



WHEN TO USE AN INTERNALLY PRODUCED VS. PROFESSIONALLY PRODUCED VIDEO

By Susan Burnash

Video has become a powerful tool for nonprofits that want to increase awareness, raise funds, recruit volunteers and advocate for their causes. But as with any type of communications medium, it is important for organizations to know the different kinds of video that can be produced and the appropriate applications for each, to reach their target audiences effectively.

When I teach [Purple Duck University's](#) nonprofit [interactive workshops](#) and [webinars](#) about video production, I am often asked the same question: "What's the difference between having a volunteer or staff member produce our videos vs. hiring a professional production company?" Although video production and the quality of video cameras have changed dramatically over the last 10 years there is definitely a time and place for both. Let me explain the two types of video production methods and how they should be used. Then, you can decide which is right for your nonprofit's current and future needs.

INTERNALLY PRODUCED VIDEOS

As the name implies, these videos are usually produced by a staff member or volunteer who supports your organization or mission. They are often made with lower quality cameras (*including flip or cell phones*) and are edited with simple editing programs, giving them a more casual look and feel than a professionally produced video. Most often internally produced videos are utilized by smaller nonprofits who cannot afford to hire a professional company. However, even large nonprofits who desire quick casual videos for their social media communications find this type of video extremely useful and powerful.

Not sure whether to produce your own video internally? Here are a few things to consider:

1. **What camera will be used?** – Remember, the camera dictates the **quality** of the final product.
2. **What experience does the camera person have?** – Just because someone has a camera does not mean they know how to use it correctly for your particular need.
3. **What story are you trying to tell?** – If you are telling a quick "snippet" type of story (*event coverage, a profile, testimonials, etc.*) an internally produced video is fine. If you are telling a serious or longer format (*more than a few minutes*) kind of story you really need experienced professionals to write the script, shoot the footage and edit it.
4. **What experience does the editor have?** – Fooling around with edit software on a laptop is not the same as knowing how to create an engaging nonprofit video. Make sure to review the videos the volunteer or staff member has created.

So what are the best uses for internally produced videos? Here are some I recommend

- News Updates and/or Quick Announcements
- Supporter Thank You Messages

- Client Testimonials and/or Staff Introductions
- Event Recaps
- A Day In The Life Snippets (under 2 minutes)
- How To Videos
- General Fun

I also recommend that these types of videos are kept under a few minutes and that they are used mostly on your website and for your social media and electronic communications.

PROFESSIONALLY PRODUCED VIDEOS

Professionally produced videos definitely have a much higher production value than internally produced videos. They are commonly more formal and polished, longer in length, and definitely cost more. Most nonprofits use professionally produced videos for branding, marketing, fundraising, advertising and broadcast.

Some typical uses of professionally produced videos include:

- Organizational Overviews
- Fundraising Campaigns and Events
- Public Awareness Campaigns
- Conferences and Tradeshows
- Public Service Announcements (PSA)
- Television Advertising

The key to determining when to invest in a professionally produced video is understanding not only the long and short term objectives for the project, but the target audience and the multiple purposes for creating your video. Keep in mind that you can use snippets of the video for a variety of purposes including re-purposing footage in future video projects. When you spend a little time thinking through the project, and how to maximize your return on investment, it becomes easier to spend the money needed to come up with a high quality professionally produced video. Done well, this type of investment should be positioned to increase support for your organization.

FYI: Don't be dissuaded from engaging with a production company to produce your nonprofit's video. A good production company can offer you a variety of budgets based on the elements used to create the video. Professional videos can be created using photos and video footage alone, or mixed together. The greatest expense in professionally produced videos is in the shooting.

So before you decide whether to produce your nonprofit's videos internally, professionally, or both spend time [ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS BEFORE YOU START YOUR VIDEO PROJECT](#) (click on the link to get this Freebie download, too!)

And if you would like to learn **HOW to create compelling videos for fundraising and awareness** why not join us for an interactive workshop in Atlanta, GA?

[UPCOMING INTERACTIVE WORKSHOPS](#) (click on the link for more info)

[How to Make the Ask and What to Do When You Get the Money: Parts 1 and 2>>](#)

[How to Write Your Nonprofit's Marketing Plan: Parts 1 and 2>>](#)

[How to Create an Effective Website that People Will Want to Visit>>](#)

[How to Launch Your Organization to the Public and Media>>](#)

[How to Create a Special Event for Fundraising and Awareness>>](#)

[How to Market Your Special Events for Maximum Success>>](#)



[How to Define and Recruit the Volunteers Your Organization Needs>>](#)

[How to Create Compelling Videos for Fundraising and Awareness>>](#)

To receive updated information on upcoming interactive workshops and webinars sign up for our email [newsletter](#).

UPCOMING WEBINARS

For those of you who are not in the Atlanta area but would like to learn **HOW TO PRODUCE AND PROMOTE A VIDEO or PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT**, I will be leading two Webinars for the Foundation Center in June. The info is below!



June 13, 2013

[How to Produce and Promote Your Organization's Dynamic Video Story \(Part 1 of 2\)](#)

By understanding how to create effective videos, re-purpose existing ones, and tap into the many opportunities available to showcase them, nonprofits can stretch their marketing budget and increase their return on investment significantly. [Details and Registration](#)

June 27, 2013

[How to Create Your Organization's Compelling Public Service Announcement \(Part 2 of 2\)](#)

When it comes to increasing awareness around a cause, public service announcements (PSAs) are a powerful tool for getting your message out to new audiences. The challenge is, how do you illustrate the cause, the need, and the actions your audience can take to create social change in only 30 or 60 seconds? [Details and Registration](#)



ABOUT SUSAN BURNASH

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Susan Burnash is a Communications Specialist with Purple Duck Marketing, a full-service Marketing, Public Relations and Video Production company with offices in Seattle and Atlanta. Through the use of marketing, PR, and video, Susan and Purple Duck Marketing use an integrated approach to helping nonprofits increase awareness, educate, and garner support for their missions, services, and causes they were created to champion. Susan has worked with a diverse group of clients on a variety of projects including branding, web site development, traditional and electronic marketing, e-newsletters, fundraising and marketing videos, and public

relations campaigns.

Susan has been a passionate advocate for nonprofits for the last 15 years. Serving as a Communications Specialist, Marketing Coach, Speaker and Interactive Workshop Teacher (*Purple Duck University*), she is committed to empowering nonprofit with the knowledge and tools they need to survive, thrive, and grow. She has served as the inaugural member of *the Foundation Center of Atlanta's "Expert in Residence Program"* and has taught classes for *the Georgia Center for Nonprofits*, *The Foundation Center (Atlanta)*, *The Community Foundation of NCW*, *Association of Fundraising Professionals (Seattle)*, *Kirkland Chamber of Commerce*, and through Purple Duck Marketing classes offered throughout the U.S. Susan is also called upon to present at various nonprofit conferences and trade shows across the country.

Susan has a Business degree from Georgia State University and a BFA in Writing and Film from Emerson College. In addition to her work with Nonprofit organizations, Susan is currently writing a nonprofit workbook and CD "How to Write a Nonprofit Marketing Plan," along with a series of children's books called "When I Pray."