

Pop Talk: Boost Your Videos & Visuals

Video and Visual Communications Tips

Journalists are hungry for visuals and video assets that help tell a story.

When we pitch broadcast media, we spell out what will make the proposed segment visually compelling. If pitching an event after the fact, we offer b-roll (footage to introduce or illustrate the subject, location and action). We'd recommend working (good!) visual and video elements into your PR plan. Below are some tips we learned at the PRNews 2016 Media Relations Conference in DC, for offering strong visual assets when pitching, and for "going live" with Facebook and Periscope.

Big thanks to Meagan Phelan, Executive Director of the Science Press Package for the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), Erin Fiori, Senior Director of Digital Communications for the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation and Johna Burke, EVP of BurrellesLuce for inspiring these takeaways.

Creating a Visual Press Package

1. **Think about your topic "in action".** If it's "insurance in action", maybe it's a photo of someone at an accident scene using an app to file a claim on the spot. If the photo doesn't already exist, re-create the action shot.
2. **Think in gifs.** If you could use one gif to show why your organization is relevant, what would it be? (if you don't know what a gif is, [this will explain.](#))
3. **Re-engage every six seconds.** When it comes to video, people need to re-engage every six seconds, which is why it's important to mix establishing shots with experts and action.
4. **Push beyond the talking head.** Unless your spokespeople are exceptionally dynamic or famous, talking heads can't stand alone. Consider introducing the talking head, then overlapping their audio over dynamic video content that shows your topic in action. Repurpose the audio for a podcast.
5. **Simplify and add context.** What's the one key takeaway? Use this principle for your content experts as well as for infographics. Simplify complex concepts into something a fifth grader or non-English speaker would be able to understand. But then be sure the information isn't over-simplified to the point of inaccuracy.

Video Production Tips

1. Start wide to give context, then narrow in
2. Tape in a well-lit area
3. Always use a tripod to keep things stable
4. Film horizontally (landscape) rather than vertical (portrait)
5. Phelan recommended tools like Piktochart, Infogram and Hightail. We also recommend Canva for infographics.

Going Live!

There are many reasons to go live on social sites like Facebook and Periscope: facilitating a virtual press conferences, building rapport with constituents, turning your spokesperson into an influencer, reaching a new audience, increasing engagement, prompting an action, driving traffic, navigating a crisis, honing your video production skills and helping your spokesperson to improve their on-camera delivery through practice.

Tips for Going Live

1. Start small
2. Get buy-in from internal stakeholders
3. Thank people for being there
4. Make it clear who the content is geared toward (which helps to ward off trolls)
5. Look beyond the CEO. Audiences want someone relatable. If your CEO is very relatable and down to earth, by all means.
6. Practice! Your spokesperson may be fielding live questions but that doesn't mean you can't anticipate most of those questions ahead of time and prepare your spokesperson. You want your spokesperson to feel comfortable.
7. Consider going live through a channel other than your own. Experts gave the example of VW using Tech Crunch's channels to give a live announcement of a new business venture.
8. Use a crew or use a tripod, volume and mic
9. Move distractions from the staging area
10. Seek out resources on body language before going live
11. Make it easy for people to attend your live event. Consider your audience, their time zones and habits. Tease the event in an appealing way, perhaps by bringing in an unexpected person or partner.
12. For an event, have a facilitator and an expert to make the video dynamic and use a third person off camera to field questions.
13. Check out resources like Cantasia and meebo

If you take away one thing from this document, let it be the following advice from Johna Burke: "You can't let one bad experience turn you off forever – it's just like tequila."