

Go From Camera Shy...

To Camera Fly



A Guide to Being Comfortable on Camera

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Video is Powerful:

If you haven't already heard the hype, video is a powerful tool for businesses and individuals looking to gain an edge against competitors. Having video allows you to showcase your unique offerings while giving people the feeling that they already know you before ever doing business with you. Beyond that, video brings increased exposure and higher search results. Youtube is owned by Google and is now the second largest search engine, so naturally, Google favors websites with video in its search results. Appropriately, Forrester Research found that videos are 53 times more likely than traditional web pages to receive an organic first-page ranking on Google.

Are you convinced at the importance of getting you and your company out on video? It's oftentimes easier said than done. Be natural, talk about what you know like the back of your hand, they say. While being on video seems easy enough, for most people, seeing that red camera light turn on invokes the innate reaction of stiffening up, suffering memory loss and provoking the really attractive deer in headlights look.

For those of you that can come off confident and poised on camera on the first try, you're lucky. For the rest of us, follow the tips below to help turn you from camera shy to camera fly!

Follow these guidelines to warm up to being on video:

- 1. Take a shot of alcohol before filming.** Seriously though, do something that is going to relax you and put you in a good mood for filming. Filming can be stressful, frustrating and can potentially throw you into a mid-life crisis, so if you start out with a bad mindset, it's really not going to go well.
- 2. Pretend that the camera is not actually a camera.** It's such a strange and slightly amusing phenomenon (when you're the one holding the video camera) how people freeze up as soon as they see the camera light turn red. Put a wig or hat on the camera if needed.



3. Use a message map so you know your main points and stumble less on film. According to leadership coach Art Petty, “The map is constructed on a single sheet of paper (landscape), with the core message placed at the center, no more than 4 key supporting points external to the core message and then supporting data or evidence adjacent to each supporting point.” See Art’s illustration on message mapping below (found on artpetty.com):

Building Your Message Map



Try for shorter snippets that contain your main points

- 4. To go along with your message map, studies show that people remember what they plan to say more when they write it down.** While there are fancy computer programs that can make you beautiful diagrams, it may serve you and your memory well to use the good ole pen and paper for your message map.
- 5. Try not to watch other people as examples before you film.** This may make you feel like you need to act a certain way. Instead, remember to be yourself and people will like that more than anything!
- 6. Film in short clips.** There's a reason movie stars get paid so much; remembering lines and saying them flawlessly is hard work! If you don't want 100 takes, try for shorter snippets that contain your main points.
- 7. Try some acting classes or brush up on your pretending skills.** Okay but seriously, while it's easier said than done to pretend that you're actually talking to a friend rather than creating a video that millions of people could potentially judge you for, try it. It may surprise you how much more calm you will feel.

Mistakes are natural and people are drawn to authenticity

8. Think of something funny right before you film. Don't be full on laughing when the camera starts rolling because that's awkward, but a joke will lift your spirits, your energy level and will form a smile on your face. The hard part is trying to remember to keep smiling and keeping your energy up throughout the video!

9. Remember that in the right context, mistakes are okay on film. In our everyday lives, we have moments where we stumble with our words and say "umm" once in a while. Again, in the right context, those brief mistakes are natural and people are drawn to authenticity.

10. Keep it concise. Just like when interviewing for a new job, you always know when you're just trying to fill the silence and the rambling begins. That 'I don't know what I'm going to say next so I'm just going to keep talking and repeating points I already said' doesn't work well in interviews and doesn't go well on camera either.

11. There are teleprompter programs out there to help you remember your main points. You can also paste up sheets of your main talking points to the wall near the camera. However, while both of these options can act as a safety net for you, make sure to not look at them too much or too noticeably because people will feel the disconnection between you and the camera.

12. Without getting into the details of what colors and styles are going to look best on you with your skin tone, dress nicely. You don't need to be decked out in your Sunday's bests (unless it's appropriate for your video), but dress in something you feel confident in so you're in a good mindset for filming.

13. Remember that editing programs exist for a reason. Umms, blabbering, cats walking into scenes and cusses can be edited out, keep that in mind. Editing is to video as airbrushing is to magazine photos.

14. Don't be so hard on yourself. You are your own worst critic and you will be doubly as harsh on yourself when you see yourself on film. (Do I really look and sound like that in real life?) If you have friends, people obviously don't mind being around you so you're not so bad. If needed, ask a good friend or someone who is willing to be honest with you on what elements you can improve upon.

15. Don't get discouraged and don't give up. You may have one bad day of filming where you just can't get the clip you need, but try again another day after your frustration subsides. While a bad day of filming may want you to crawl into a hole, the power of video is here to stay, so you can't give up.

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16. And finally, practice, practice, practice!! When we film our clients, one of the neatest things to watch is how people start out nervous but end up really warming up to and almost enjoying being on camera. Try filming multiple times a week until you start to reach a good comfort level with the camera.

You May Even Develop a Fondness for Video:

Once you see your finished video, it may even surprise you how good you are on film. You may even enjoy it eventually. Get practicing, your business deserves it.

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Left Hand Marketing was founded by Amber Wallor and Edgar Mourans in 2011 to help small businesses differentiate themselves and gain more qualified leads through video, internet, mobile and creative marketing processes. For more information, please visit www.LeftHandMarketing.com. Follow Left Hand Marketing at twitter.com/lefthandmktg.

Get left-handed with your marketing!