Preparing for a Video Interview

So you've been asked to appear on video. It may be to provide a brief testimonial for a product or service. Or maybe you're on expert on something. It could be that you're well respected in your community and an organization wants people to know that you support their mission. Whatever the reason, you've been asked because someone thinks your opinion is important – so congratulations!

Now here are some important things to consider before the big shoot!

Be real. Be yourself. You're great!

A video can't be successful unless the people who appear in it are perceived as trustworthy. This is just as important as ensuring that the technical aspects (camera, lighting, background, etc.) are of high quality. It is of equal importance because even with the best camera, the best lighting, the best background – a video will not succeed in its purpose if the viewer feels that he or she can't believe its message.

These days, everyone is so familiar with video that the average viewer unconsciously has a better intrinsic understanding about camera angles, facial expressions, lighting, scripting, etc. than some directors and producers did 10 years ago – just because of the sheer volume of online videos. And with "talking heads" appearing on TV and YouTube by the truck load every second of every day, the average viewer is desperate for a simple truth. An honest insight.

Here's an exercise that works:

During your interview, think of a specific friend you haven't seen in years. Picture them in your mind. This is a good friend, and you have some catching up to do. You can't *wait* to tell your friend about what you've been up to, or that they need to do a certain thing, or donate to something, or think about something in a different way. This simple internal exercise will help you focus on your "mission" which is to be real, friendly, and to believe in what you're saying.

Remember that **you've** been asked to speak on camera. So unless you're seeking guidance, don't let anyone tell you how to be. If you're low key, be low key. If you're someone with a lot of physical energy, then move. Are you witty? Then be all that – just make sure it's appropriate. Avoid memorizing a script unless you are a vigorous and frequent speech giver. But do think through your key messages ahead of time and let us help you get the information across during the interview process.

At Spectrum Video, we pride ourselves on ensuring that each subject is shown as themselves. We decide together how best to set up the shot. More comfortable standing than sitting? No problem. Want to talk about what you're going to talk about? Fine. Once in position, we make it a point to "chat" for a little while before actually turning the camera on. This allows for the subject to get comfortable with the lights (if any), the surroundings, and the person he or she is speaking to (you know, that friend you haven't seen in a while).

Drink Lots of Water
Make sure you stay hydrated and have bottled water available during your video shoot – the lights are hot and you may not have a chance to get up in between takes.

Look at the Interviewer
Don't look directly at the camera lens. You will be answering questions or delivering your thoughts to an interviewer seated next to the camera. Interact and converse with the interviewer as if there isn't a camera in the room. Don't look down or away from the interviewer, always look them directly in the eye and give your response with confidence and feeling.

Be Confident as You Finish a Thought
At the end of a thought, pause and continue to look at the interviewer. Common mistakes are finishing a thought and saying "whew" with an eye roll; or looking at the camera and saying "was that good?". These abrupt endings wreak havoc in the editing process.

Dressing for the Video

Dressing for camera can be a delicate dance. Cameras work differently than the human eye and have a tendency to make colors, shapes and sizes look really *off* if the wrong things are worn.

Here's a list to help you decide what not to wear on the day of your big close-up:

**What Not to Wear on Camera**

colors

- **pure reds, whites and blacks:** such extremes of pure white and black make it difficult for the camera to balance exposure. intense reds will bleed and make the surrounding objects (ie your face) appear red.
- **hot colors, like hot pink, green, yellow, purple, orange etc.:** they'll make you look a little bit like an alien
- **colors that compete with your complexion** (ie if you have more reds in your skin tone, don't wear a red tie ll if you are very pale, don't wear white)

for women

- **dangly or flashy jewelry:** this can be very distracting to the viewer. less is more!
- **bright or very glossy lip gloss:** you'll have reflective lips. yikes!
- **low-cut or potentially revealing blouses**
- **heavy makeup:** the more neutral the better. bring powder or foundation to the shoot to keep just in case

miscellaneous

- **glasses:** unless you're known for wearing them. non-reflective coated glasses are preferred.
- **any tight or complex patterns or stripes:** the camera will make it look like there are lines moving all around your outfit (see pic to the right for reference)
- **heavy fabrics:** those lights get hot. and you don't want to be sweaty for your camera debut.
- **really loose clothing:** the camera won't pick up on depth and can make you look larger than life. literally.
- **really tight clothing:** you know why.
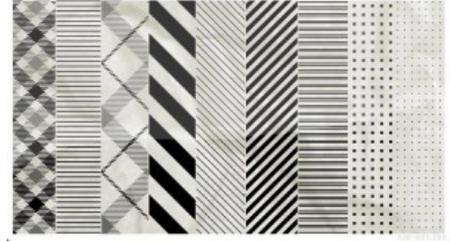
We know what you're thinking…

"Well what on earth CAN I wear?!"

Glad you asked. We think these work really well:

- **solid colors (blue is really nice)**
- **cotton, or light fabrics**
- **subtle jewelry & make-up for women**
- **contrasting colors:** i.e. gray sports coat and cobalt blue shirt
- **whatever is most appropriate for the story:** i.e. find out the tone of the video and dress accordingly (professional, down-to-earth, laid back)
- **bring an extra outfit just in case**

And remember…

Be Yourself
everyone else is already taken