

Social Video Best Practices

2019

This document outlines what makes social video (both organic and paid/promoted) different from other forms of video, and what you can do to make sure your social video content is as effective as possible with the resources you have.



SQUARE AND VERTICAL

Most people are viewing social media on mobile devices. Square and vertical creative allow you to take up more space on their screen, capturing more of their attention. Specs can be found on page 3 of this document.

SOUND OFF

On social feeds, most people will be consuming creative with their sound off. **All the messaging you need to communicate to the audience should be on the screen.** At the very least all social video should have basic subtitles. Ideally, there is bigger text on screen throughout the video highlighting main points and adding more visual interest.

FRONT-LOADED MESSAGING

You only get a few seconds on the social feed before people scroll away from your content. It's crucial to **get your main messaging across at the very beginning of the video**, and grab attention in the first few seconds. **Don't save the Call To Action for the end of the video**, get it on screen first thing, especially if an action is the desired result of the video.

AUTHENTICITY

Social video lends itself especially well to authenticity. Face to camera videos mimic the organic content people see on these platforms *and* allow you to show a personal side to your candidate or cause. The production quality on these does not need to be extremely polished -- a feeling of something being filmed on a phone/on the go will fit right in on a social feed. With that said, some baseline audio and lighting quality standards should still be met -- if people can't see or hear your video, they aren't going to watch it.

Tips for Shooting Video for Social

Some of these notes are intended for instances where professional equipment is available. Recommendations that can be implemented regardless of equipment quality and videographer skill level are highlighted in [blue](#).

GENERAL

- Some principals are better with scripts, others will sound more authentic winging it. If you have the time to capture both, do it and give yourself options later!
- When shooting direct-to-camera, try to avoid the subject repeatedly looking offscreen. You can use an ipad to show the script and place it directly above the camera so the video subject looks like they are looking into the lens.

TECHNICAL

- When framing the subject, keep in mind that you may want to cut additional sizes. For instance, if you're only shooting in horizontal, keep in mind what the framing would like if the video were cut to Square or Vertical in post production.
- Be mindful of the rule of thirds.
- If you can shoot 4k, do it!
- If shooting 4k, shoot the master shot wider. We can always punch in to create a medium-close, but can't pull out.
- Use the magnify zoom to make sure focus is set to the eyes or other subject.
- If you're using a lavalier microphone, make sure it's hidden. You can clip to the inside of the collar, a jacket, or sleeve of a shirt. Once placed, be sure to test that there are no rustling sounds when recording.

AUDIO

- Avoid loud areas or distracting sounds.
- Be sure to have someone listen to the audio throughout to ensure nothing has changed or shifted in a way that will affect quality.
- Give yourself a second or two of silence before and after your principal is done speaking. That'll give your editing team more options for transitions later.
- Don't rely on audio meters, have headphones to make sure audio is good and is set to stereo.
- Take 30 seconds of room tone before shooting to capture the noise print of the room in case it needs to be taken out in post production.

LIGHTING

- Make sure there is adequate lighting (post production can only do so much).
- If lighting or using natural light for an interview or address to camera, use your largest light source (might often be the sun) as your key and have the neg side be the side closest to the camera.
- White balance the camera before shooting.
- Use the meters on the camera to make sure the subject is properly exposed.

ENVIRONMENT

- Be aware of what is in the frame with the subject/what environment they appear to be in.
- Creating some separation between the subject and the background will give a greater depth of field.
- If shooting B-roll, hold on a subject for 7-10 seconds.

Video Specs

SQUARE

(Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)

- 1080x1080px (FB minimum width: 600px)
- H.264 (.mp4)
- 1:1 ratio
- Video Bitrate:
 - o 8mbps+ for 1080p
- Audio Bitrate - 128kbps+ preferred
- Length: 120 min max
- File Size: 4GB max
- Frames: 30 fps max

VERTICAL

(Facebook)

- Minimum width: 600px
- H.264 (.mp4)
- 2:3 ratio (600x900)
- Video Bitrate:
 - o 8mbps+ for 1080p
 - o 4mbps+ for 720p
- Audio Bitrate - 128kbps+ preferred
- Length: 120 min max
- File Size: 4GB max
- Frames: 30 fps max

STANDARD HORIZONTAL

(Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Youtube, Hulu)

- HD 1280x720px (720p) or 1920x1080px (1080p)
- H.264 (.mp4) or .mov
- 16:9 ratio
- Audio Sample Rate: 48kHz
- Video Bitrate: At least 15mbpsn
- Audio Bitrate: At least 192 kbps
- Frames: 29.97 fps