9 Tips to Shoot an Effective Video

1. YOUR story is all that matters
   - Have a clear and simple message to convey in the video - what is the **one thing you want people to remember**?
   - Think of your **target audience** – what’s important to them and how can you share it with them in an interesting way?
   - Build the scene - **where** is being filmed, **what** is happening, **who** is involved/being affected and **why** this is important?

2. Before you shoot…PLAN
   - Write your story with a clear beginning, middle and end. In the **beginning**, draw the viewer in with a relevant message; in the **middle**, provide details and make the viewer think; in the **end**, leave the viewer with a clear call to action.
   - Plan the shots for each section and write them down in a **story board** or ‘comic strip’.

3. PREPARE your phone
   - Ensure you have **enough memory** by removing old files; **clean your camera lens**; and put your phone on **airplane mode/silent** to make sure your video doesn’t get interrupted in the middle of shooting.
   - Always shoot with your phone **horizontally/lengthwise** to avoid ‘black bars’ on the sides of your video.
   - Increase video resolution/size to the maximum (720P, 1080P, HD, FHD, 4K) for the best quality. Play with record settings!
4 Keep movement SIMPLE

- Keep your movements simple, and steady to avoid camera shake.
- Always hold the phone/camera with both hands, keep your elbows to your body and your knees bent.
- Imagine you are holding a bowl full of soup and don’t spill it; your video should automatically be more stable!

5 GET CLOSE—but vary shot size

- Generally, filming closer to the subject/interviewee/ecosystem looks better, provides more details and gets better sound.
- However vary the shot size throughout your video, wide/far away shots offer context and show where you are, medium shots/half body shots show who is there and what is happening, and close ups show details and give the video drama.
- Think about how the shot size is helping the beginning, middle and end of the video.

6 Composition and light

- Activate the ‘grid view’ on your phone’s camera settings and place your subject/points of interest where lines intersect for attractive compositions.
- Avoid overhead/midday sun which makes unattractive shadows on your subject’s face. An overcast day can soften the light and the ‘golden hour’ right before sundown and after sunrise, creates warm attractive glows.
- Don’t make shadow puppets! The main light source (sun) should not be behind the subject you are filming. It must be behind the cameraperson.
- Use the flashlight on your phone or your friends’ phone to fill in shadows on a subject that needs light.
7 Sound-50% of the video

✓ Be aware of **background noise that could be distracting**, move close to your subject to minimise hammering, drilling and banging noises.

✓ Use your **headset/headphones as a microphone**; plug it in and record, placing the headset microphone close to sound you want. Or... **record sound on a second phone** closer to subject and edit sound together after.

✓ Sometimes background noise is useful e.g. birds and ocean noises can provide context and indicate location.

8 Interviews-getting them RIGHT

✓ Generally it is best to shoot **at eye level**. Shooting from below makes people look unusually tall, from above they look small.

✓ **Avoid distracting details** behind the subject/interviewee.

✓ **Don’t cut off the head at neck or forehead**. If you must its better to cut at top of the head than at the chin.

✓ **Be aware of light on subject(s) faces and focus of their eyes**. If someone is asking questions or holding a poster to be read by the subject, let them stand right beside the camera.

9 Editing + distribution

✓ **Google: best phone video editing software!** Lots of free ones are available.

✓ **Get extra shots aka “b-roll”** of things that make the place situation unique, you can edit it in to provide context of narration, for visual interest and mask transitions.

✓ **Distribute your video close to important events** for maximum impact, do a campaign and launch before you release to maximise distribution and impact.