



VIRTUAL COMMUNICATIONS TIPS

We live in an ever-evolving world where we can communicate with one another through social media in an instant no matter where you are. Social media can be daunting. The rules and “how-to” instructions seem to change by the minute. We wanted to help lessen some of the confusion and give you tips and tricks on how to make it work best for you.

THE BEST “YOU” ON VIDEO

What is the best way to shoot a selfie-video? Where should I sit in my house for a video conference/call? How do I shoot video with my mobile phone? Let’s start there. There is a TON of information on the internet. YouTube videos are fantastic learning tools because they “tell-and-show” and the videos are usually pretty easy to understand.

Here are three videos to get you started. Clear your brain, shake those social media nerves, and start learning!

“How to shoot video on your phone”: This quick video covers the basics in a very simple way, so start with this. <https://youtu.be/j685NaMDVYE>

“How to look your best on a video call”: This video reinforces the tips above but in more detail. She is very thorough and easy to understand. I like her too because her message speaks to grown-up women and not to teenage social media influencers. <https://youtu.be/ACNGhPKnmok>

“How to film and edit on your smartphone/tablet”: Maya is wonderful. She revisits all of tips above and really brings it altogether. She even touches on editing. Don’t let editing scare you. Watch this third video and you will be on your way to expert status. <https://youtu.be/vpZvc8vtHvo>

If you want to learn more about editing after watching this video, search “editing on your phone” on YouTube. (Thank you YouTube!)

So now that you have watched the videos above, here are the absolute rules that you need to follow.

- 1) Hold your phones horizontally when shooting video.
- 2) Face the light, make sure your light source isn't behind you or you will look like a shadow.
- 3) LOOK AT THE CAMERA. Don't look at “you” on the screen ... look at the camera. It may feel odd at first but, however the person viewing your video will wonder what you are looking at if you don't look directly at the camera. Look directly at the little lens on the front of your phone or the lens at the top of your computer. Imagine the person with whom you are speaking is right behind that lens, because, well ... that is exactly where they are.
- 4) For sound, you cannot be too far away from your device or we can't hear you! As you saw in the videos above, you can buy microphones that you can clip to your clothing for the best sound quality. Just keep in mind, if you use a microphone, remember to use your “inside” voice. Your device may be further away and you may want to yell to it, but that microphone will be near your mouth, so there's no need to increase your decibel.
- 5) What is best for hair and make-up? How would you present yourself if you were showing up in person? Let's start there. Now make-up on camera can look a little different. Shiny make-up like frosted bronzer can cause the light to really bounce and make you look shiny or worse yet “sweaty.” Matte makeup can sometimes make you look pasty. Best advice is take a test drive! Pick where you are going to shoot the video, figure out your light source, turn on your computer camera or mobile phone camera, and then flip the camera toward you so you can see what you look like. Looking too pasty or too shiny ... adjust your make-up until you like what you see. Also, remember, your make-up may not be the problem, it might be your lighting. Move around until you like how you look.

RECORDING VIDEOS

For recorded videos that you are posting to social media, let's talk a little bit about timing. Don't go too long! Attention spans on social media are like a high-speed freeway. Videos will make people stop and take a look, but if your video is too long and just keeps going and going and going ... well, viewers may lose interest and move on. Trying to get a message out and trying to keep it simple? Here are two little tricks.

Trick #1: Three Words

Break your message down into three words. Yes, three words! Boil it down to 3 words in your mind and then build your message up and out from there.

For example, let's take our upcoming walk for healthy living. What is a message you may want to get across? With COVID-19 striking Black communities, you may want to get people focused on the health inequities in the Black community so the message in your mind in three words is: Spotlight Health Inequity. Make that your focus and then build a short video message around that. Keep the focus in mind as you are writing your scripts. Read them and cut out anything that seems wordy or takes you off message.

Trick #2: Write it Down

Strongly recommend writing out your script even if you don't memorize it. Writing down or typing out your script forces you to come up with the complete sentences in sequence that ensures your message makes sense. It organizes your thoughts. Once you get the swing of that, you can move to just jotting down bullet points. The key to it all is organizing your thoughts and being in command of your subject. Try not to read from a paper when delivering your message on video. Another good reason to keep your videos short.

Trick #3: The 5 "W's"

Focus on the 5 W's: Who, What, When, Where, and Why (and, sometimes, How.) You hit all of these points in your video message and you will have hit the most important information. The 5 W's help you stay out of the weeds.

Example:

Who: Potomac (VA) Chapter of The Links, Incorporated

What: Walk for Healthy Living

When: Saturday, September 26, 2020

Where: Virtual. Watch it all unfold on @PotomaLinks on Twitter/Instagram/Facebook

Why: To increase awareness of the health inequities in Black communities by lacing up our shoes and walking for healthy living. As COVID-19 has ravaged our families and communities, the call to move and focus on our health has never been more critical.

How: We will be posting across our social media channels starting at 11 a.m. on Saturday. You have permission to share images of our event on all of our social media pages between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. on Saturday, September 26, 2020.

LIVE STREAMING

A quick note about live streaming. What is it? You basically stream (digital transfer of data in a steady stream) your event or your message LIVE (not-recorded) through a social media platform like Facebook or Twitter. Word of caution ... you can't edit a live stream, so if something happens that you would rather not have shared, then all you will be able to do is hit "stop" and "delete," but you can't erase what everyone just saw or heard because they saw or heard it LIVE. Live streaming is great but can be hazardous. There is a lot to be said about recording something, reviewing it, and then posting it, especially when you are starting out.

SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

So now that you are a video-producing aficionado, where should you post all of this wonderful material and messaging? Different methods work best for different platforms with different target groups and that can add to potential social media angst. Let's focus on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

You want to keep it basic? Then just get your message out on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. (YouTube is a great place to post videos but for actual messaging the first three are the best.) PS you should be active on all three platforms.

Here is simple breakdown:

Facebook – the largest platform on the blocks – targets a more mature crowd – great for videos/pics, great for interaction with people who post in comments etc. More people get their news from Facebook than they do from the “news.”

Instagram – targets a younger crowd - truly image driven. Great place to *show* what you are doing and for interactive posting with hashtags ... the use of hashtag's (#) here # can bring an event together and connect posts together and really show the groundswell.

Twitter – Short burst of information in real time. Great platform to get eyes on you and your events and get news out (media follow Twitter like it is their job, because it is their job) and great place to share video/pictures and tag outside organizations and interact with hashtags (#LinksOnTheMove #OurHearts)...the use of hashtag's (#) here can bring an event together and connect posts together and really show the groundswell.

Here are two articles that break down the three platforms perhaps more eloquently than the rough cut above:

<https://www.investopedia.com/articles/markets/100215/twitter-vs-facebook-vs-instagram-who-target-audience.asp>

<https://www.impactbnd.com/blog/the-difference-between-facebook-twitter-linkedin-google-youtube-pinterest>

Having trouble figuring out how to post to any of these social media platforms, there is a YouTube for that! Just search “How to post to Facebook,” etc.