



Asking the Right Questions BEFORE You Start Your Video Project

by Susan Burnash

The most important phase in beginning a video project is what production companies call discovery. This is where the critical elements that will maximize the success of your video project are identified. During the discovery phase, you must consider the what, why and how for creating a video. Without these specific answers, and more, the odds are good that your video may not have the impact you want.

When we work with a nonprofit organization, the first thing we do is provide the following questionnaire for our clients to brainstorm and define the goals, messaging and content to be included in their video project.

1. **What is the video's purpose?** Will it be used at a fundraising event, for educational purposes, to solicit contributions or for media relations? Setting clear objectives and defining your audience critically impacts your video's format, time length and style.
2. **How do you intend to use all or portions of your video?** Will the video be used only once or be updated in the future? Do you want to include a portion on your website, in an email or for a PSA? Knowing your goals for the use of all the video footage and the final video will allow for capturing the right images, maximize their uses and provide you with the greatest return on your initial investment.
3. **Who is its intended audience?** If you are using your video for a fundraising event, your audience is potential donors. That means your video needs to tug on their heartstrings to encourage them to give. If your audience is your Facebook fans, your video should be entertaining, engaging and easy to share. If your video is for a PSA, your video should be informative, short and with a strong Call to Action. *(There are many other target audiences so be sure to outline each.)*
4. **What is the message you want to communicate to your audience, what are its main points and what is your Call to Action?** Your messaging should be consistent with the other places where you tell a target audience about your organization, services and the people you serve. Take a look at your Web site, brochure, Marketing Plan, Development Plan, etc. If you find you are using completely different messaging there is a problem that should be addressed before you start your video.
5. **What is your Call to Action?** When your audience has watched your video what do you want them to do? Having a clear Call to Action prior to starting your video project is critical. It is usually the reason for creating a video. If you are looking for financial support, ask for it. If you are hoping to recruit volunteers, make it easy for people to do so. Your Call to Action must always be clear and easy for your audience to do. If your Call to Action is unclear you will not see the kinds of results you need.
6. **What benefits do you want to illustrate as a result of the audience responding?** Most people want to support an organization they believe in but it is common for many nonprofits to forget to show their target audience what their support really means to the people you serve. Show and/or tell your audience how their support makes a difference. This is usually where client testimonials are most effective. When your audience can get to know someone who has been helped by your organization, it makes it easy to connect the dots that their contribution truly makes a tangible difference.
7. **How do you want the audience to feel after watching your video?** *(Happy, sad, informed, etc.)* This may sound a little strange as you prepare to create a video but remember, people get involved at an emotional level before they get involved on a financial level. Outline all the feelings you want your audience to feel as they watch your video. Do it in the order you want them to feel the feelings as well.

This will help you to better conceptualize what content, messaging and people should be included in the finished product.

8. **What are the key images you want your audience to see?** Do you want to highlight your facility, tell how your services impact your clients' lives, or both? Should you include footage that shows your staff, volunteers or clients in action? By understanding the purpose of the video, the message you want to convey and your desired Call to Action, it should be easier to determine the key images that should be included in the final video.
9. **Who are the key people who best represent your organization and the story you want to tell?** When we work with a nonprofit this is always a tricky issue. Most nonprofits have their favorite staff or clients they want to include in their video. Unfortunately, these people may not be able to convey the messages outlined above in a clear and succinct way. People who are nervous on camera and unable to respond to interview questions with complete and usable answers can be a huge challenge that often results in greater costs during filming and editing. Always pick the people who can clearly articulate your core messaging while evoking the desired emotions in the target audience.
10. **When and where does the video have to be shot?** Will it be shot at one or more locations, at a studio, in someone's home or during a specific time of day? Although changes often occur during the production process, having an initial plan is an important part of the budgeting and planning process. If you are going to shoot at multiple locations, the cost will always be higher!
11. **How much money do you want to, or can you, spend on the entire project?** Setting a budget beforehand allows your Production Company to determine the most cost-effective way of producing your video. A big budget concept seldom works on a small budget but there are always methods for cutting back on costs while still producing a high quality video.
12. **How many copies of the video will be made and what format will be needed?** CDs are fine for single videos but if you want to include snippets and additional information, you need a DVD with a full menu and chapters. This will allow your target market(s) the flexibility to choose what they want to watch. If you need streaming video for your web site or YouTube, or footage for news and media releases, the formats will all be different. There are real costs associated with producing the various formats of the final product and they should be planned for in advance.

Once these questions are thoroughly answered, you can start producing your video internally or through a professional production company. Not sure the differences between the two? Download our Freebie on [WHEN TO USE AN INTERNALLY PRODUCED VS. PROFESSIONALLY PRODUCED VIDEO](#).

Purple Duck Marketing is committed to helping our clients produce the most effective videos possible. We know from experience that a good video can significantly help an organization raise funds, awareness and support. That's why we follow a strong and proven process for nonprofit video production. How can we help you with your video production needs? **Give us a call at (678)925-3582 for more information.**

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

Email: susan@purpleduckmarketing.com

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."