

Video reporting on a mission using mobile phones

From video preproduction to production with your mobile phone

Today, an efficient communication strategy, for missionaries, chaplains and aid workers, cannot do without well produced videos

A first question to start with:
Why must missions produce videos themselves?

The answer:
Because a production crew is not available on the mission's site. or an onsite crew would be too expensive to maintain for regular video productions.

Then they missionaries) must be their own witness, their own *reporter...* with proper training, knowledge of the subject and good equipment.

And, what about the expenses? What would be the budget for your well-produced videos in your mission's total expenditure?

Much lower cost than you might think...

Then think about what would be your cost of not producing your videos *correctly*?

What are the benefits for your mission? (producing good videos)

- Inform
- Build credibility
- Establish trust
- *Call to action*

Video is the most efficient way to reach support for the ministry; prayer partners and donors as well as collaborators.

We often hear “the best video camera is whatever you have”.

My opinion: The best video camera is the one you planned to have and use! And the same goes for the rest of your equipment.

This is something to keep in mind when purchasing a mobile phone (the quality of the camera for photo and videos)

See: **Equipping our mobile phone for video recording.**

How do I organize myself? What will be the quality of my video productions? Where (which column) will I stand?

X Misses the point	✓ Meets the goal
amateurish	well produced
boring	uplifting
mediocre	engaging
controversial	biblical (values)

A first question that may come to mind:

Why must missions produce videos themselves?

- Because a production crew is not available on the mission site, or
- an onsite video production crew would be too expensive.
- Then, they must be their own witness, their own *reporter...* With training, knowledge of the subject, practice, a good mobile phone and proper accessories.

It is to be understood that the quality of your video production outlines the

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credibility of your work and your mission. Reputation alone is not enough.

What are the benefits of producing good videos for your mission?

- Inform (potential partners)
- Build credibility
- Establish trust
- *Call to action*
- “Onboarding”: The most efficient way to reach prayer partners and donors

Preproduction

This is when you prepare what will be your video production.

See: **Basic project management concepts for your video production**

To clearly define the video (the scope), you want to produce:

Write the item (draft ideas) you would like to present in your video as (examples):

- The missionary (or mission team)
- The mission location (country and site)
- A special event
- Students on the campus
- A worship service
- Establishing shots (Useful for the credits)
- Transition shots (between 2 scenes)
- Still pictures

You also need to be flexible and expect the unexpected.

You may have to add relevant content as events come before you ...

Then you would write a final document in a proper format for production.

See: **Your video script.**

At this point you should have assessed the needed resources, timeframe and other items as the duration of your video.

Before production, adopt a file name convention

An example from a photo camera (still picture) can be as: IMG_XXXX

An example of naming convention:

YYYYMMDD_SITE_SUBJECT.JPG

(the media file)

YYYYMMDD_SITE_SUBJECT.TXT

(a companion short text file)

Avoid to plan “talking head”

This is when (only) a manager or a person in a position of authority talks to us about the mission, often from his/her office, the home base, along with a few photos and some video clips. Supporters want to hear from the missionaries themselves and to see them in action, in the field.

Attention to jump cuts!

If you do retakes, don't organized yourself in such a way that you will make “jump cuts” in postproduction.

Always retake the complete sequence.

Production

The ethical aspect

You are in communication which is not a marketing scheme. Pure information is not manipulative publicity.

The bare facts “speak volumes” for themselves. Leave it to God to encourage his people to pray, donate and to get involved as part time or full time.

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The legal aspect

Be sure to have the right to show the people present in your videos, in your country, the mission sites, as well as where they will be presented.

“Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities... it is necessary to submit to the authorities...”

Romans 13

The security aspect

Take all necessary safety measures to protect yourself, as a videographer, your subjects and the mission to reduce risks of threats, intimidation and violence.

Light – natural and artificial

White sources are not “always white”. The resulting video may be correct, yellowish or blueish. To get the right result most phone offer a white balance function. This must be done before recording. (This is done differently for brand and models of phones – consult your manual).

Basic configuration

On a phone (sub \$ 500) this is quite simple and may be:

- Resolution: 1080p at 30 fps
- Video codec H.264/MP4
- Aspect ratio: 16:9, horizontal (not vertical)
- 1x zoom (no digital zoom)
- As for other settings keep them as “default”

Some elements of composition

Composition is the creative, the artistic, aspect of photography and/or

videography. It is often overlooked even unknown by too many.

Here are some “basic rules”:

- The camera should be front of the subject, not sideways, not looking down or up at the subject.
- When speaking to the viewership the subject should be looking directly at the camera (not sideways as some took the habit to do)
- Pay attention to “framing” (edges of the picture) and the background
- Declutter background to keep the focus on the subject
- Use a tripod (whenever possible)
- Pay attention to light
- Have “significant” subjects (no anonymous “street photo/video”)
- Footage should be relevant to the report to be done
- Do natural sequences, not staging them (sequences)

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Using stock shots

I suggest using only original material, produced by the mission team or by the home base (question of truthfulness and credibility).

As all good mirrorless camera and some phones (more and more) offers this following grid in the LCD screen.

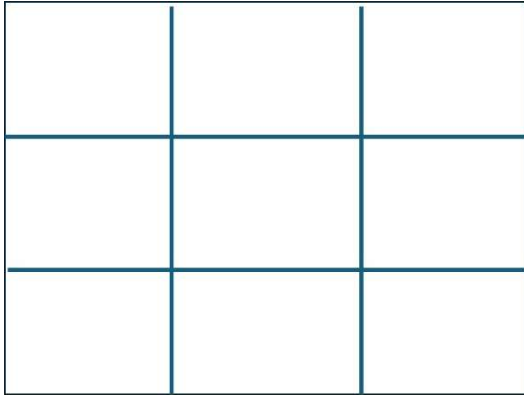
The Rule of Thirds grid

This is only a rule, a guideline, not a law...

A common practice would be to have the subject on one of the 2 vertical lines,

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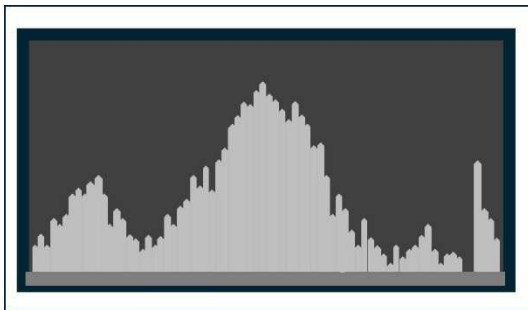
starting at the upper intersection point (and descending).



It can be visible in the LCD screen

As for landscape, the horizon is usually placed on one of the 2 horizontal lines. There is much more to this, but it is “out of scope” of this paper.

Also, a histogram (can be visible in the LCD screen)



A histogram is a graphical representation of the tonal values of a picture, brightness ranging from black (far left brightness) to midtones (center) to white (far right). There is no single ideal histogram shape in photography, but most of the time a balanced photo presents a gentle “hill shape” in the center of the graph.

If the histogram has tones only at one of the edges (left or right) of the graph, it

means either underexposure or overexposure.

If the histogram has tones touching the top of the graph it means that clipping is occurring in the picture.

Postproduction

(A very few words about planning it)

This is usually done at the mission “home base”, not in the field.

You must supply a clear and complete postproduction script (with all the video files – with proper name convention).

Some color correction (adjustments) can be made but this process is limited (if some items are poorly recorded) ... The expression for this is: “garbage in garbage out” ... don’t expect miracles!

At the end of editing there should be debriefing (with the responsible of the video project and the members of the production team) on the quality of the project and the technical QC (Quality control).

In the service of our Lord,

Pierre

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« ... how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard...”.

Romans 10:14