

8 WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR VIDEOS AND 8 MISTAKES TO AVOID

Making videos can be an exhausting, all-encompassing task. But there are ways to speed up the process of creating, awesome, relevant content that will resonate with your audience.

In this class with [Richard Boehmcke](#) of [Vibrant Motion](#) you'll learn what you should be focusing on while making your videos, and the potholes you should be avoiding.

This document contains important lesson notes and summaries for the content shared in this course.

LESSON 2: TELL STORIES IN THE PRESENT TENSE

TELLING STORIES IN THE PRESENT TENSE MAKES THEM MORE INTERESTING AND KEEPS THE ATTENTION OF YOUR AUDIENCE.

- ☐ If you are on camera and you are speaking, you are essentially telling a story.
- ☐ Tell those stories in the present tense to maintain velocity and attention. It grounds people in what you are sharing.
- ☐ Telling stories as though they happened in the past removes any anticipation on the part of the audience and subsequently, their attention.
- ☐ People aren't as excited about things that happened in the past as they are in things that are happening right now.



- ☐ Video is great because it feels like a shared moment for your audience. Grab them by the lapels and bring them with you.

LESSON 3: LIMITING ASIDES

BY LIMITING YOUR ASIDES YOU KEEP YOUR STORY ON TRACK AND STAY RELEVANT.

- ☐ It is OK if you have new thoughts pop in your head as you are filming your video.
- ☐ Some asides can be fun and illustrative, they show off your human side, but too many lose your audience.
- ☐ Making a video requires much more effort than creating a blog post or podcast.
- ☐ Remember just because somebody else does something else well, doesn't mean you will.
- ☐ Just because somebody doesn't do something well, doesn't mean you might not be good at it.
- ☐ If you have a tendency to lose focus, set a rule for yourself before you start your video that you will limit yourself to a certain amount of tangents.
- ☐ You can always trim and focus your story during the editing process.
- ☐ The better you get at editing yourself the better you will get at actually being on camera.

LESSON 4: START IN THE MIDDLE

TOO MUCH SETUP MEANS YOU WILL LOSE YOUR AUDIENCE BEFORE YOU EVEN GET STARTED.

- ☐ Remember when you make a video; your video is competing against every single other thing on the Internet and the world for people's attention.



- ☐ Do not underestimate your audience, get right into it.
- ☐ If it turns out you need an intro, you can always reshoot the video or add an intro.
- ☐ If you want to do a big flowery introduction, maybe you do a blog post instead, or a podcast where people know it's going to be a lot longer.
- ☐ Ask yourself:
 - Who is your audience?
 - Why are they watching your video?
- ☐ Make sure you can deliver on the expectations of your audience.
- ☐ If you've titled your video appropriately and somebody has clicked on and is already watching your video, chances are they already have an idea of what you're offering.

LESSON 5: USE HUMOR

USE JOKES ONLY IF YOU ARE FUNNY, AND IF SO, SPARINGLY IF THAT.

- ☐ Be yourself. Be yourself. BE. YOUR. SELF.
- ☐ The greatest skill you can have as an on camera personality is self-awareness.
- ☐ You can develop on-camera self-awareness by watching and making a ton of videos.
- ☐ Getting comfortable on camera is just the first part of the process.
- ☐ The point of jokes is a momentary escape.
- ☐ The best humor for videos tends to be natural humor, things that arise in the natural course of video creation.
- ☐ If your goal of video making is NOT specifically humor, doing tons of jokes can easily wear thin.
- ☐ Remember to ask yourself why your audience hanging out with you? Most likely it's not to see you test out new material.



LESSON 6: VELOCITY IS CRUCIAL

IN ORDER TO BE INTERESTING, A STORY MUST CONTINUE TO MOVE FORWARD EVEN AT ITS SLOWEST POINTS.

- ☐ In any ANY story, written, audio, or visual, velocity is crucial.
- ☐ There are several ways to maintain the velocity of the story.
- ☐ Tease the ending at the beginning; let people know where this is going so they are naturally anticipating what you are going to show them.
- ☐ Escalation. It's always good to grab your audience's attention right at the beginning, but if you start out too fast you have nowhere to go, it becomes unsustainable.
- ☐ Limit your video time. Set a limit of 2 or 3 or 4 minutes so that no matter what, you HAVE to finish your video by that time.
- ☐ It's better to have a 2 minute video crammed with great content that people can watch again and again as opposed to a 5 minute video that's hit or miss that people most likely won't finish watching.

LESSON 7: GIVE YOURSELF A REGULAR SETUP

CREATE A STRUCTURE TO EASILY CREATE YOUR VIDEOS TO ENSURE QUALITY.

- ☐ When it comes to video, consistency breeds quality.
- ☐ A regular setup means a regular process so that making your videos is as straightforward and painless every time.
- ☐ This could mean keeping your camera in the same place every time.
- ☐ It could also mean dedicating a corner of your apartment to shooting so you don't have to set up and break down every time.
- ☐ This is helpful for several reasons:



- It creates familiarity with your audience. There is a comfort in that which people value.
 - It makes it easier to shoot your video. Systematizing the process allows you to go through the steps a lot easier because you don't have to remember what you do next. Plan your work then work your plan.
 - When you stop worrying about what comes next or how long this video should be or where you should shoot, you free up brain space to focus on the content.
- ☐ You don't need to be tied to the format though. If having the same process is more work than it's worth, switch it up and try something new.
 - ☐ Find the process that works well for you.

LESSON 8: BE SPECIFIC

IN THE SPECIFIC LIES THE GENERAL.

- ☐ There are three types of videos that are popular right now
 - Commenting
 - Informing
 - Entertaining
- ☐ Specificity is what distinguishes one from the other and makes one better than another.
- ☐ Your unique individual specific take is what makes your video different.
- ☐ Avoid topics and styles that are bland, general or vague.
- ☐ Specificity can also be confused for overkill. It doesn't mean you have to over explain everything.
- ☐ The best way to find your specificity is to have a point of view.



- ☐ Don't make your video just to be like everybody else.

LESSON 9: TRUST YOUR AUDIENCE

TALK TO YOUR AUDIENCE LIKE THE SMART, SAVVY, INTERESTED PEOPLE THEY ARE.

- ☐ Once you figure out who your audience is, you want to treat them with respect.
- ☐ Respect their intelligence by providing good content.
- ☐ Respect their time by keeping your video to the point.
- ☐ This can be a tough balance to strike. How slow to go versus how much information to share.
- ☐ Remember that every time you make a video you have the potential to elevate the quality of content on the Internet.
- ☐ Talking down to anybody does not earn you fans. Give them the benefit of the doubt.

LESSON 10: OUT OF FOCUS

IF YOU'RE OUT OF FOCUS, YOUR AUDIENCE WON'T BE ABLE TO FOCUS.

- ☐ It doesn't matter if you are the funniest, best looking, most engaging person in the world, if people can't actually focus on you because you are out of focus; they are not going to hear what you say.
- ☐ If you don't start your shot in focus you will have to reshoot the entire shot
- ☐ One of the easiest ways that people lose focus is by not refocusing after every shot.
- ☐ Set yourself a checklist before you push record: Something like:
 - Sound - Light - Focus - Ready - Shoot!



LESSON 11: BAD ANGLE

START WITH THE CORRECT ANGLE & YOU SET THE TONE FOR THE REST OF YOUR VIDEO.

- ☐ Too many videos are shot from below eye level.
- ☐ It is possible to shoot at eye level even if using your laptop or Smartphone.
- ☐ You don't need to invest in something fancy to get your laptop or camera at eye level.
- ☐ If you are using a tripod you should be able to raise it up.
- ☐ If you are using your laptop, just get a stack of books, or a fat suitcase and put it on your table.
- ☐ This also allows you to adjust the lighting appropriately.
- ☐ Distinguish yourself as somebody who has created a really great product.
- ☐ Once you start looking for videos shot from below eye level you won't be able to avoid seeing it. You'll see it everywhere.

LESSON 12: TOO LOUD OR TOO SOFT

QUALITY SOUND REQUIRES TIME AND TESTING. PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE.

- ☐ You need to do sound tests for the videos that you record.
- ☐ Every microphone is formatted to receive sound at a certain level.
- ☐ If the sound is too low, nobody understands what you're saying and your video becomes something to quickly skip over.
- ☐ If you are too loud the feedback will come across as more obnoxious and or annoying.
- ☐ Create a system and process for creating your video so you don't forget to test sound levels.
- ☐ Doing a lot of testing early on will free up time later on.



LESSON 13: TOO DARK

LIGHTING IS ONE OF THE MOST COMPLICATED ELEMENTS OF VIDEO. GIVE IT THE RESPECT IT DESERVES.

- ☐ When you don't have enough light in your shot your video can become "grainy" or what some experts call "noisy."
- ☐ You don't need just enough light to be visible; you need enough light to be clear.
- ☐ Open up those shades; turn on all the lights in your apartment.
- ☐ More than anything getting good at lighting is an ongoing experiment.
- ☐ That is why it is good to get yourself a familiar setup that you can easily go back to every time you shoot your videos, or, even better, shoot multiple videos at one time.

LESSON 14: NOT HAVING A STORY

MAKE SURE YOU HAVE AN IDEA OF WHAT YOUR STORY IS BEFORE YOU START. DON'T LEAVE THIS TO CHANCE.

- ☐ You don't need to be the best storyteller to make a good video, but if you don't have a story in your video, it puts tremendous pressure on the rest of the elements of your video to keep people engaged.
- ☐ That means people will pay more attention to the lighting, the sound, if you are entertaining or not, or if they like you.
- ☐ A great video doesn't just mean HD; it means it's a comprehensive complete well-rounded video that is made up of solid parts.
- ☐ The big difference between blogging and doing video is that blogging you can find as you go whereas with video, once you start; you should have a pretty good idea where you will end up.



LESSON 15: NOT LIMITING THE LENGTH

RULES AND PARAMETERS ACTUALLY FREE UP ROOM FOR CREATIVITY AND ORIGINALITY.
LEARN TO EMBRACE THEM.

- ☐ There is no hard and fast rule for what is too long.
- ☐ If something is really engaging there's no telling how long people will watch.
- ☐ If you are doing some sort of recurring video series, it's easy to set a regular time limit for it.
- ☐ However if you are going to be shooting different kinds of videos, you have to learn how to do it by touch, by feel.
- ☐ A good trick is to watch your own videos over and over and pay attention to when you lose your own attention.
- ☐ Start off short and then work up to making longer videos.
- ☐ Consider where your audience is going to be watching your video. At work? On their phone? In a cab?

LESSON 16: BORING VIDEO

EXPERIENCE WILL HELP YOU DETERMINE WHAT IS BORING FROM WHAT IS INTERESTING

- ☐ There is a difference between boring and uninteresting. A video becomes boring if it doesn't contribute value, doesn't capture attention, and has nothing that engages the viewer.
- ☐ If you are shooting a video you should start out with a goal in mind, or possibly 2 or 3 goals.
- ☐ This makes it a lot easier to edit your video as well because anything that does not meet my goal is cut.



- ☐ Make your goals specific.
- ☐ Your goals can always change.
- ☐ This goes back to your plan. Plan your work and then work that plan.

LESSON 17: DISTRACTING BACKGROUNDS

YOUR BACKGROUND IS ONE OF THE FOUNDATIONS FROM WHICH YOUR VIDEO IS BUILT, MAKE SURE IT IS SOLID.

- ☐ Your background can play a lot of roles in your video:
 - It can serve to drive home your point.
 - It can add credibility.
 - It can change to keep videos interesting and varied.
- ☐ Your background should NEVER distract your viewers from your message.
- ☐ If you have an a very active background that is in clear focus, your viewers might find themselves watching what is going on behind you instead of focusing on you.
- ☐ If you're background is confusing because of décor or otherwise, your viewers might find themselves wondering where you are instead of listening to your message.
- ☐ There is a big difference between plain white backgrounds which focuses attentions on your subject versus a dark background which can make it seem like you are shooting in an abandoned space.
- ☐ Your background doesn't have to be perfect but it should be honest.

