

## Some General Tips for making your Videos Better

*Reproduced with appreciation to Gary John of Silverscreen Productions Ltd, Auckland*



### THE SHOOT:

- Work out why you are making the video – who is it for – what do they want out of it – how can you best deliver this.
- Plan, prep, plan and prep again – the more you are prepared the more experimenting and “fun” you can have when shooting.
- Know what, who, when and where you are shooting – go on a recce before your shoot day, and work out what angles you will use, where the sun will be, any problems should be addressed on this recce day, not on the shoot day.
- Use a tri-pod... handy cams are very shaky, and this can be very off putting when watching – even nauseous.
- Lighting – very important, if you don't have access to lights, then make sure you shoot in a well lit area – don't shoot into windows or have the sun behind your subject – unless of course you are going for a silhouetted look. Try to get the light hitting the subject from a  $\frac{3}{4}$  angle rather than face on – adds depth and shape to the subject.
- Rule of thirds for framing – once you get this trick down, then you can experiment with different framing – beauty is in the eye of the beholder!
- Minimise zooms and pans – again very off putting – a well-framed shot is more aesthetic to the eye than a pan or zoom.
- 3-Shots-in-One... When zooming or panning – hold your shot for 5 seconds then zoom/pan and hold the end shot for another 5 seconds – this gives you three shots in one when editing
- The pan or zoom should only be used for a reason, not to adjust your shot half way through... look through the camera and find your shot before recording.
- Get shots from a lot of angles – mix it up a bit to make the visuals more interesting – try shooting through foreground objects or into a mirror/ reflective surface.
- Foreground objects give a sense of depth to your shot; flat shots become boring very quickly.

- Make sure you get plenty of CUTAWAY shots... very useful in the editing process when you want to cut a section out of an interview or a shot. Also can tell a story or emotion very quickly eg. If interviewing a person get a shot of something in their environment that represents them or what they do.

### EDITING:

All videos/films are a story, whether it is an informative story, a narrative story or just a visual story. Once you have shot all the pieces you need then the trick is to put them into an order that controls the story you wish to tell.

In your pre-production planning you should have worked out the kinds of shots you need and a general order – storyboard – for these shots.

- Establishing shot: To tell the viewer where the story is taking place – i.e. a certain place or time. This shot should be placed somewhere near the start of the video... it sets up the rest of the story
- Introduce the key character / subject early on in the video. This tells the viewer that this is the most important person/event/subject.
- Remember the Jump-Cut rule. Avoid cutting between two shots of similar size – cut from a mid-shot to a close up, to another mid shot, rather than mid shot to mid shot. Use cutaways to fill in the gaps.
- Don't hang on a shot longer than necessary. Even if the shot is beautiful and stunning. It is more impressive if you give the viewer just enough time to take it in, and then move on.
- Don't cut out of a shot too early! Remember that even though you may have looked at the shot many times, the viewer hasn't, they only get one look at it... same rule as above, give the viewer enough time to take in the information in the shot and then move on.
- Beginning – middle – end. All stories have this structure; all video / films should have it to.
- Have fun in the edit! Try re-ordering the shots a little... you never know what you might come up with...