

VIDEO PRIMER for COM 303

What's the story? Think of it in terms of a headline. And who cares? What does this matter? Look for key "moments", or 10-second segments that can hold your story together.

Know that you are creating an experience for your viewers, so think also about pacing, rhythm and tone. A story on a bootcamp? Fast pace. A story on love and loss, with a funeral? Slower pace.

Think in terms of 3- to 5-second increments. If you can SHOW a sign with explanatory verbiage, there is no need for a cheesy voiceover. SHOWING is always better than telling.

In the bootcamp example, think of the visuals: Rows of things – shoes, helmets, guns, trainees, etc. Think of all the signage that could help tell the story. Closeups of the drill sergeant yelling, the bootcampers sweating, sleeping. Darkness to light.

Think about how to structure your story. Chronological is the easiest. Headings/subdivisions/topical is another way.

Lay down all of your audio first. You integrate video with a storyline, and the storyline comes from the audio. Realizing that people do not naturally speak in soundbites, you will edit the audio down so that you have soundbites. They will end up sounding like they do speak naturally in soundbites.

You are dealing with a really, really small screen size. You will want closeups. A lot of them.

- "X closeups" are used for extreme emotion, like crying. A partial face.
- "Closeups" are head-and-shoulders, used for most interviews.
- "Medium shot" is cut below the waist.
- "Long shot" is the whole person in the shot, typically relating to other subjects.

Your goals in editing:

Remove and condense: Take out anything, everything that isn't necessary to telling the story. The biggest task and most time-consuming, is removing unnecessary audio.

Create new meaning: Structure, shape the story.

This can be done a lot of different ways, but listen to your audio first. Then watch your video. What do you have to work with?

Next, import your audio and video as assets, but not all of it. Only what you think you might use. These imports create HUGE files in terms of server space and size.

Edit the audio, linking it together in or on a coherent storyline. Don't even think about working with your video yet. Think about natural sound you can use, as well. A whistle being blown, for example, to punctuate a video package on football or soccer. Silence, too, can be used very effectively to tell a story, to add weight or gravity to a scene.

Edit your video, laying it down onto the audio-based storyline. This creates what is called a rough cut.

Time for polishing. Insert transitions. Smooth them out. Fine-tune, trim.

Other considerations:

- Don't be afraid of graphics, charts, photo stills.
- Make sure you have no jumpcuts.
- Vary your angles. Hopefully the videographer used different camera placements and angles to give you choice.
- Set the scene first. Establish the setting for the viewer. Usually this is done with a long shot. Then move in. Medium shot. Closeup.
- De-familiarize the mundane. Deconstruct. We deal a lot with the mundane, so it will take creativity to draw the viewer in.