

IAD Seminar

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Intro

My workshop here is entitled "Visual Communication", but let's be clear that the emphasis is on video production. A lot of this applies all across the board, but we need to narrow this down some.

Even so, what I'm going to cover today usually takes at least an entire year to study. And of course a lifetime to become great at.

Last Year's Research

The average U.S. viewer watches over 5 hours of TV every day.

Latin America and Asia Pacific tie as the two global regions with the highest rates of watching TV.

When we ask people to sit back and watch a video or film that we create one afternoon, this is what we're competing with. 5+ hours of very expensive content.

Online Video Viewing On the Rise in Latin America

<http://www.worldscreen.com/articles/display/29716>

You have so many responsibilities. But 99% of the members in your constituency will not know who you are, and what you do. And yet, the majority of them, as well as the public, can see the images you capture. In that way, that is your most powerful communication tool.

Pre-Production: Wisdom For When You Are Planning a Shoot

Planning is key.

Many people approach me with ideas for films. "I want you to do a film" they say. So they tell me their idea. And my first question to them is, "Why a film? Why video?" They're always caught off guard. They assume everything makes it to video.

Every year, dozens of books are made into movies. It's usually disappointing. It's very different. Why? Because it's a completely different medium. It *must* be different to work. So it's the same with video.

When you have to do a video, what's the first thing you do?

You first think about what information you need to put in it.

Right away, you've made a huge mistake.

Videos aren't about information. They're about stories. They're about people. They're about ideas.

You have to plan ahead of time who is going to cover an event. And what exactly are they looking for? Based on some of the videos that I've seen, it looks like nobody was there at the event, and so you just asked for some church members to send a few photographs. Why didn't you know that this event would need to be covered? There's no excuse for lack of planning.

Decide ahead of time what you want to include in your reports. The events are planned in advance, so you should be able to put a talented videographer there. If you don't have any good images...then don't cover it.

Create a network of talented young photographers and videographers. Don't just get photos or video from any random church member. There are many talented young students and professionals who would offer their services.

You have to recognize that it's better to not show something at all, than to represent our church poorly. If the images and video are bad, don't use them!

One of the most important things you have to do is respect the time you ask of your audience. It is a sacred commitment of time. Every second is valuable. Don't waste their time with bad video and bad pictures. It's insulting.

Production: Wisdom for When You're Shooting

Lighting

Composition

To me, this is perhaps the most important thing in our discussion. Why? Because a lot of times, you don't have a lot of control over your lighting. But, the one thing you really do have control of, is the composition. You and I could go and take a picture of something, stand in the exact same place, even put our cameras on the same tripod, and take a photo, and the two photos will not be the same. Why? Because we frame the image differently.

Some Important Considerations when Composing

Don't put your main subjects in the center of the frame. Rarely does this make the best photograph.

Motion

“Everything is the enemy of the interesting.”

Don't try to include everything. You need to include only what's very important and what looks great. Every pastor, every conference leader, wants to be in the videos. They want something covered. Considering what *not* to put in is as valuable as what you decide to leave in.

So many shots are just wide shots of people in buildings. People in buildings. I'm not going to remember any of these images. Take Shots of People. Faces. Get closeups. Move your feet! Don't stand in the back and be lazy, walk forward in front of your subjects and get close to them.

Post-Production: Wisdom For When You are Editing

Your video doesn't have to be a literal interpretation of everything that's described. Don't just use a voiceover narration that tells everything. Make sure there are people in your video who speak, and share their thoughts. Make sure you use visuals to tell the story. If you simply record a voiceover that says everything, it's not good storytelling.

Politics: Wisdom for Dealing with Your Boss

You need to earn trust and respect from your leaders. When you create things for them, you need to educate them. Show them great work that you know they will like and that you like. Then you can be on the same page about what you want to accomplish. Negotiate with them. Choose your battles. If they tell you to do something that you know is not good, tell them. It's your responsibility, and they will respect you for it. If they don't, they're a bad leader. If you just do everything they say, which creates bad work, you are still responsible to your church members for the poor work that you do. You need to fight for the image of our church and for our membership.

Good is the enemy of great. Every conference president, every union secretary, every Adventist pastor, thinks there is something good happening where they are. There are many good members in the pews, many good things for us to see. But that is why we have bad videos. We include everything, not what's great.

How to Cover an Event

Our conferences, unions, and divisions, even the GC, love to do events. And the problem with covering events with photos and video, is that they all start to look the same. A few pastors and leaders who speak. A bunch of people are sitting somewhere, watching. And there is very little context. We don't really know what we're watching, until it's explained to us. We don't even find the videos interesting, until somebody explains to us why it's important.

What's really interesting about an event? You still need to tell personal stories. Who is there at the event? Who came from far away?

Film is at its best when it captures story and emotion

You have some big responsibilities in your job. But you can't just take a few video shots everywhere you go, and then throw it together into some kind of report. If you just take a few shots here, a few shots there, then you are doing photography. Nothing more, really. Film is all about how your images associate with each other. It's a collection of shots.

People won't remember information. They will remember stories, and images.

Even long videos that tons of text--really have one idea. All that information supports one idea.

Screen: National Geographic Motion Graphic Video

It only tells people one thing in 50 different ways, even with a bunch of different text.

Do NOT give too much information. If that's what you want to do--provide a written report.