CREATING YOUR SHORT VIDEO

Step 1: Start concepting with a brief.

Creating a brief allows you and your team to document the answers to really important project questions so everyone involved in creating the video can get on the same page. And that's ideal, because you know what's the worst? When you're three-quarters of the way through the editing process and your teammate wants to completely redo that whole shot where you demonstrate how your main character solves global warming. When pesky predicaments like this one try to stand in the way of progress, you can just refer back to that questionnaire containing the goals and project plan your team mapped out together at the beginning.

- Focus on your goals, topic, and takeaways when developing your brief.

A brief doesn't have to be fancy, nor does it have to follow a specific formula, but there are several key questions every questionnaire should include to craft an effective video script.

1. What's the goal of this video? Why are we making the video in the first place?
2. Who are we making this video for?
3. What's our narrow video topic? (The more specific, the better)
4. What are the takeaways of the video? What should viewers learn from watching it?
5. What's our call-to-action? What do we want viewers to do after they've finished watching the video?

You can easily create a brief in Microsoft Word or a Google Doc to serve as a living, breathing template that you revise over time.

Step 2: Write your script.

Once you've picked a topic, it's time to write that script! Just like the brief, the video script doesn't have to be fancy. You're not trying to submit this script for any awards. Its purpose is strictly functional. A good script makes it easy for the people on camera to get their message across while sounding and acting natural.

- Write in plain, conversational English.

Writing a script is not the same as writing a college paper or marketing research report. You want to write the script how you want the video subject to speak. On camera, saying, "I'm gonna create a video after reading this blog post" will read much better than "I am going to create a video after reading this blog post."

- Make it thorough.

A script doesn't just include dialogue. If your video will require multiple shots, characters, or scenes, include these details. Be sure to include any necessary information about the set or stage actions, such as a wardrobe change. Basically, you want the script to be thorough enough that you could hand it off to someone else to shoot.

- Differentiate the main narrative from B-Roll, text overlays, and voiceover using different formatting or callouts.

If your video will transition from a the subject speaking the primary narrative to a close up shot of your product with a text overlay, you'll want to call that out in your script so anyone who reads it knows what's supposed to be read on screen versus incorporated in the editing process.

- Script every word.

It's understandable to think you can just jot down the main bullet points for a script and then just wing it on camera, especially if you know your subject matter. This approach makes it tough to communicate a message as clearly and concisely as possible (which you should aim to do in every video you create), and it usually results in a lot of re-dos. So, I suggest scripting every last word -- doing this will keep you organized during filming and save you loads of time later.

- Make it brief.

Shorter videos are better than long videos, and to make short videos, you need a short script. The result is a video that's succinct, engaging, and allows for a simple editing process. Your video should be **around 5-8min.**

In sum, here is what you need to do for your script:

Start with a rough outline of the narrative of your story, which will later be translated into visual objects and movements, voiceover, sound effects, and music. First, lay out the main points you want to make, then start writing, word-for-word, what you want the narrator and characters to say (whether it's voiced over or only text on the screen). Keep in mind that time is very limited in videos: the shorter, the better. Reading the script at a moderate pace will provide a rough estimate of how long the video will be.

Step 3: Storyboard.

This is where you first start to create visuals and sounds that correspond to the script. Lay out all critical moments in the script, known as "style frames". You may want to start with sticky notes that you can rearrange freely. At each critical step in the narrative, quickly sketch what is happening in the scene, and what actions any characters are taking. Write a short description of the scene and any narration, sounds, or on-screen text that occur at this moment. You can use the provided template for this.

Step 4: Action!

You can follow your storyboard and complete each scene. This doesn't have to be sequential but you need to make a note of each shot's time and recorded place. This way, it wouldn't get lost!

Step 5: Editing.

We'll cover class and lab meetings and learn how to do this. Don't worry about it now.

Sources: Kalow, N. (2011). *Visual storytelling: The digital video documentary*. CDS Publication.

Web Video Marketing (2015). How to Write a Video Script. Retrieved from http://webvideomarketingportugal.com/write-video-script-template-video/ on February, 2017.