

Creating Event Magic through Planned Video Production

Once upon a time, there was a young, stressed out corporate events planner called Tanya. She was organizing a large-scale event for her firm's biggest client.

In the midst of organizing the guest list, Tanya's boss told her that the client had requested some video footage be edited together to open the event. It had to be done in a hurry.

Tanya asked her boss, "What do they want the video to tell their audience?"

"Oh, they don't have any messages", said her slightly panic stricken manager, "they just want to show footage that was taken years ago that seems relevant for their new launch".

Tanya knew nothing about video production. She didn't even have the time to find out. After quickly talking to a few production houses, she chose one that was close by that had quoted a cheap price.

The production house was able to quickly edit the footage together in one day. They did what she said, but deep down she knew she really had no idea what she wanted or why the video was being made.

The video opener was used to kick start the event. Tanya noticed that nobody seemed enthralled by the vision and that some people started talking half way through. Luckily, the client and her boss seemed happy with the result.

A couple of months later, Tanya was out at a networking function. She met another corporate event planner who told her how well video had been used at their events. Tanya was amazed and asked what they were doing.

"The most important thing we do is spend the time working out what the video has to do", said the vibrant woman. "Then, we make sure that it ties in to our theme and our communication objectives. If you just edit together a collage of pretty pictures, all you're doing

is creating a meaningless video that doesn't connect with people. People get bored because there is no clear message".

'Next time', she advised, "spend the time working out what the video needs to do, before getting anything made. Work out the objectives with your client and refuse to just make anything just for the sake of it. Otherwise, all you'll do is waste their money".

There are lots of event planners and PR account managers like Tanya who are put into this situation.

Tight deadlines, lack of clear client direction, little knowledge of how video can be used and minimal budget all compound to make it really difficult to create a video that pulls people in.

The secret is skilled strategic planning. All this requires is spending some time working out the objectives.

First of all, what is the event all about? Is it a company celebration or an awards night? Is it a product rollout or a publicity event? What problem does the video need to solve? These days, the need for return on investment is imperative. By having some defined goals, you will have metrics to measure the success of your video.

Second, describe the audience. Does it include skeptical buyers or excited employees? How likely are they to take home your message?

And last of all, what are the main communication messages? Do you want your audience to learn about the success of others? Or do you need them to be sympathetic to your messages?

When you have important messages that need to cut through, you need to get out the big guns.

The Use of Emotion

Want to get a message across that won't be forgotten? Then, remember this formula. $E+I=C$. Emotion plus Information equals Communication.

Using the right blend of emotion and information is a powerful way to get people to listen to what you have to say. And want to hear more.

If you really want to captivate a large group with a message, you have to grab them with emotion. Otherwise, you'll have a bored and noisy bunch who will turn to the alcohol for entertainment far too early in the night.

For special events, create a video that has an emotional angle to the set mood and tone. Use video to inspire, motivate or excite.

Communicate with Stories

Story telling is a powerful way to pull people in and listen to what you have to say. Let's face it; we all know how relaxing it is to chill out at the movies or in front of the television to watch stories about other people.

There are many ways to tell your story in a corporate environment. Show re-enactments, use historical footage and photos, interview people and use engaging case studies. Make use of video testimonials.

The Gift of Music

Music has a way of touching the soul like no other type of communication. Used properly it can make people laugh, cry and feel inspired.

Used badly and it will turn people away.

At an awards night I once attended, a motivational video was displayed that featured greyhound racing highlights throughout the year.

It pulled out all the tricks in the book – action shots, over-animated titles, emotional winners and screamingly bad 80's guitar music. The type that instantly made you think of bad hair, leery jumpsuits and ridiculous make-up. The result was an audience who stopped watching and spent the rest of the night complaining about it.

The only other caution with music is that everyone wants to use commercial tracks. This music requires expensive licensing fees and permission from the artist. Royalty free or production music are often the best choices. A good producer will be able to choose the right music for your production.

So if you are an over-worked Tanya type, who needs to produce a video in a hurry, just remember that you are wasting your time and money, if it has no specific message. Spending a couple of extra hours working out what the video needs to do will create an enjoyable and successful event that people will remember for years to come.

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