

CNHI VIDEO INTERVIEW BASICS

Keep in mind that when budgeting a video component for a story package, it's going to require much **more planning and creativity** than simply conducting an interview for print that's to be published as a 20 inch feature with a couple of photos.

A collaborative pre-production meeting with the reporter, assignment editor, photographer/videographer and video editor will make sure that the project has covered all the bases technically, logistically and creatively. This attention to detail will help make the video session more time-efficient and lead to a more professional end result.

A "vision" of the final edit will help plan the camera angles, shot styles, lighting, audio and pace of the interview.

More attention must be given to preparation of the interview outline and primary questions to be asked.

BE FOCUSED: Web videos need to be short -- one or two minutes. Pick one aspect of your story -- something with emotion -- and make the video about that. Keep it short.

FIND A CHARACTER: A successful video needs a 'character' to be the star -- find someone who is articulate and engaging, someone who makes quips and jokes -- and does them in short, sweet sound bites. Run-on sentences are death in video.

GET THE SUBJECT TO TELL THE TALE: Don't ask yes or no questions. Ask the subject to "describe" or "give me the background" or "tell me in short sentences" what happened. If they ramble, say "I'm not sure I understand. Tell me again about...." until they say it in a direct way. You need the 25-words-or-less version! See "*BE FOCUSED*" above.

DON'T STEP ON THE AUDIO: *(This is the most challenging adjustment that most newspaper reporters will encounter when making the changes necessary in adapting their interview style for video.)*

Don't start talking until they've stopped. Don't jump in immediately with another question after they've stopped speaking -- first, you need a break in between for editing, and second, people hate a vacuum and will sometimes volunteer really great stuff after they've directly answered the question.

IF YOU ARE SHOOTING TAPE, ALWAYS PRE-ROLL AND POST-ROLL.

1) ALWAYS record a minute of tape before starting. Video editing programs need extra space before and after the bit you want. (Pre-roll and post-roll!) Write down

the story, date and your name on a piece of paper and tape that for 60 seconds. This avoids tape dropouts that always happen at the beginning. It also reassures you that the camera works.

2) ALWAYS record at least 4 seconds before someone starts talking and at least another 4 seconds after they stop. (you can't capture the soundbite in the editing program otherwise. Pre-roll and post-roll!)

3) ALWAYS record a minute of tape after you've finished everything. Your cat is still fair game. (pre-roll and post-roll!)

4) REALLY REALLY REALLY IMPORTANT: Never break timecode! If you try to watch what you've recorded and then start recording again with even a half-second of blank tape in between, the piece cannot be edited.

ONCE THE VIDEO SESSION HAS ACTUALLY STARTED, DON'T REWIND UNTIL YOU'RE DONE! NEVER! EVER! *If there's some apprehension about lighting & audio levels, do a quick test shoot and review the footage first.*

A FEW RULES FOR SHOOTING VIDEO:

HOLD THE SHOT: Line up your shot in the viewfinder, press record, and then HOLD IT FOR TEN SECONDS.

Don't pan. Don't zoom. HOLD THE SHOT. Count to ten! Even if we only need a second of it, hold the shot so it can be edited later.

GET SHOTS THAT GIVE PERSPECTIVE: Make sure to get plenty of "B-roll" (or insert) video to tell the story in a way that the viewer will be able to identify the "who, where & what". Signs, landmarks, etc. should be shot to help establish the location.

SOUND: Shooting interviews, it's the most important thing in the video.

Try to get the microphone within 12" of the person speaking and hold it still during the interview. If you're using a mike that's on the camera, SET UP THE CAMERA CLOSE. Don't talk while the person is speaking -- nod but don't say "un hunh". The interview is called "A-roll" and will be the main sound track for the piece. Record the sound in a quiet place. Turn off the TV and radio. Air conditioners, traffic, and ringing phones are your enemy. If possible listen to the sound through headphones while you're recording.

IMAGES: Now that you've gotten the sound, take video of everything the person talked about. Shoot close, medium and wide of each thing. Hold each shot for 10 seconds. Let the subject move, not you. Don't pan or zoom. Get close.

Brace against something so the camera doesn't shake. The images you shoot of whatever the subject talked about is called "B-roll" For a minute-long interview, you'll need dozens -- DOZENS -- of different B-roll shots related to what he's

talking about. Shoot details, establishing shots, and activity. Shoot lots of shots of the subject doing things. Make sure you've got at 3-5 different shots for each good sound bite.

*For example, if the subject says "**Oh my god -- I can't believe we're alive! The car crashed right into the bedroom!**", in your B-roll shot selections, you'll need a wide shot of the house, a medium shot of the car in the wall, several shots from different angles of the car from both inside and out, close-ups of the bed, close-ups of the broken wall, details of family photos on the dresser with debris around, etc.*

KEEP CLOCKS OUT OF YOUR SHOT!

Sometimes the order of responses may be inverted in the final edit for continuity. If there's a clock in the shot, there's "time-shifting" in the visual image.

Remember to pre-roll and post-roll! Don't hit the record/off switch until at least four seconds after they've stopped speaking.