

From Grating to Captivating

THE 5 MOST IMPORTANT
CONSIDERATIONS FOR YOUR
UPCOMING VIDEO PROJECT

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Introduction

In this guide you'll learn 12 simple tips and hints to take your upcoming video project to the next level.

We've picked these 12 tips to focus on across 5 key areas because they are some of the most common problems video productions encounter and can all be easily mitigated.

The 5 key areas we will discuss are:

1. Picking The Perfect Location
2. Magnificent Lighting
3. Solutions for Sound
4. Post-production
5. The "Do's" of Choosing Music

So, if you're ready to take your video content to the next level, and want to engage your audience with even the simplest of content, keep on reading. We'll give you an inside look at how to make stunning online content by embracing a few of the fundamentals of filmmaking. We will also tell you how best to work with your video team.

To Your Success!

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Poached Egg Pictures

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Chapter One

PICKING A PERFECT LOCATION

Locations

Unless you're shooting inside a purpose built studio, a great location is a fundamental ingredient for your video. It can make your brand and message stronger and assist in telling a visual story within the given limitations of video production. Two visual qualities which an experienced filmmaker will be looking for in a location are depth and colour.

Depth

Your location can help support your brand's message and also help us to create a visually appealing image. By offering us large locations with plenty of depth it helps us light interviews quicker, easier and with better results. It also helps us distinguish between the subject and the background.



In this example the cinematographer has made the subject sharp and the location behind him out-of-focus.

Image 1. Shallow Depth of Field puts the background out of focus.



Here the subject doesn't pop out from the background as much, and is less appealing.

Image 2. Deep Depth of Field puts the background in focus.

In the world of cinema, a shallow depth of field (Image 1) is an excellent tool for storytelling. Placing the main subject in focus, the human eye is attracted to it as the focal point. This compels the viewer's attention and is therefore ideal for story telling.

Colour

Your perfect location should have lots of depth and a cohesive colour palette. Just like brands, logos and websites, filmmakers use colours to manipulate how we think and feel with great potency. The colours within your video will always have a psychological, symbolical and/or a cultural effect. No matter what the situation, there are many ways colour can be used and manipulated to enhance your video.

For example, here are two shots in the same location...



Image 3. Colour Palette has an eco friendly look.



Image 4. More clinical with the use of grey.

By simply framing up the subject around the green chairs and with the timber in the background we've created a feeling that they work for an organisation which focuses on being eco-friendly. In contrast the same location but with grey couches has removed the eco-friendly look and feels a little more clinical.

Putting time, and potentially a little bit of budget, aside so you or your production company can find a location with these features, can be the difference between an everyday video and something exciting and visually cohesive.

Chapter Two

MAGNIFICENT LIGHTING

Avoiding Fluorescents

Everyday fluorescent lights are designed to consume less power than traditional incandescent lights and to look good to the human eye. Unfortunately they rarely look good to our high-tech digital video camera sensors. Fluorescent lights can create a flicker and can also affect the colour palette and skin tones in a negative way. This will drastically degrade the video quality and can even make people look ill if not managed.



Image 5. Fluro lighting causes a nasty green colour, creates unsightly shadows and reduces the contrast and highlights we aim to achieve in our lighting.

You can easily fix any problems with fluorescent lights but it requires an investment of time in finding that perfect location. After investigating your location choices you should identify what lighting is installed. If the location is normally lit with fluoros, let the production team know. They can then plan ahead and bring the necessary equipment required to mitigate the nasty colours and remove the flickering.

Windows

Windows can be a great source of natural light, and there is no light more powerful than the sun's. A location with large windows and lots of natural light can reduce setup time and make your video appear more inviting.

When we shoot b-roll, sometimes known as cut-aways, we want to grab lots of small exciting snippets of people being engaged and dynamic around the work place. The more scenarios we can cover, the greater flexibility we have in post-production editing of the story, creating cohesion.

If we have a location full of natural light we can save time by utilising it instead of setting up many of our own lights. This makes us more efficient and creates a more exciting video with a larger number of cut-aways.

Finally, most cameras like a lot of light and giving it to them reduces the amount of "digital noise" in the image. Thus, providing locations with big windows helps threefold; cleaner images, more footage creating an engaging edit, and quicker set-ups!

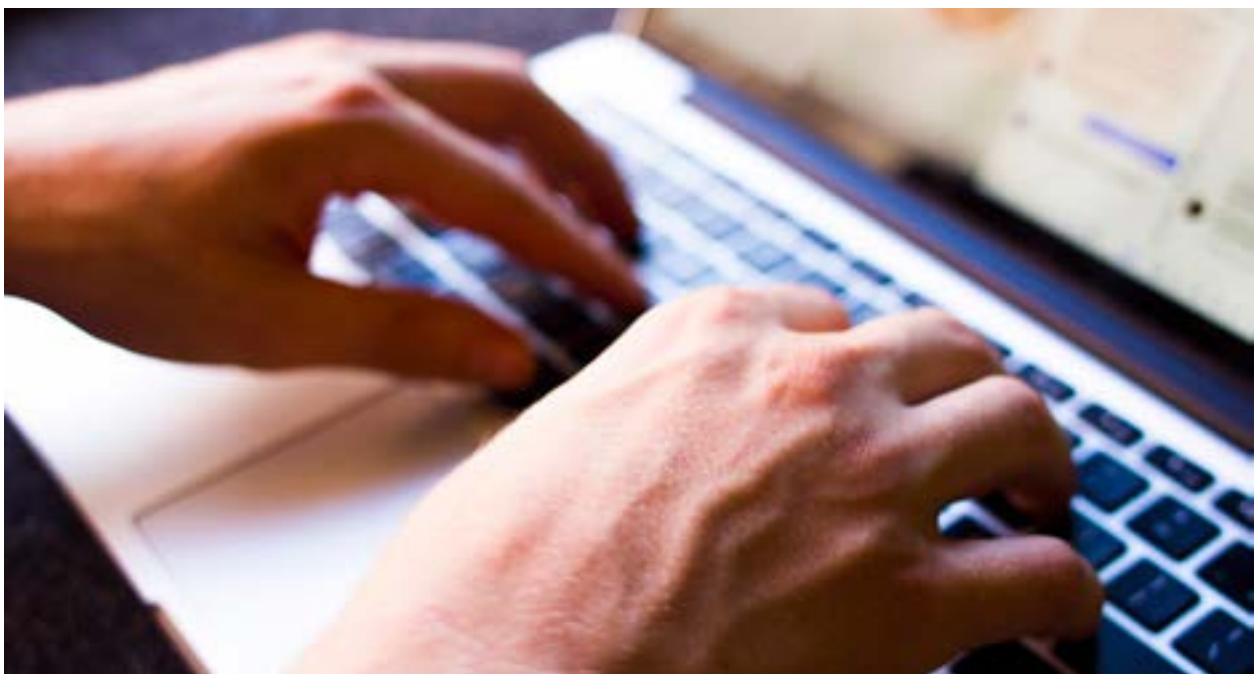


Image 6. An otherwise unremarkable photo of a keyboard can really pop when a window is used as the main light source

Chapter Three

SOLUTIONS FOR SOUND

Sound

Quality sound, just like lighting, is critical to the success and perceived quality of your video. If the viewer can't hear it correctly they'll disengage and turn their attention elsewhere. Poor quality sound is often hard to recognise, but our subconscious is aware and it is one of the key reasons a video can seem amateurish.

Two things always to be aware of with sound are:

- Ambient noise
- The ability of the person delivering the message

Fortunately you can often reduce the ambient noise levels and a good director or interviewer can assist the speaker in performing at their best.

Ambient Noise

Microphones are incredibly sophisticated and can be designed to pick-up and record sound from a single direction. However, no matter how directional or high-quality a microphone is, the world of sound around it can interfere and muddy up the recording with noise pollution.

Ambient noise pollution comes from absolutely everything surrounding a location. The rooms next door, noise from other levels, doors closing, air conditioners, phones ringing and the streets outside. On busy main streets and especially in the CBD, every tram or train that clanks past makes capturing clean and crisp audio the sound recordists' nightmare.



Image 7. Trams around Melbourne can be picked up by sensitive microphones and should be considered when choosing a location.

Ambient Noise cont.

Two ways to help make the sound recordists' job easier is to:

1. Take noise pollution into consideration during the location scouting process. If you have location options with minimal noise pollution, you may need to think about whether this supersedes other preference. If re-recording audio at a later date is not an option, due to time or budget, this might be a safer middle ground. It's easy to overlook audio in preference of the visuals, but you don't want to dig yourself into a hole.

2. Work with high quality equipment and someone who knows how to use it. In the world of film, it's not just about having the right equipment, but also making sure the operator knows exactly which method and piece of equipment to use. The difference is in the details. Knowing how to craftily place a microphone on a person, or work with troublesome clothing fabrics to avoid issues is vital. A budget in which you have found room for a sound operator is a budget that creates spectacular video.



Image 8. Soundie Elliot Klein uses a boom microphone and two wireless mics to record a scene

Budgetting for a sound recordist and being aware of the struggles that even a great soundie can face on the job will help your video stand out from the crowd.

Talent

In most cases, the performer, presenter, or interviewee is chosen because of their charisma, knowledge and ability to present the information confidently. However, if they don't necessarily have all of these traits; what can happen is a delivery with lot of "ums" and "ahs" and speech 'ticks'. One of the worst situations is when the speaker trails off without completing their sentence.

A good director can mitigate these problems on the day by creating a relaxed and comfortable atmosphere. If done well, the person in front of the camera will forget the recording aspect and transform into a captivating subject.

If that doesn't work, a good editor can cut around as many anxious um's and ah's, but this can take many hours or even days to fix. It's always preferable to get it right in camera, and to avoid the "we will fix it in post (-production)" mentality.

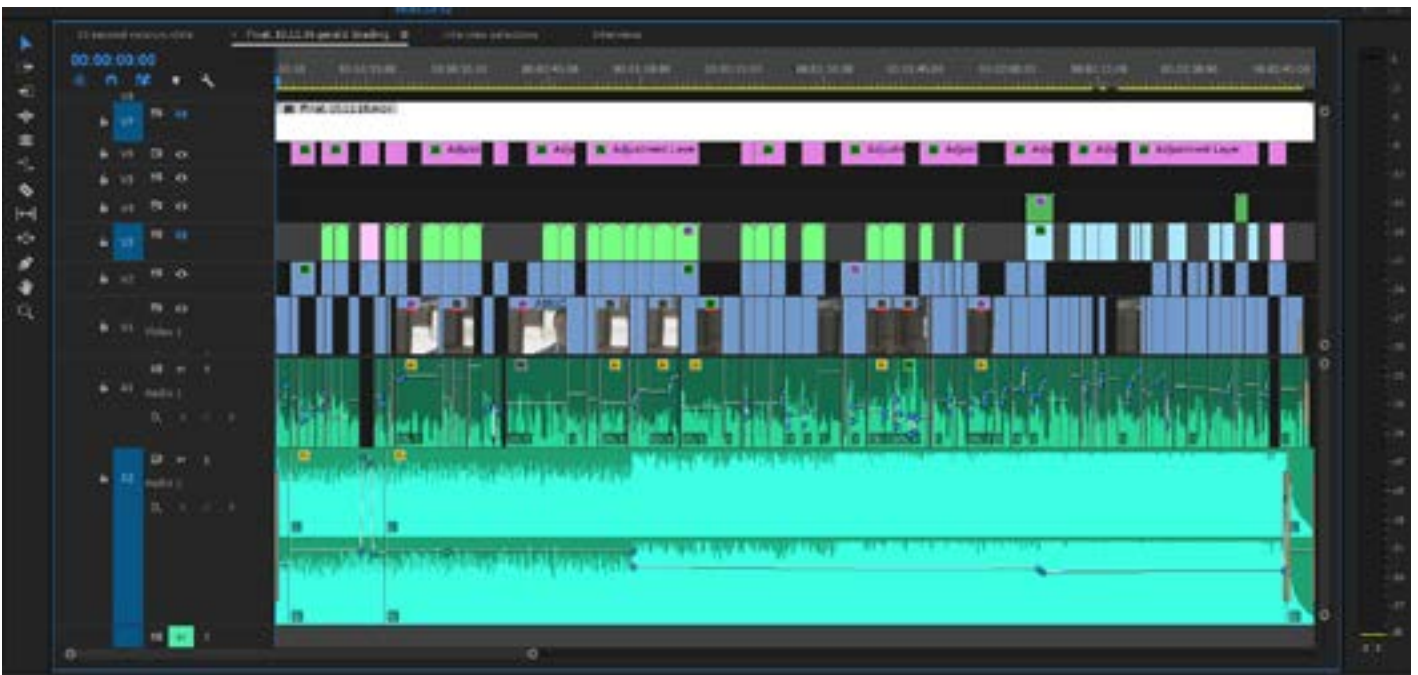


Image 9. A "fix it in post" mentality can add a lot of time to post-production. Here is a screenshot of the timeline from a project where a lot of additional work was carried out to make sure the audio was perfect.

Talent cont.

Here are some points to think about for achieving dialogue audio that is as coherent and concise as possible.

1. Make sure the person in front of the camera is the right person for the job. Sometimes this means they are not the most senior person or highest authority on the subject being spoken about.
2. Where possible have material pre-planned and rehearsed. Off-the-cuff is great and natural, but having a foundation laid down for them helps in most situations.
3. Spoken thoughts are best when they are no longer than one or two sentences. A paragraph of speaking without a full stop and a breath is hard to follow and edit.



Image 10. Some speakers have a natural and authentic personality in front of the camera.

So, when planning your next project, make sure you consider how much ambient noise the location has, and who is going to be interviewed. These two factors will have a great impact on the final product.

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Chapter Four

POST- PRODUCTION

Post-production

The Post-production component consists of many different processes including the edit, the grade, titles and soundmix to name just a few.

It is an exciting process where the moments captured by the camera are put together to form a message and story. It is advantageous to know and understand our workflow. This will help to avoid doubling up on specific components and then paying more than expected or having a video delivered late.

Post-production Workflow

To assist us in our post-production workflow it is best you know the order in which we carry out the different steps.

- Data wrangling
- Syncing sound
- Extracting "interview selections" and "b-roll footage".
- Carefully crafting the story from the interviews, b-roll and voice overs.
- Finding music and editing the footage to the rhythm
- ROUGH CUT #1 - SEND TO CLIENT FOR REVISIONS
- Changes made from client feedback
- Creating titles
- Colour grading
- Sound mix
- ROUGH CUT #2 - SEND TO CLIENT FOR REVISIONS
- Final changes from client feedback
- Exporting the finished product
- Quality control (QC)
- Uploading

Double Handling

A mistake we often encounter is changes being requested at the very end when ideally they would've been flagged earlier.

A small change to the story, or interview selections, at the end of the post-production workflow can mean "double handling" many of those components. A small change can take hours to re-sync to music, colour grade, export, QC check and upload. While it can't always be avoided, it's much more efficient to get it right the first time.

Rough Cuts

On most projects the client is given two revisions to look over it in order to flag anything they might not like or provide feedback as to the direction it is taking.

On the previous page you saw where these rough cut revisions take place and how many additional steps are still left to complete, especially after the first rough cut is given to the client.

When you view the first rough cut it is best to look at the overarching story and direction of the video. The post-production team know that titles are missing, the colour grade hasn't been done and the sound mix and music aren't perfect, so ignore these. During this process, what we really need to know, is whether the interview selections are working well and no one's saying anything that contradicts your desired message.



Image 11. An un-colour graded image.



Image 12. A colour graded image, with saturation, contrast and levels adjusted.

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Chapter Five

THE "DO'S" OF CHOOSING MUSIC

Music

Music is a universal language, and is believed to be older and more instinctive to humans than speech. Not only that, music improves our mood, boosts brain chemicals, and helps us learn and retain information. These are all positive aspects which can enhance your video.

Your music choice(s) should not only be a positive addition to your video it should also enhance and support your video's narrative, message and brand. In order for that to occur you need to think carefully about two things when approving your piece of music: rhythm and tone.

Rhythm

A human's heart beat starts syncing to a song's rhythm, and our heart rhythm is in correspondence to how we feel. For example a slow heartbeat with a strong diastolic pressure tells our brain that something sad or depressing is occurring, whereas a fast beat is telling us we are excited. The music chosen should correspond with how you want your audience to feel.

Tone

Tone qualities can alter emotions and mood. For example the tone of a violin by itself brings forth emotional associations such as sadness or melancholy, but this can be counteracted with opposing tone and tempo.

Pricing

When it comes down to finding the right music with the right rhythm and tone for your project, budget for quality. APRA (Australasian Performing Right Association) prices a promotional piece of music at \$214.50 per track or \$60.50 per 30 seconds for online content. It's possible to get cheaper music but we would always recommend spending a little extra and getting the song that complements your message perfectly.

Remember to stay impartial to the style and think about how it connects with your message.

Chapter Six

TAKING THE NEXT STEP

Conclusion

We hope this book has provided you with plenty of helpful hints and general information on how to take your upcoming projects to the next level.

Having an understanding of how videos are made will assist you in communicating your requirements and ideas to the video production team and helping them to help you.

Now that you know some more about locations, lighting, sound, the post production workflow and production music you're sure to be able to rise to the top.

On the following page you will find some incredible statistics relating to user interaction with online video content. These will surely strengthen your desire for incorporating video into your website, social media or business.

Statistics

Videos let consumers get to know you, your products and the services you provide, but they also allow us to surpass the mechanical and connect to the human. The eyes, smiles, laughter, it is all part of the human charisma which excites and charms us. Here are some amazing statistics regarding online videos.

80%

INCLUDING A VIDEO ON YOUR LANDING PAGE CAN INCREASE CONVERSION RATES.

2-3x

INCREASE IN CLICK THROUGH RATE WHEN A VIDEO IS INCLUDED IN THE EMAIL

64%

OF USERS ARE MORE LIKELY TO BUY A PRODUCT ONLINE AFTER WATCHING A VIDEO ABOUT IT.

33%

OF ALL ONLINE ACTIVITY IS SPENT WATCHING VIDEO!

403%

MORE INQUIRIES FOR REAL ESTATE LISTINGS WHICH INCLUDE A VIDEO

REFERENCE: [HTTP://WWW.INSIVIA.COM/50-MUST-KNOW-STATS-ABOUT-VIDEO-MARKETING-2016/](http://www.insivia.com/50-must-know-stats-about-video-marketing-2016/)

ABOUT US

GERALD WIBLIN



GERALD'S BACKGROUND INVOLVES DESIGN, ARCHITECTURE AND PHOTOGRAPHY. SINCE MOVING TO THE WORLD OF FILM IN 2011, GERALD HAS WORKED ON A MIX OF COMMERCIALS, FEATURE FILMS, MUSIC VIDEOS AND BRANDED ONLINE CONTENT.

CHRISTOPHER TALBOT

CHRISTOPHER'S BACKGROUND INVOLVES ACTING, THEATRE MANAGEMENT, WRITING AND EDITING. COMBINING THESE SKILLS, CHRIS IS ABLE TO GUIDE EVERYONE IN FRONT OF THE CAMERA TO GIVE THEIR VERY BEST PERFORMANCE.



“

A COLLABORATION BETWEEN PRODIGIOUS DIRECTOR CHRISTOPHER TALBOT AND EXUBERANT CINEMATOGRAPHER GERALD WIBLIN.

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