contained in the video ever change?
- 2) Decision Making and Budgetary Questions
- a. When is your desired completion date?
 - b. Are there any time constraints? (Temporal/Spatial/Personal)
 - i. Availability of Personnel
 - ii. Availability and Condition of Locations
 - iii. One time event?
 - c. What is your budget for the project?
 - d. Are there any cost factors or special considerations involved? (Wants vs. Needs)
 - i. Things that must be included
 - ii. Things that would be nice to have included
 - e. Who has final authority for approving the project? Is it one person or a committee?
 - f. How involved do you want to be in the process of producing and editing the video?
 - g. How are you going to distribute your video?
 - h. What quantity will be needed? (VHS, CD, DVD, Internet)

If you can answer the above questions, then everyone involved should be well acquainted with the goals of the video project and how the project will ultimately be realized.

Once you've considered the above questions, you can begin to think about HOW you would like your video presented. To be honest with you, most people may have a couple of ideas of what they like to see in their video, but really don't want to have to sit down and map out its structure. That's where we come in; we've been doing this for years!

We'll consider the following questions: (Play along if you like!)

- 3) Style and Aesthetic Questions
- a. What organization pattern best fits the purpose & topic?
 - i. Chronological
A Chronological pattern is best suited when describing a series of events or steps in a process. It is also effective in showing how a series of "causes" created an "effect." Used best for Video Biographies and "Day in the Life" videos.
 - ii. Topical
A Topical pattern takes one main idea and divides it into several subtopics, all of which contribute to or constitute the main idea. This pattern is best used when the subtopics are all given equal importance.
 - iii. Ascending or Descending Order
This pattern is similar to the Topical pattern except items are arranged in an order of most important to least important or vice versa.
 - iv. Spatial
A Spatial pattern simply arranges ideas and visuals in a geographic pattern, such as a tour video.
 - v. Who, What, When, Where, How and Why (Journalistic)
Answer these basic questions in your video. This style is good for an event promotion video.



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- vi. Problem-Solution
A Problem-Solution pattern includes three main sections. First, the problem is analyzed to explore its history and magnitude. Then the causes of the problem are explained. Finally, the solution is explained and support for the solution is provided.
 - vii. Comparative Advantages
This pattern is used to compare and contrast two or more items, brands, solutions or options.
 - viii. Deductive/Method of Residues
This pattern is best used when your audience is well aware of the problem and causes. In this case you first present the solutions. Then you examine each solution critically, ruling them out until you get to the final solution. Finally, you provide evidence why the final solution is best and ask your audience to support it.
 - ix. Monroe's Motivated Sequence
This is a pattern based on psychological research by Alan H. Monroe in the 1930's and has become the standard for presentations. It is comprised of five steps: 1) Gain the Audiences ATTENTION, 2) describe the problem, demonstrate a NEED for change 3) SATISFACTION: present a practical, and concise solution to the problem 4) allow your audience to picture or VISUALIZE the results, and 5) request immediate ACTION from your audience
- b. What presentation style would be most effective in conveying the message? (May be a combination of styles)
- i. Narration with supporting visuals
 - 1. Voice over narration
 - 2. On-Camera Talent
 - ii. Parody of/Homage to <fill in the blank>
 - iii. Captured live event/presentation/demonstration/panel discussion
 - iv. Interviews/Testimonials
 - v. Dramatization/Re-enactment
 - vi. Music Video
 - vii. Text/ Graphical with supporting Sound Effects
- c. What are the Logistics of the Video?
- i. Do you need a script? Will a rough draft/sketch be provided?
 - ii. Would the video be best shot on location or in the studio?
 - 1. Do you need a set?
 - 2. Do you need props?
 - 3. Do you need to shoot in one location or many? Where?
 - 4. Are there any special concerns due to the location?
 - a. Noise?
 - b. Lighting?
 - c. Availability of People?
 - d. Size?
 - e. Cleanliness?
 - 5. Do we need to provide food, water, etc.?
 - iii. Is there a need for additional gear?
 - iv. Is there a need for talent?
 - 1. On-Camera
 - 2. Voice-Over
 - 3. Internal
 - 4. Professional
 - v. Internal or Professional talent considerations:
 - 1. Male or Female
 - 2. Demographic considerations
 - 3. Make-up



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4. Teleprompter
5. Ear Prompter
6. Costumes
- vi. Is there a need for news or stock footage, special music, animation or any other item that can not be easily obtained?
- vii. Is there a need for special video effects or camera tricks? (Chroma Key, etc.)
- viii. What should the pace/style/mood of the video be like?
- ix. What duration should the video be?
- x. Is there a video or TV show that you've seen that you would like to model your video after?

The Proposal

Once the WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, WHY and How's have been determined, we'll submit a proposal that'll cover the scope of the entire project.

If you desire, we can arrange a proposal meeting where we'll explain every aspect and bullet-point of our proposal.

Scripting

Once the proposal is accepted, it's time to script it. The script is the master plan that details the elements of your program, from the razzle-dazzle open to the final credits. (It's kind of like a blueprint for a house!) If it's in the script, it'll be in your completed video. A script provides a point of common reference for everyone involved, from the crew to the video's financiers. The script serves as a checklist and lets everyone know precisely what will be in your video. The more detailed the script is, the easier the following steps become.

Pre-Production Planning

Once a script has been completed and approved, it's time for the pre-production planning. This is where we plan how to shoot every element in the script, and design a shooting schedule. Arrangements are made (when needed) for talent, costumes, locations, props, special equipment, transportation, etc. to make sure that your shoot will progress as smoothly as possible.

Once the script, budget and arrangements have been made, it's time for:

Production (aka Shooting):

Production is where we make it all happen. All of the on-camera parts, demonstrations, products, processes, action, and drama are captured on tape. The shooting of the video can take place either in our 1200 sq. ft. studio, on-location, or a combination of both.

If it's part of the proposal, we'll beam live video events through the airwaves, around the U.S. and to Europe (a satellite uplink/downlink truck can be parked on your doorstep.)

RVS accomplishes all of this with an impressive arsenal of equipment and technical expertise. We can do it all ensuring the quality, technical superiority, program integrity and accountability from conception to completion of all your ideas.

Depending on your particular project, here's some things to think about:

To shoot a script in an artistic and intriguing way requires many shots and many different camera set-ups.



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If the shoot is to take place on location, please make sure all interested parties are aware of our presence in advance. This includes security and anyone that may appear in the video in the background or on camera.

It is highly recommended that a contact person be in attendance at all shoots either on location or in the studio. This is especially helpful on location shoots; it speeds up the process when someone who knows the area is close by.

It is very typical to shoot items out of order. (Unless, of course, we're shooting a live speaker or a live event.)

The shooting locations should be clean and orderly to properly reflect the business environment and/or mood of the scene. It's also a good idea to know how to control the HVAC in the shooting location (if you can) and how the electrical outlets in the room are wired; our lighting kit demands a lot of electricity.

Non-professional talent should be briefed on what their role in the video will be and what will be required of them. They should know their lines so that the process goes as smoothly as possible.

Make-up on talent is a nice thing. It adds a little to the cost of the project but will make everyone in the video look professional.

Certain clothes and colors look better on video than others. Avoid tight patterns and bright, saturated colors. Pick clothing that compliments your skin tone.

Before shooting begins, talent will be "mic'd up." This is where the production assistant invades your personal space and attaches a lavalier (lav) microphone to your clothing. Sometimes this takes longer than expected.

You'll see that many times it takes longer to set-up a shot and get the lighting just right than it does to actually record the shot. (This is sometimes referred to as "Hurry up and wait")

If the shoot is an all-day affair, you'll get more accomplished in the morning than after lunch. (This statement is based on past experience)

When recording is taking place, watch the video monitor, not the action – after all, that's what's going to be in the final product.

Post-Production (aka Editing):

This is where we take all of the elements that were produced and assemble them in such a way so that everything fits together seamlessly and that the message is communicated clearly and effectively.

Today, post-production (editing) is accomplished by using non-linear digital editing suites. Basically, this is a specialized computer system that has been equipped to digitize, manipulate, and store video information at a high quality.



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Once the camera master tapes are handed off to an editor, he/she will review the footage and log all of the good and/or usable takes. The usable takes are then 'captured' by the non-linear editing system, storing each video clip on the computer's hard drive. Once all of the clips have been loaded, the editor has the freedom to rearrange the video clips just as easily as you can edit and rearrange sentences in a word processing document.

This latest non-linear video editing technology gives you peace of mind, knowing that if you want to change or delete a segment in the middle of your finished programs you can do it without any costly delays or generational loss. Non-linear video editing technology is giving producers greater freedom, flexibility, and cost-effective results.

A myriad of tools and special effects are available to the editor in order to edit your video to create the type of content, mood, pacing, etc. that you are looking for, which includes the creation of graphics, insertion of PowerPoint slides or photographs. We also have an extensive library of production music and sound effects at your disposal so that you can find the sounds to add the right feel to your video.

But what good are all the gadgets if you can't make them work? That's why we have a staff of top professionals at the controls, making your video project look its best without breaking your budget.

Once we've completed the first edit of your video, you can sit in with the editor to review the project and make changes, or we can deliver or mail a preview copy that you can review on your own time and then phone in or e-mail changes to us. If you have a tight deadline and the final "say so" is out of town, we can encode your program into an internet streaming format and send your "final say so" a web address where they can preview your video online, to make changes or give final approval.

When your project is completed to your satisfaction, Russell Video Services will master your program to the video format of your choice to preserve the quality. We'll also archive all of the elements of the project so that if changes need to be made at a later date, we don't have to start all over.

We'll even store it in our Video Vault free of charge so that if you need duplicates, CD's or DVD's in the future, all you have to do is give us a ring!

Duplication

Now that your program is finished, it's time to decide how you'd like to distribute your program.

RVS can make your copies from and to virtually ANY video format, audiocassette, CD or DVD. We also provide international standards conversions, so customers can view your program anywhere in the world.

All video duplication is done on a high-end industrial/professional level with each master receiving full time base correction to control video levels for peak picture quality.

If your looking for more tech-savvy methods of distribution, we can also encode your program for internet streaming or download, author a DVD (complete with menus and chapter points) or create an interactive CD.

Distribution

Obviously, your completed video program is really what's important—but the way your videotapes, CDs and DVDs look on the outside will make that all-important first impression. We want you to stand out from the competition! That's why RVS provides you with the largest selection of packaging options available.





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Both our CDs and DVDs are ink-jet printable discs, which means that we can print any artwork that you provide directly on the face of the disc. Or, if you don't have the time or the resources, RVS can design your artwork for you, using your logo or any other graphics that you can provide.

Ever think of producing a Business Card CD?

Wanna try some CDs in different shapes or sizes?

We've got 'em...Plus every sort of box, sleeve, jacket, case, colored shell, album, holder, doohickey, widget, gizmo, doodad and thingumajig that you could ever think of.

Grab your customer or client's attention with the packaging—then hold it with the program on the videotape, CD or DVD. RVS will help you make a statement in everything you do.

We even offer custom packaging and labeling options, including full color label printing for video or audio cassettes, and direct printing on CD's and DVD's.

To top it off, we offer free local pick-up and delivery for all of your duplication needs, and we offer shipping services in-house.

Got Questions?

This guide by no means is a comprehensive guide to creating a video. Remember, we're here for you! If you have any questions, please send us an email (inbox@russellvideo.com) or give us a call!

