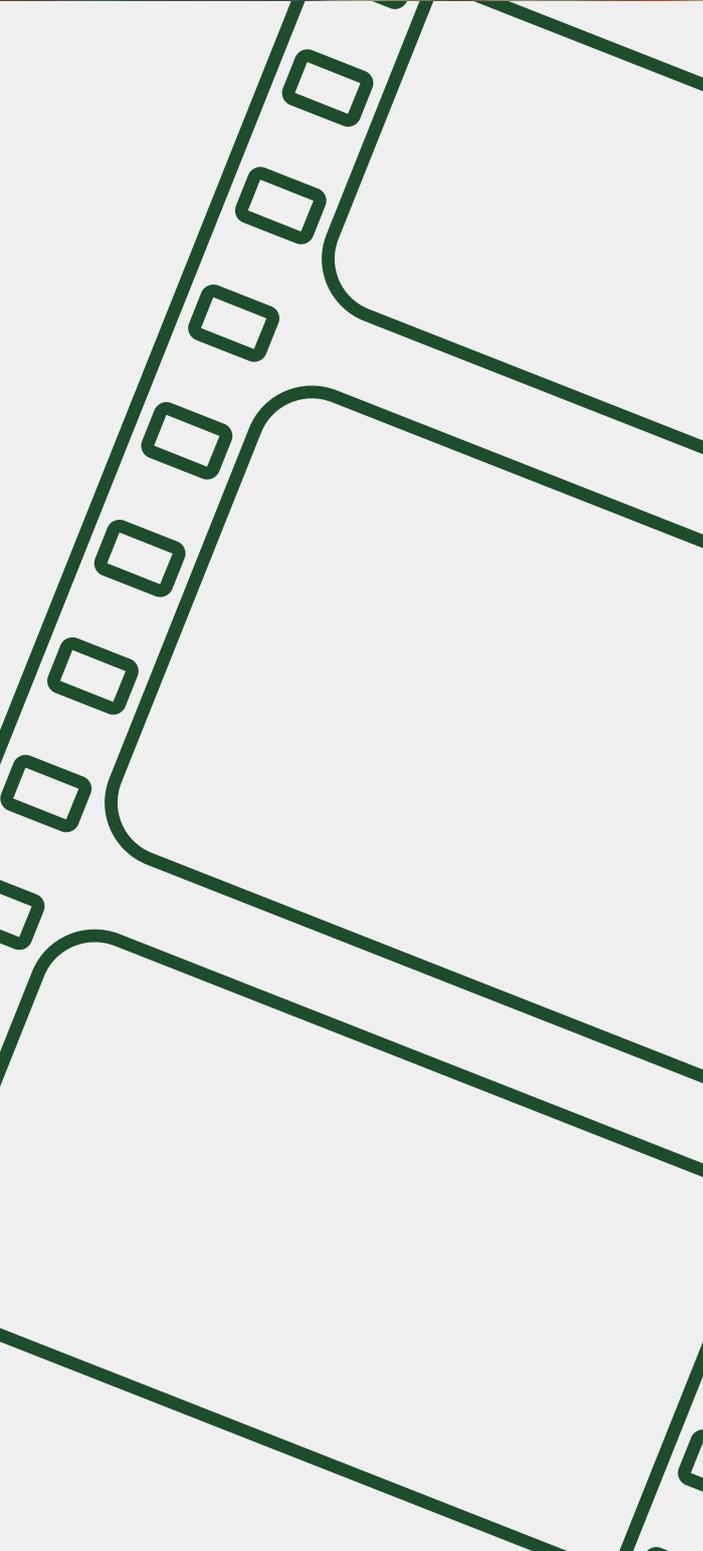


COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

A FRIENDLY GUIDE TO
VIDEO PRODUCTION

2020



A NOTE TO EXTENSION AGENTS

Hi there!

There are so many benefits to creating videos for Extension. Videos are a great way to promote programs within your county, teach new skills, train staff, and tell your story. High-quality videos can be used for years to come and can be a great asset to your department. There are many Extension agents, staff, interns, and students who successfully create videos for their programs. Advances in technology have made it easier than ever to both produce and share video content to large audiences.

Still, producing high quality videos can be overwhelming, and it's easy to get lost in the weeds. Colorado State University (CSU) Extension has dedicated staff to help either create videos for you or assist you at any step in the process

Creating videos is a highly collaborative process. This experience will help you to stretch your communications skills, network with Extension staff and local stakeholders, and help you reach your desired outcomes. This guide will help you create high-quality videos, reach your target audience, and make the process easier and more enjoyable. We also recognize that the needs for each video and Extension professionals are unique, and we encourage you to reach out to our team to discuss and assist you in your project.

Sincerely,

The CSU Extension Communications Team

DECIDING ON VIDEO

Video is a fantastic tool for both educational and promotional purposes. It also involves a lot of time and effort. Before you start, it's worth asking yourself if a video will be the most effective strategy to communicate with your audience. Sometimes a photo, infographic, or a well-timed social media post can be simpler and more effective. If you ever have questions about whether or not a video right for your message, please feel free to contact the CSU Extension Communications Team.

Below is a list of indicators that video is the right tool for your project:

- Showing a process (how-tos)**
- Speaking directly to your audience**
- Conveying the tone or feel of an event**
- Showing the emotional impact**
- Showing unique personalities**

Video Production Process

Preparation

- Identifying the Goals and Target Audience
- Creating a Team and Gathering Assets
- Writing a Script
- Creating a Storyboard/Shot list
- Scouting a Location and Creating a Schedule
- Equipment Needs

Shooting Video

- Framing
- Lighting
- Getting Good Sound

Editing

- Organizing Footage
- Transcribing Dialog
- Editing Software and Tools
- Graphics and Lower-Thirds
- Music
- Close-captioning Footage

Distribution



PREPARATION

Preparation is critical when creating a compelling video for CSU Extension. Thinking through the process of video production from start to finish can help you identify potential problems that may arise during filming, weak points in your story, or difficulties you may face during editing or distribution. Anticipating these problems can help you avoid them, and the next phases of creating a video will be much smoother.

Here are the steps we take in the communications office to prepare for a shoot:

Identifying the Goal of the Video:

Knowing what you want to accomplish through video is a great place to start when crafting a concept. Having specific goals such as "demonstrate the proper way to can strawberries" or "encourage millennials to join Master Gardeners" can help you start to create a vision for the video.



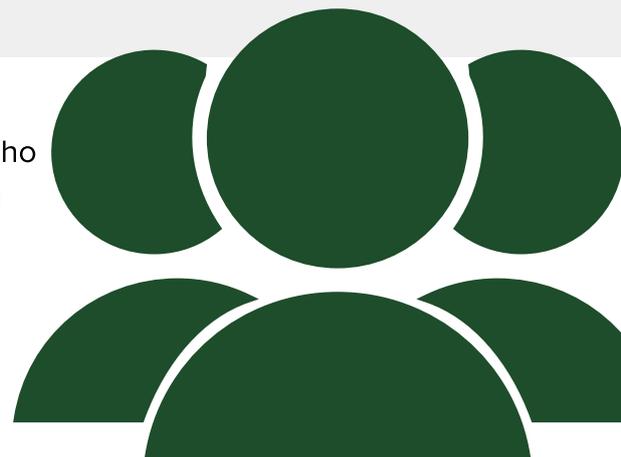
Identify the Intended Audience:

Being able to describe the intended audience in as much detail as possible will help you identify essential elements for your video. Demographics such as location, age, ethnicity, gender, and education levels are a great place to start. However, understanding the audience's values, goals, and desires can help you create a more powerful message.



Creating a Team and Gathering Assets:

There's no point in starting from scratch if you don't have to! Who do you know that you think would be great on camera that can talk about your subject matter? Who do you know that understands your intended audience? What video footage or photographs do you or your coworkers already have? What equipment or services are available to you?



DEVELOPING A SCRIPT

You probably have a lot of interesting facts and tips that can help your audience, but remember that people watching still expect your content to have elements of a typical story format, and they may not have the same level of expertise that you have on a particular subject. They will probably also be watching your video on a mobile device.

What does this tell you about crafting a good script? A good script holds the audience's interest, is easy to understand, and is as concise as possible.

Extension agents sometimes wonder how they can make their subject matter appeal to their intended audience. Utilizing the basic elements of story is an effective way to hold their interest. The foundation for all stories is based on resolving conflict. For Extension agents, the conflict is usually solving a problem for community members, and therefore adding value to their lives. This is even more impactful if the resolution can also speak the audience's values. For example, having a lush green turf is ideal for most homeowners. More specifically, parents may want a green lawn to encourage their children to play outside, dog owners may want a place to bond with their pets, and a young couple may be trying to create a space to entertain guests.

The conflict and resolution may be obvious or subtle to the viewer, but it is important to include it in to maintain their interest. There are other elements to the story that can add depth and interest to your video as well. You may have an interesting character, a significant change in a community's attitude, or an interesting landscape that is an essential setting for your story. Evaluating the facts of your story against these structures may help you find a good way to organize and script your story, and help you find elements to hold the audience's interest.



Once Upon A Time...

DEVELOPING A SCRIPT: ELEMENTS OF STORY

It will be difficult to include every story element listed below into your final video, but will help include the quality of your final product.

Hero's Journey

1. The Ordinary World

This sets the scene to tell the story. To understand a hero's journey, her status quo must first be understood. Examples for Extension professionals could be shots of the town, or an interview clip about a subject's thoughts about a program before it started.

2. The Call to Adventure

This step is about the Hero stepping out of the status quo. This is the point when a problem can no longer be ignored. For an Extension agent, this could be recognizing an opportunity to create a program or simply realizing an important need in the community.

3. Cross the First Threshold

The point of no return for the Hero, often this is the first point of action. For Extension, this could be a public promise made to the community, breaking ground in a new garden, or launching a new course for example.

4. Trials, Friends, and Foes

Theodore Roosevelt once said, "Nothing in the world is worth having or worth doing without effort, pain, or difficulty," This is the point to talk about the challenges associated with endeavor associated with the subject of the video, it is also the point to introduce friends and allies who supported the Hero. For Extension agents, this could be a key community member, partner organization, or inspiring volunteer.

5. Magical Mentor

Some friends may have already been introduced in the step above, however this is the place to acknowledge key contributors to the project and their value.

6. Dragon's Lair

During stage 4, the Hero may have encountered smaller obstacles. For Extension agents, this may be finding funding, organizing teams, or convincing key stakeholders to contribute. The Dragon's Lair is an acknowledgment of the ultimate challenge the Hero has yet to face. For Extension agents it is articulating fully the challenge of bringing change to community.

DEVELOPING A SCRIPT: ELEMENTS OF STORY

7. Moment of Despair

This is the point where the Hero facing the ultimate test, and conquering the main challenge feels impossible. This could be the point where doubt sets in for an Extension professional, or when a community is unresponsive to a launched program.

8. Ultimate Treasure

This is the pivotal moment for Hero, the point when he is able to obtain the ultimate prize, and overcome his greatest challenge. For Extension agents this could be a restored small business economy, heartwarming testimony from a program participant, or continued growth in a program over several years.

9. Homeward Bound

After overcoming his greatest challenge, and gaining the ultimate treasure the Hero's journey is not yet complete. He may return home changed, but often the journey home parallels crossing the first threshold. Though less dramatic, the Hero may still face challenges on the road home. For Extension professionals this may be looking at steps forward now that funding has been secured, or it may be maintaining a garden after a successful season.

10. Rebirth and the Champions Return

The Hero has now returned home, and can now reflect on his journey. The Hero's return is characterized by three things: change, accomplishment, and evidence of the journey. For and Extension professional this often means reflecting on where she started from, success in the program she initiated, and the impact it has had in her community.

One Final Note on Scripting

It is also common for Extension agents, or anyone making videos on a budget, to develop writers block because they think their ideas are unrealistic given their limited resources. Creating the first draft of a script is not the time to limit your creativity. Not every idea you come up with will be possible to produce, but allowing yourself to think through ideas will help you flesh out other important elements and motifs of your story. You also may have assets available to you in your community that you were unaware of when you began the process. Having fully formed ideas in the forms of a script will help other people be able to come into the process and revise elements as needed.

SHOTLIST AND STORYBOARD

Now you can start thinking about the visual aspects of a story that make a video a video. You probably already have ideas about some of the shots that you would like to include in the video. Start by writing the ideas you have down on the script itself. This will help ensure that you have good visual coverage of the script. Visuals are not easy to come up with for all topics. Some shots may need supporting graphics, or a voiceover script to clearly convey the message. Making a note of needed graphics, or creating a voiceover script may be necessary. Whether the visuals are obvious or not, we can always communicate more to the audience by thinking about what should be included in the frame. Maybe you are recording an interview with someone with a certain kind of expertise, like crop science. Would it make sense to conduct the interview in front of a crop field or inside a greenhouse? Maybe you are doing a feature story on a 4-Her whose small town has influenced the way she grew up. Gather footage that gives viewers an understanding of a character to add needed context for the story.

Shot lists are simply a list of shots you are planning on collecting that may have detailed notes in a table that show location, time of day, and the subject. Storyboards are drawn out pictures of each shot that resemble a comic strip. Shot lists are great to help keep you organized and on schedule, and storyboards help you articulate your vision to other team members. Either or both may be necessary for your project.

Shot list

Flowers being watered

Friends working together

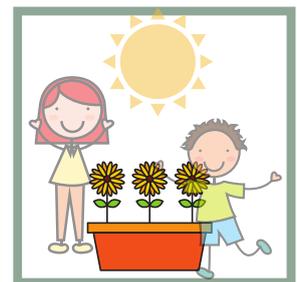
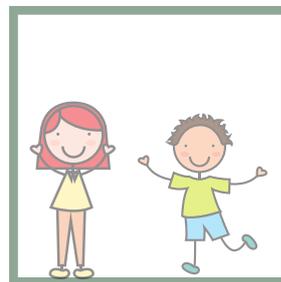
Flowers being planted

Seeds being watered

Sunshine

Sprouts in the garden

Storyboard



LOCATION, SCHEDULING, AND EQUIPMENT NEEDS



Location Considerations

You probably understand that you want to shoot in a location that helps you tell your story visually, but there are a few other factors to consider when choosing a location. One often overlooked and yet essential element of a good location is sound. You may have a beautiful landscape in mind, but if it is right next to a highway or an airport, capturing quality sound may be difficult. Other considerations include access to electricity and bathrooms.

Scheduling Considerations

Due to seasonal nature of many Extension programs and activities, it is incredibly important to give careful consideration to when certain aspects of your video need to be captured. It is always best to plan well in advance to be able to capture the desired shot, but we also recognize that Extension agents often busy running other programs in their county. If capturing a certain shot seems overwhelming, please reach out to the Extension Communications Team. We will be able to capture the shot for you as our schedule allows, or provide you with footage on hand.

Equipment Considerations

As technology continues to develop, equipment with more advanced capabilities are entering the market at affordable prices every day. Please contact the Extension Communications Team for current recommendations.

SHOOTING VIDEO

Framing

Camera height and placement determines framing and offers a lot of subtext to a viewer. While many choices are subjective, it is still important to make decisions with awareness of the impact they may have on the audience.

Eyeline

Setting the camera below the eyeline gives the subject more power and authority. Setting the camera above eyeline makes the subject seem small and diminishes authority. Generally, Extension agents will want to set the camera height at eye level with the subject as this feels like talking to a peer, and inspires trust in the viewer. You can also choose to have your subject look straight into the camera, or angle him to give the impression he is talking to someone off camera. This will either make the viewer feel like they are a part of the conversation or are listening in on an outside conversation. Taking into consideration the content and tone will help you decide how to set the subjects eyeline.



off camera eyeline



in camera eyeline

Distance

Setting the camera close or far away can determine the intimacy of the shot. Generally, Extension agents will want to set the shot somewhere between Medium and Medium Close shots, and Close Ups can be used to convey more emotion, and Long shots can be used to show a subject in relation to the setting.



Medium Close



Medium

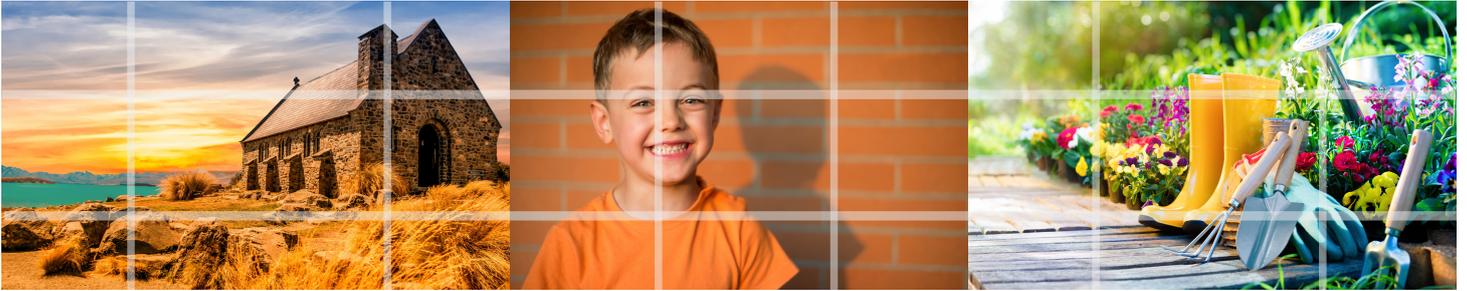


Long

SHOOTING VIDEO

Rule of Thirds

The rule of thirds creates an appealing balance in the frame. Setting a subject to one side or the other of a frame can be counterintuitive to many beginner photographers and videographers as many often center the subject. Take a look at the images below to



Lighting

Lighting plays a big role in affecting the mood of a video. Generally for Extension professionals the lighting should be bright and even. Harsh shadows and lower light often create darker moods. Try to choose locations where the light can be bright and even.



Bright even lightning

Bright even lightning

Dark moody lighting

Getting Good Sound

If you have chosen your location with sound in mind, you will have already made major progress in ensuring that you will capture high quality sound. While having a quality and appropriate type of microphone are certainly factors to consider, the most important element is that your microphone is properly placed. It is generally best to place the microphone as close to the subject as possible, while doing your best to not include it in the frame. For strategies on capturing quality sound, contact the Extension Communications Team.

EDITING VIDEO

Organizing Footage

How you choose to organize your footage will vary depending on your preferences and needs for the project. One way to start organizing footage is by creating folders based first on the location they were shot, the date, time of day, and finally separating interviews from b-roll. This may be more organizing than your project requires, or you may need a more detailed system. As you are organizing your footage, it is also good to go through the footage that you captured. Any unusable footage such as false takes or unfocused subjects can be deleted at this time, which will help you save storage space on your computer. Be sure not to delete any footage that could still be used such as blurry footage with a great audio clip, because there may be ways to creatively use it in the editing process.

Transcribing Dialog

Transcribing dialog is another organizational tool that may help you edit your footage together. While it is recommended you transcribe interviews and other recorded dialog, it is not always needed in order to create a video. Transcribing will help you and other collaborators choose the footage that you want to include in your final project. It is also handy to have a written document of interviews for other publicity materials and reports as it can be quicker to find the quote that your looking for in a document. Finally, transcribing can help you close caption your video more quickly.

Editing and Software

Filmmakers often say that a film is written three times, the first when writing the script, the second during filming, and the third during the edit. If you have gone through your footage, and made notes about the footage you would like to include then now is a good time to also review the Hero's Journey story structure mentioned previously. See if there are elements you could add to strengthen your video that you may not have thought of before you begin filming.

This handbook will not offer a tutorial on how to use editing software, however below is a list of recommended free software video editing software programs as well as tutorials that can help you start editing your footage:

- Apple iMovie
- Windows Movie Maker
- Davinci Resolve

EDITING VIDEO

Graphics and Lower Thirds

Most editing software will have the capability to make simple text graphics for a subject's name and title, also known as a lower third. It is important to remember that promotional materials, including videos must follow the brand standards of CSU University. For most video work Extension agents are doing this includes using approved fonts, colors, and logos. Below are relevant excerpts from the Communications Toolkit. For more details, be sure to reference the toolkit here:

<https://brand.colostate.edu/>

A list of approved Extension logos can be found in the shared Google Drive for CSU Extension. If you need help accessing the drive, please contact the CSU Extension Communications Team.

Closed Captioning

It is now required for videos published by departments of Colorado State University to include closed captions. Not only does this make the content of the video more accessible to a more diverse audience, it also makes your video more usable for viewers on mobile devices, as many mobile viewers watch muted videos.

Music

While there is certainly free music that can be found under creative commons, CSU Extension has a subscription with APM music, which has a vast supply of stock music that is used by many large producers in film. We recommend that you contact the CSU Communications Team to take advantage of this service.

Distribution

Once you are ready to export your video you will find that most editing software has a larger list of available formats. For videos being shared online, .mp4 and mov files are typically the recommended format. For videos meant to be shared only to a select audience such as within Camtasia, contact the CSU Communications Team.

A FINAL NOTE

Congratulations on beginning your journey into video production. We hope you find the process of video production rewarding and inspiring. Remember this process is also highly collaborative and is best executed when a robust team is put in place. The CSU Extension Communications Team is happy to assist you at any and every point along the way. Video assets can be valuable materials for years to come and is a great way to showcase the knowledge and talent of your office. Enjoy the creative process!

