How to Create Better Photos & Videos
A Guide to Creative Composition

Why take great photos?

We've all heard the old adage, "A picture is worth a thousand words," and you want to be able to use images to sell your cause. But taking an effective picture requires some thought. On page 3, we have some things to consider when taking a photo to promote your cause.

Why take great videos?

Presenting information through video will engage viewers while also entertaining and informing them. Follow our steps on pages 2-3 to create effective videos that will encourage people to care about your project or organization.

How to Take Better Videos

Identify Your Audience

Keep that ideal viewer in mind so that your video is effective. Are they young or old? Now brainstorm what things will keep this ideal person engaged and will help him or her learn. Consider hosting a focus group with sample of people from your target audience. Don't forget to think about the tone of your video - will it be funny? Sincere?

Identify the Goals for Your Video

What should the viewer walk away knowing or wanting to do? Write this down and refer back to it, improve and update it. In this step, it's important to think about what you want your viewers to do after watching the video. Do you want them to vote, email, share, or text? Your video should move them to action.

Plan Your Video

Before you hit the "record" button and start filming, think about the content that goes into your video. Create an outline. Begin outlining the specific points you want to discuss:

- Your Story/Inspiration
- The Problem you are trying to solve
- Your Solution
- Your Impact (Potential and/or existing)

If you are planning on making more of a documentary style video think about the following when creating an outline:

- Beginning: Set it Up! (1/4)
- Middle: The Confrontation or Conflict (1/2)
- End: Resolution (1/4)

How to Create a Video from Start to Finish

Brainstorm ideas.

Take out a piece of paper and a pencil and start a mind-map. Don't hold yourself back, anything that comes to your mind at this point is fair game. Write it all down. Storyboard your idea. A video is VISUAL. Start sketching out how you want your video to look. (Index cards are

a great way to storyboard, because you play around with the order).

Make a list of your media needs. Are you going to use existing video footage and photos or do you need to shoot new footage?

Create a shot list. Create a list of shots and images you want to include in your video.

Think about your visuals. Will you use a graphic? Typography, photos, people speaking, or a mix?

Shoot your video. If you've developed a good pre-production plan, shooting your video should go smoothly. By knowing exactly what footage you need, you'll save a lot of time.

Edit your video. There are many video editing tutorials for free software like iMovie and Windows Movie Maker. Online editing programs include Jaycut and Kaltura.

Share your video. There are many ways to gain an audience for your video, including: your website, uploading to your Facebook page, emailing to friends and colleagues, or posting your video on a variety of video sharing web sites.

Bonus Tips

• Keep your video short. Usually, your video shouldn't be more than 2 mins.
• Make sure your message is clear and simple.
• Keep your video interesting. A variety of shots, angles, and perspectives will make your video more interesting to watch.
• Watch other videos. Learn and examine, but don't replicate! Make your videos authentic, but pick up on some good practices! There are tons of awesome videos out there.

How to Take Better Photos

Have a goal. What are you trying to do through these pictures? Your pictures should speak to the action you want to follow, such as:

• Recruiting volunteers. Show people how much fun it is to be involved - use bright, energetic scenes; you would use color and light to engage the viewer.

• Connect to Emotion. What aspect of your project will get people to feel something? Using pictures of the people or animals you are helping is a great option.

Get an honest look. The person you photograph should appear authentic, so make them feel comfortable. Talk to them. Get them to describe what bothers them, what makes them happy.

Composition. Great photos involve elements of: Colors, Lines, Shapes, and Textures. Using a lot of contrasting colors can send a message of energy and excitement, while using a lot of similar colors can show more hopelessness or drabness. Think about what you want to say, and then use colors, shapes, and textures to help tell your story.

The camera. You don't need an expensive camera to get a great picture.

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