

Production Team Goal

The most important step is to have a Team Goal so that you can design your message based on your goal. An example of a goal would be:

- *Your team's goal is to work together to create a message or T.V. commercial that is exactly 60 seconds long.*

There are an unlimited number of ways that you can design your message. Here are a few possibilities:

- Use on-camera interviews with people giving personal testimonials. Try a talk-show format
- Try a narrator reading a written copy off-camera with on-camera talent acting out a scene that supports the message.
- Write and perform a short song, jingle or rap that conveys your message.
- Write and perform a dramatic scene or role-play.
- Create a segment that resembles a news segment or program.
- Write and read a poem on-camera.
- Use music and visuals—props, body language, movement, graphics, etc. to enhance your message.
- Write something you can feel while you say it.
- Consider your audience and think about what might work best for them.
- Ask yourselves, “What are the most powerful and appropriate visual and audio tools we have available to us?”
- Be Creative!

Production Team Roles

You may all want to work together on each task or you may find it helpful to take on certain roles within your production team. For example:

- **Producer:** The person who gives overall leadership to the content, message, audience and objectives of the production.
- **Director:** The person who gives overall leadership to the scripting, rehearsing, talent, set design, camera, shots and video taping. This person keeps people on task and makes sure deadlines are met. Often the Producer/Director roles are combined.
- **Scriptwriter:** The person who writes the script, copy, narration, voice-over, etc.
- **Talent:** The people whose voices or faces appear on-camera.
- **Graphic Artist:** The person who designs and creates visuals to enhance and support the message.
- **Videographer:** The person who operates the video camera. If someone in your group brought their own camera, they may want to be the videographer for your taping session.

WRITE, CAMERA, ACTION!

Writing Skills for Video

This handout will get you thinking about what makes your writing effective. Read it aloud to your whole production team. Then decide as a group who will take primary responsibility for writing your message.

- Write clearly and simply. Write to be heard.
- Write in a conversational tone.
- Keep your scenes short.
- Use first person. (i.e., “You can make a difference....”)
- Use action verbs. (i.e., join, come, write, buy...)
- Choose simple words that clearly communicate and conjure up powerful, emotional images.
- Edit your copy. Take out unnecessary words and change verbs to communicate action and present tense.
- For a 60 second spot, limit the number of words to between 75 and 100. (More or less depending on the pace and whatever elements you’re using,)
- Use a stopwatch or clock with a second hand to time your message. Be sure that the copy (the narration) with other elements of your message (music, role-play, dramatics, etc.) is not longer than your time limit.
- Read and/or perform your completed message aloud. Listen to be sure that it is clear and easy to understand. Read it to someone else and get their impression.

YOU'RE ON!

Speaking Skills for Video

This handout will give you some tips for speaking effectively...especially in front of a video camera. Read these suggestions to the whole production team and decide as a group who will narrate or be the on-camera "talent" to help communicate your message.

- A strong, confident voice will make your message more believable. Speak up!
- How do you make your voice sound strong and confident? Relax, breath deep, lower your voice and project from your diaphragm.
- To hold viewer's interest, vary your pitch, volume and pacing.
- Try to sound like yourself. Avoid sounding like a book, monotonous or sing-songy.
- Enunciate and speak very clearly.
- Exaggerate your delivery and put strong emphasis on key words. Be dramatic!
- Your facial expression should be appropriate to your words. (i.e., Don't smile if the message is very serious. Smile and look joyful if the message is positive or heart-warming.)
- Posture: Stand up straight, look people in the eye and stop fidgeting. (In other words, listen to your mother!)
- Effective hand gestures come from being relaxed and spontaneous. (Playing with your hair, scratching, rubbing your knuckles are not effective gestures.)
- Eye contact is extremely important and powerful. If you want to talk directly to your video audience, look at the camera lens as if it were the friendly eyes of your best friend. Don't let your eyes stray from the camera lens while it's recording. Wandering eyes make you look shifty and insecure. Practice by saying your script as you look at an eye-level mark on the wall.
- If you are the narrator or on-camera talent, you may need to hold a microphone for the camera. If so hold it about four inches away from your mouth.
- Just Do It! Almost everyone is nervous about speaking in front of groups (and cameras!). The more you do it the better you will become and the easier it gets.

On your mark, get set, DRAW!

Graphic Design for Video

This handout will give you an idea of how video graphics can be used to help get your message across and how the design process works. Read it with your production team then decide as a group who will be responsible for designing graphics for your video.

The “Job” of a video graphic

Video graphics can be used to reinforce:

- Visual identity for a product so it can be “picked out of the crowd.”
- Where you need to go or call to find the product or service.
- An image for the product or message that is geared to a target audience.
- Identification of the “talent” if it is important to show names.

The design process:

1. Define the “design problem.” Research and organize the key points you wish to communicate.
2. Make “thumbnail” sketches or “roughs”.
3. Get group opinions.
4. Produce final art (proofread carefully!).
5. Evaluate how well it worked.

Type/Font tips:

- Medium-weight, sans-serif and thick serif typeface read best.
- Use small “chunks” of type at a time – don’t overload the screen with information.
- Use upper and lower case type – not all upper case.
- Be sure type contrasts well with the background (color, weight).
- Choose colors that reinforce your product image.
- Use only one font “family” if possible.
- Avoid stacking type vertically or on an incline if you want maximum readability.

Logos and Symbols

You may wish to design a logo or symbol to identify your product. A good logo or symbol:

- Has positive associations.
- Provides quick and easy identification.
- Can be reduced without losing effectiveness.
- Works in one color.
- Uses negative space well.
- Has “heavy” weight for good contrast with background and other elements.
- Shows action or flow (upwards and/or to the right is the most positive).

And finally...

- Keep artwork proportional to the video camera image area.
- Be sure to leave extra background borders around the artwork so the edge doesn’t show in the shot.