

# Top tips for creating an effective talking head video



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## What is a talking head video?

Talking Head videos – not the 80s band, are a popular a style of video. They can be quick to film and edit and generally less expensive to produce compared to other types of promotional video as the shoot won't require actors, only minimal props and generally only one setup.

High quality, polished natural talking heads video seem effortless to the viewer but be assured a lot of time was spent in preparation before the shoot.

Considering the points below before you begin production can help you avoid some of the most common pitfalls.

### 1. Keep your questions focussed on the points you are trying to make

The job of the interviewer is to get the best out of the interviewee, so having your questions structured correctly and using an open ended format enables your interviewee to give an honest and personal account of the point or message the video is making.

- Getting your questions right will ensure you get your point across early. Remember you can always edit out any sections that are too long or move off point.
- Prioritise your questions so that if you run out of time you should have the key parts already in the can.
- Make sure you send out the questions to everyone involved in the production so they can familiarise themselves with them prior to the shoot

### 2. Make sure your interviewee is okay with being in your video

Being filmed is not for everyone and addressing the camera is not easy. Rehearse without the camera first and run through the questions multiple times before you start.

- Make sure your interviewee is someone familiar with the subject of the video and is able to articulate the points well.
- Try to avoid over complicated words, regional terms and acronyms as there is a chance your audience won't know what they mean.
- Ask your interviewee to speak slightly slower than normal speed as speaking this way will make the words sound clearer. Short sentences will also act as a natural break in the video and will help with editing later.
- Being well briefed and prepared will get the most natural response out of your interviewee.

### 3. Location

- Make sure you've recce'd your location before you shoot.
- If you're filming on location and not your own premises make sure you have the necessary permissions.
- When filming outdoors check the environmental conditions such as weather forecast, where the sun will be, monitor noise and traffic levels if necessary beforehand. The beauty of this type of a talking heads video is that you don't require a large amount of space for production so use your imagination.

## 4. Props and clothing

- Your interviewee should be dressed comfortably for the shoot but remember the video is a reflection of your business so being dressed appropriately is important.
- Having props are good to provide a visual aid and take some of the pressure from your interviewee.

## 5. Editing

- On the day of the shoot take multiple shots of the same question. The chances that your Interviewee is a one take wonder are slim. When it comes to editing go back to your original question and choose the response that gives you the point or answer that you were looking for. Shoot more content than you need.
- Quality footage discarded for this project could be repurposed later for another video.

## 6. Invest in production

Although filming a talking heads production is seen as a less expensive alternative to other types of video, it's still important to have high production values. If you have a great interview with all your points made but the end result is a low quality, badly lit video with poor sound, then the majority of your preparation and hard work will be lost on the viewer. **Remember the video is a reflection of your business.** If the video is rough and poor quality what will a potential client think about your work?

## 7. Hosting

Deciding how you will host your videos (put online) is important.

- If you are going to host on your own website, find out whether you have the space and functionality to accommodate video.
- Using a video hosting site such as YouTube or Vimeo makes hosting easier but you will need to embed the video within your website.
- Having a link to the video on YouTube will only lose your audience to cat videos. Users of this type of service also lose a certain amount of control in that they generally do not own the rights to the video once uploaded.
- Check the End User Licensing Agreements before you upload your video.

## 8. If your interviewee is not media trained, using a script is fine and makes it easier for your speaker to prepare

- Using your script as a guide rather than sticking to it word for word is fine and should be encouraged, as long as the speaker does not go too far off point.
- Read and amend the script multiple times before the shoot, print off your script and be brutal with the red pen removing all unnecessary content. Then get someone else with a fresh pair of eyes to proof read before you start shooting.

## 9. Timing is key

- Make sure you get your key points across early in the video and try and keep emphasising your key points throughout.
- Remember when speaking to the camera your subject will need to slow down their words and be clear and concise.
- Another tip is to use short sentences as the pauses in between will act as a natural break and give your viewer time to process the information ensure.



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