

# How to Prepare for Your Small Business Video Shoot

A Complete Checklist to Ensure Professional Results



# The Complete Small Business Video Production Guide

Getting the Best Results from Your Video Investment

Whether you're working with a professional videographer or creating content yourself, this guide will help you get the best results from your video investment.

## Section 1: Before the Shoot (1-2 Weeks Out)

---

### Planning Your Content

#### Everyone Should Do This:

- Define your video's primary goal (brand awareness? lead generation? education?)
- Identify your target audience—who needs to see this?
- Write out 3-5 key messages you want to communicate
- Decide who will appear on camera (if anyone)
- Gather any props, products, or materials to feature
- Create a rough outline or script of what you'll say

**If You're Filming Yourself:** Keep your script conversational and short. Aim for one key message per video to avoid overwhelming yourself and your audience.

**What Your Videographer Will Do:** Work with you to refine messaging, suggest shot ideas, and help you feel natural on camera. They'll guide the structure to maximize engagement.

## Location Preparation

### Scout and Prepare Your Location:

- Choose your filming location(s)
- Check lighting at the time of day you'll be filming
- Clear clutter and remove distracting elements (family photos, messy desks, random papers)
- Identify any noise sources (HVAC, traffic, refrigerators, office equipment)
- Secure any necessary permissions or access
- Consider the background—what does it say about your brand?

**If You're Filming Yourself:** Choose the quietest room with the most natural light. Simple backgrounds work better than busy ones. A blank wall is better than a cluttered space.

**What Your Videographer Will Do:** Scout locations with depth and visual interest, control lighting and sound, and use professional equipment to handle challenging environments. They'll know how to make any space look cinematic.

## Logistics

- Confirm shoot date, time, and backup date (especially for outdoor shoots)
- Share your schedule with your team
- Arrange parking/access for videographer and crew
- Plan for weather contingencies if filming outdoors
- Notify building management or neighbors about filming activity

## Section 2: The Week Before

---

### Finalize Details

- Confirm talking points or script with videographer
- Review shot list together
- Notify employees/neighbors about filming
- Test any technology or products you'll be demonstrating
- Prepare any graphics, logos, or brand materials needed (high-resolution files)
- Confirm contact person and phone number for day-of coordination

### On-Camera Preparation

- Choose your outfit (see wardrobe tips in Section 4)
- Practice your talking points—know your key messages but don't memorize word-for-word
- Get plenty of rest the night before
- Stay hydrated throughout the week
- If nervous, remember: professionals know how to make you comfortable and look great

**If You're Filming Yourself:** Practice on camera several times before the real shoot. Watch your practice footage to see what works and what doesn't. Most phones have a "do not disturb" mode—use it!

**What Your Videographer Will Do:** Direct you through the process, do multiple takes until you're happy, and use professional techniques to make you look and sound your best. They'll coach you in real-time.



## Section 3: Day of Shoot

---

### Morning Checklist

- Arrive 15-30 minutes early to prepare the space
- Do a final declutter and clean (wipe down surfaces that will be visible)
- Adjust lighting/open or close blinds as needed
- Turn off phones, notifications, music, and noisy equipment
- Have water available for on-camera talent
- Ensure bathrooms are accessible
- Put pets in a separate room (unless they're part of the video!)
- Have your brand materials ready (logos, products, signage)

### During the Shoot

- Trust your videographer's direction—they see what the camera sees
- Take your time—rushing creates mistakes and awkward moments
- Don't be afraid to do multiple takes until it feels right
- Ask questions if something's unclear
- Stay flexible if adjustments are needed
- Take breaks when needed—fatigue shows on camera
- Have fun! Authenticity and enthusiasm translate beautifully on video

**If You're Filming Yourself:** Use a tripod or stable surface. Film in landscape mode (horizontal) unless you're making content specifically for Instagram Stories or TikTok. Film multiple takes of everything—you'll thank yourself later.

**What Your Videographer Will Do:** Handle all technical aspects, monitor audio and lighting in real-time, direct the flow, capture backup footage, and ensure everything is properly framed and exposed. They'll also get B-roll (supporting footage) that makes editing seamless.

## Section 4: Pro Tips

---

### What to Wear on Camera

#### DO Wear:

- Solid, rich colors (blues, greens, burgundy, deep purples)
- Clothes that fit well and you feel confident in
- Minimal jewelry (nothing that jangles or creates harsh reflections)
- Your normal professional attire—be authentically you
- Layers if the location temperature varies

#### DON'T Wear:

- Busy patterns, thin stripes, or herringbone (creates visual interference)
- All white or all black (difficult to expose properly)
- Brand new clothes you haven't worn before
- Logos or text (unless it's intentional branding)
- Noisy fabrics (corduroy, taffeta, windbreakers)
- Anything uncomfortable—you'll fidget

**If You're Filming Yourself:** Test your outfit on camera before the actual shoot. What looks good in person might not work on video.

**What Your Videographer Will Do:** Provide guidance on wardrobe choices and may suggest adjustments if something isn't working on camera. They'll check for reflections, patterns, and how colors appear through the lens.

## Talking on Camera Tips

### Being Natural:

- Speak conversationally, like you're talking to a friend or trusted client
- Look at the interviewer, not the camera (unless you're doing direct-to-camera address)
- Use your hands naturally—don't overthink it or keep them too rigid
- Pause between thoughts (makes editing much easier)
- If you mess up, just stop, take a breath, and start that sentence again
- Energy translates on camera: Be about 10% more animated than your normal conversation
- Smile when appropriate—warmth is magnetic on video

### Common Mistakes to Avoid:

- Speaking too fast (slow down more than you think you need to)
- Saying "um," "uh," or "you know" excessively (pause instead)
- Looking down or away when thinking
- Apologizing for mistakes (just redo the take!)
- Being too stiff or formal—let your personality shine

**If You're Filming Yourself:** Read from bullet points just off-camera, not a full script. You'll sound more natural. Practice until you can maintain eye contact with the camera for most of your delivery.

**What Your Videographer Will Do:** Interview you to draw out natural responses, provide prompts that get authentic reactions, coach you on pacing and energy, and create a comfortable environment where you can be yourself. They'll also edit out mistakes and "ums" seamlessly.

## Location Setup, Lighting, and Sound

### Lighting Fundamentals:

*If You're Filming Yourself:*

- Face windows or natural light sources—don't have bright windows behind you or your face will be too dark
- Film during the day when natural light is best
- Avoid overhead fluorescent lights (they create unflattering shadows)
- Position yourself 3-6 feet from the background to avoid harsh shadows
- If filming at night, use soft, diffused light sources in front of you

*What Your Videographer Will Do:*

- Use backlight (light behind you) to create depth, separation, and a cinematic look
- Add professional fill light on your face for proper exposure
- Control and shape light for the most flattering results
- Balance multiple light sources for professional quality
- Use reflectors, diffusers, and flags to sculpt the light

*This multi-light approach is why professional lighting makes such a dramatic difference!*

### Sound Quality:

*If You're Filming Yourself:*

- Quiet locations are better than "interesting" loud ones
- Turn off all fans, HVAC, and appliances
- Use a lavalier mic or quality external microphone (phone audio alone is rarely sufficient)
- Get close to your microphone—6-12 inches is ideal
- Do a test recording to check audio levels

*What Your Videographer Will Do:*

- Use professional microphones (lavaliers, shotgun mics, or both)
- Monitor audio levels in real-time with professional equipment
- Reduce or eliminate unwanted noise
- Capture backup audio for critical moments
- Record room tone for editing purposes

*Good audio is 50% of the viewing experience—professionals know this!*

## **Background & Composition:**

### *If You're Filming Yourself:*

- Simple, uncluttered backgrounds
- Avoid positioning yourself directly against a wall (creates a flat look)
- Rule of thirds: position yourself slightly off-center
- Make sure the top of your head isn't cut off and you're not too far away

### *What Your Videographer Will Do:*

- Create depth by positioning you away from the background
- Use professional composition techniques (leading lines, depth of field, framing)
- Select or create backgrounds that support your brand story
- Include subtle, intentional brand elements and products
- Control focus to keep attention on you while creating visual interest

## Section 5: After the Shoot

---

**If You're Editing Yourself:** DIY editing works well for casual social media content, practice videos, or when budgets are tight. Free tools like CapCut or iMovie can handle basic cuts and transitions. However, for important business content (product videos, brand storytelling, narratives), professional editing ensures polished results that reflect well on your business.

**What Your Videographer Will Do:** Handle all post-production including editing, color correction, sound design, motion graphics, and multiple export formats. They'll transform your raw footage into a compelling story that achieves your business goals.

### Immediate Next Steps with a professional video editor

- Confirm timeline for first draft delivery
- Provide any additional materials needed (high-res logos, website links, brand guidelines)
- Be ready to give specific, actionable feedback during revisions
- Respond promptly to any questions from your videographer
- Review the revision process and how many rounds are included

### Giving Good Feedback:

- Be specific: "At 0:45, could we trim that pause?" vs. "Something feels off"
- Prioritize: What's essential vs. nice-to-have?
- Trust professional judgment on technical matters
- Remember the video's goal—will your feedback serve that goal?

## Planning Distribution

### Where Will Your Video Live?

- Website homepage or specific landing pages
- Social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube)
- Email marketing campaigns
- Sales presentations and proposals
- Trade shows or events (on screens or tablets)
- Paid advertising campaigns

### If You're Handling Distribution:

- Create different versions for different platforms (square for Instagram feed, vertical for Stories, horizontal for YouTube)
- Add captions (80% of social video is watched without sound!)
- Create an attention-grabbing thumbnail
- Write compelling captions that complement the video
- Post at optimal times for your audience

### What Your Videographer Can Do:

- Provide multiple format exports optimized for each platform
- Offer video marketing strategy consultation
- Help with distribution planning and content calendars
- Create additional cuts and variations from the same footage
- Provide ongoing support to maximize your video's impact

### Measuring Success:

- Track views, engagement, and completion rates
- Monitor comments and direct responses
- Measure website traffic or conversions driven by the video
- Ask customers how they found you
- Use these insights to plan your next video

## Section 6: Service Options for Every Budget

---

Not sure whether to DIY, hire full service, or something in between? Here are ways to work together:

### Full-Service Video Production

**Best for:** Businesses wanting a completely hands-off, professional result

- Complete filming, editing, and production
- Professional direction and coaching
- All equipment and crew provided
- Multiple revisions included
- Packages starting at \$795

### Editing-Only Services

**Best for:** Businesses with footage but need professional polish

- You film (or have someone film) with guidance
- I provide editing, color grading, motion graphics, and sound design
- Transform raw footage into professional final products
- More affordable option while maintaining quality

### Video Consulting

**Best for:** Businesses wanting to build in-house video capabilities

- Strategy sessions on what to create and how
- Technical guidance on equipment and technique
- Review and feedback on your footage
- Coaching on filming and storytelling
- One-time consultation or ongoing partnership

**Want to discuss which option is right for you?** Let's talk! Book a free 30-minute consultation to explore your needs and goals.

## Final Thoughts

Remember: The goal of your video is to connect with your audience authentically. Whether you're creating content yourself or working with a professional, preparation is the key to confident, effective results.

**The most important thing?** Just start. Imperfect video that exists is infinitely more valuable than perfect video that never gets made.

## Ready to Get Started?

Have questions about your specific project? Let's talk.

**Book a Free 30-Minute Consultation**

[\*\*www.matthewmccaulley.video/FREE\*\*](http://www.matthewmccaulley.video/FREE)



**Brand Video Engineered for Marketing Success**

**[www.matthewmccaulley.video](http://www.matthewmccaulley.video)**

