

# How to Make a Short Film

1. Type out a script. Make sure to develop your characters with different personalities; your movie won't be interesting if everyone acts and talks the same.
2. Draw out a storyboard, illustrating the shots you plan to use. Don't worry about following the storyboard perfectly. It's just a good idea to get your thoughts on paper and a great way to see if you can communicate an idea "visually" rather than needing the actors to verbally communicate the concept. The viewer is watching first and listening second.
3. Find people who aren't busy and are willing to work hard on your film.
4. Shoot your footage. If you want to highlight your pet, you can shoot video of your pet eating, sleeping and playing and perhaps put it to music.
5. Edit your film. Many cameras edit in limited ways and some have special effects. Learn how to "cut" pieces of your footage together and put music or speech over your video. Check your camera's manual or use a free software package like iMovie to make your final cuts.

# Tips For A Promotional Video

1. Not a television commercial - A promo video is longer and it's not purely sales oriented.
2. Not a sales video - There's fine line, sometimes, between them but a sales video is trying to sell a single product or service. A promotional video strives to build connections between an organization and its customers or constituencies.
3. Not pushy. A promo video shares an organization's vision by showing what it means to people, why others chose to get involved, and how they feel about the organization.
4. Not a fact sheet. A promo video that tries to share too much DATA will never make the emotional connection to your audience that it is superbly fit to make.
5. Not a feature film. It can be entertaining (and should be), but a promotional video deals with facts. It doesn't stretch the truth, it shares the truth about the organization through the words of satisfied customers or users.
6. Not too long. It's amazing how much of an emotional bridge you can build with your audience in just two minutes!

# Video Production - Storytelling

The best videos tell a story. People love stories and it is the story that draws them in emotionally.

## **1. STORIES ARE BASED ON CHARACTERS**

Any decent novelist will tell you that characters are the heart of their story. Most novelists come up with the characters before they dream up the plot. Often, they will say the story writes itself once they know their characters well. What would this person do in this situation? There's your story.

Next time you watch TV, pay close attention to the commercials. Most TV commercials do a fantastic job of developing characters in just 30 seconds.

Exploiting clichés is usually necessary when you are trying to tell a story with delineated characters in a brief period of time.

A one-minute video production is not a novel. To get your point across quickly, you have to rely on pre-conceived notions. You CAN do that without being offensive.

Since video production is a visual medium, visual clichés rule. The easiest way to add a story to your video production is to find a person (or make one up) that personifies the idea you are trying to get across.

2. **EMOTIONALISM** is the meat of any story, so don't be afraid to go for the jugular.

Even if your video production is just going to be a talking-head explaining how to assemble a bookshelf, you can add emotionalism. You do this by making sure your on-camera host displays personality. Then you add some catchy music and flashy graphics. Those techniques alone will go a long way to adding emotionalism, and a story, to your video production.

## Common Mistakes

No video production is perfect, but to help make yours the best it can be, here is a rundown of the most common mistakes novice video producers make.

### **1. VIDEO IS TOO BORING.**

Generally speaking, to hold a viewer's attention, your video needs to be fast paced and told with some emotion. Adding music is the single easiest way to keep a video entertaining.

Make sure your opening is entertaining. **DO NOT** start off with credits. Start off with a bang and then pull back and give some of the more boring information. So many videos start off with credits that it drives me nuts. That is a blatant mistake that is very easy to avoid.

### **2. VIDEO IS TOO LONG**

This goes hand-in-hand with too boring. A long video tends to get really boring, even if it is generally of high quality. While there is no set length for video, **SHORTER IS ALWAYS BETTER**. Done correctly, a two minute video contains tons of information. **BE CONCISE**. No need to drag it out to ten minutes. Ten minutes is an eternity on video. The fact that in real life ten minutes flashes by like a nano-second is irrelevant. On video, ten minutes seems like forever.

### **3. VIDEO IS MADE FOR THE VIDEO MAKER, NOT THE AUDIENCE.**

As a video producer, you have to keep in mind who your audience is and what they want to see. You are not making this video for your own gratification. You are making it to impart information to strangers. What is their viewpoint? What do they already know and how do they feel about it?

### **4. GOING OFF ON TANGENTS**

Be focused. To help you do this, sum up the point of your video in one sentence. If you cannot sum it up in one simple sentence then you need to re-think your premise.