Session 1011
Lights, Camera... Wait, Who’s Got the Script?

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Promises

How to properly format a video script

The characteristics of a well-written script

How to write to take optimal advantage of the video format for mobile viewing

How to increase engagement through conflict and contrast

Ways to increase the lifetime of products by implementing a few simple tricks
My video philosophy

Make Effective Use of Time

Tightly Focused on the Objective

Easily Replayed

Inherently mobile, plays on a wide range of devices and platforms

Image courtesy Flikr User Matt Neale
How to properly format a video script

Four key elements
FADE IN:

EXT. TIMES SQUARE - NIGHT

Hundreds of people mill about the bustling square. We pick up on DAVE, a lanky punk in his early twenties wearing a thick winter coat, as he pushes his way through the crowd.

Out of nowhere, Dave lands hard on his back. A bulky figure in shadows rushes away, disappearing into the masses.

ANGLE DAVE

Dave pats his jacket pockets, nervous.

In a flash, two HOODED FIGURES lift Dave by his arms and drag him the opposite direction through the crowd.

HOODED FIGURE 1

Go! Go! Go!

HOODED FIGURE 2

John, to your right! Now! (beat) (shouting) Now!
FADE IN:

1 EXT. SAN MATEO CENTER - DAY

Signs indicate this is the California Bar exam test center. Dozens of casually dressed young men and women stream out the doors. Emotions range from relief to total despair.

DREW CEPPEN, in late twenties and handsome in casual designer clothes, walks with confidence, his laptop case over his shoulder.

KEVIN BELL, Drew's contemporary, is in worn Levi jeans as he angles through the crowd to join his buddy Drew.

KEVIN

Drew!

Drew pauses briefly until Kevin catches up to him.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

Honest to Christ, that was way harder than I thought!

All Drew does is flash a knowing smile.

DREW

Come on, Rev. Confidence, guy! How 'bout I buy us a drink?

KEVIN

Shit... You can buy us a whole lot more than one!

2 EXT. PARKING GARAGE - DAY

The top of the Porsche 911 Carrera GTS Cabriolet lowers to reveal Drew at the wheel and Kevin riding shotgun. The top safely down, the Porsche roars off and we see the California license plate: LAWY 2 S.

3 INT. LOCAL PUB - NIGHT

Drew and Kevin empty foamy beer mugs as a waitress delivers replacements to their table in this comfortable bar. The crowd is young; every woman who looks gives Drew a good once-over.

KEVIN

Well, whatever. I guess it'll be months before we get the results anyway.

Kevin pulls his mug close as Drew lifts and sips from his, smiling at an attractive young woman who passes by.
How to write to take optimal advantage of the video format for mobile viewing
One word for writing better video scripts.

PACING
objective 1
get to the point 2
rapidly changing visuals
show don't tell
reduce ruthlessly edit word word word count count count count
exclude all the nitty gritty little details
don't repeat
Takeaway – 7 tips for enhancing engagement

- One objective
- Get to the point
- Rapidly Changing Visuals
- Show, Don’t Tell
- Edit Ruthlessly and Reduce Word Count
- Exclude Details
- Don’t Repeat Yourself
The characteristics of a well-written script
Example 1
TOM (O.S.)
Welcome to your training video.
I’m Tom Spiglanin, and over the next thirty minutes, I will talk to you about parking lot safety as well as other safety items.
Show, don’t tell

Time lapse view of parking lot.

OVERLAY TITLE: Parking Lot Safety - Annual Training Video

FADE TO:

TOM, on-screen, talking directly to the camera.

OVERLAY: Tom Spiglanin - Instructor

TOM

Hello, and welcome.
Example 2
INT. WORKPLACE CAFETERIA - DAY

Elliot encounters colleague Marci getting coffee.

ELLIO T
Hey, Marci! I haven't seen you for a while. What have you been up to?

MARCI
Didn't you know? I've transferred to the Denver office. I've been there for a couple months now.

ELLIO T
I had absolutely no idea! How are things going for you?

MARCI
Not so good, actually.

ELLIO T
The air too thin for you?

MARCI
No, that's not it. It's just this program I'm working on—I'm having a really hard time getting anything done.

ELLIO T
What's the problem?

MARCI
Well,...
Get to the point

INT. WORKPLACE CAFETERIA - DAY

MARCI manages papers in one hand while drawing coffee from the urn, careful to not soil her documents. She looks up as ELLIOTT startles her.

MARCI
Elliott! Long time no see!

ELLISOT
How do you like working in the Denver office?

Marci grimaces, pained in thought.

MARCI
I am so frustrated, I could scream!
Example 3
ELLIO
While I'm at it, I may as well send you a copy of the contracting regulations, the organizational management plan, the sponsoring agreement, and our contract with the customer. These all have a direct say in what we do and how we do it, and you really should have them on your computer, or at least know how to find them.

MARCI
Wow, that's a lot of documents. But thanks--I really appreciate it! They couldn't just roll them all into one?

ELLIO
Well, there are different documents for different customers. So, for example, all of our
Excluded details

NARRATOR
Click the link below for more information.
Example 4
NARRATOR
Let’s consider the many, many ways we can smoothly transition from the ways of our past to the ways of our future. If we make the changes slowly rather than abruptly, we can more appropriately bring about change.
Edit ruthlessly / reduce word count

NARRATOR
With careful planning, we can make the changes needed to be more effective in the future.
FADE IN:

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ANGLE DAVE

Dave pats his jacket pockets, nervous.

DAVE

It’s...gone. (beat) Nooooo!

In a flash, two HOODED FIGURES lift Dave by his arms and drag him the opposite direction through the crowd.

HOODED FIGURE 1

Go! Go! Go!

HOODED FIGURE 2

John, to your right! Now! (beat) (shouting) Now!
How to increase engagement through conflict and contrast
Conflict and misdirection

What is conflict?

What is misdirection?
INT. HOME OFFICE - DAY

LAUREN works at her computer.

TOM appears and interrupts.

    TOM
    Hey, Lauren!

    LAUREN
    Hey, Tom.

    TOM
    Hey, have you done your compliance training yet?

    LAUREN
    I sure did! And you know what? It only took me twenty minutes.
INT. HOME OFFICE - DAY

LAUREN works at her computer.

TOM appears and interrupts.

    TOM
    Hey, Lauren, did you do your compliance training yet?

Lauren looks disgusted and rolls her eyes.

    LAUREN
    No, Tom. I have not.

    TOM
    But you can do it right now, it only takes twenty minutes...
TOM

Hey, Lauren, did you do your compliance training yet?
Ways to increase the lifetime of products by implementing a few simple tricks
Have NO date-sensitive information in AUDIO

Have NO date-sensitive information in VIDEO
What is date-sensitive information?

Just a few examples:

- The date
- The year
- The season
- Weather
- Titles
- Organizational Positions
- Organization Names
A parting, non-script thought
What we covered

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Ways to increase the lifetime of products by implementing a few simple tricks
Thank you for attending!

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