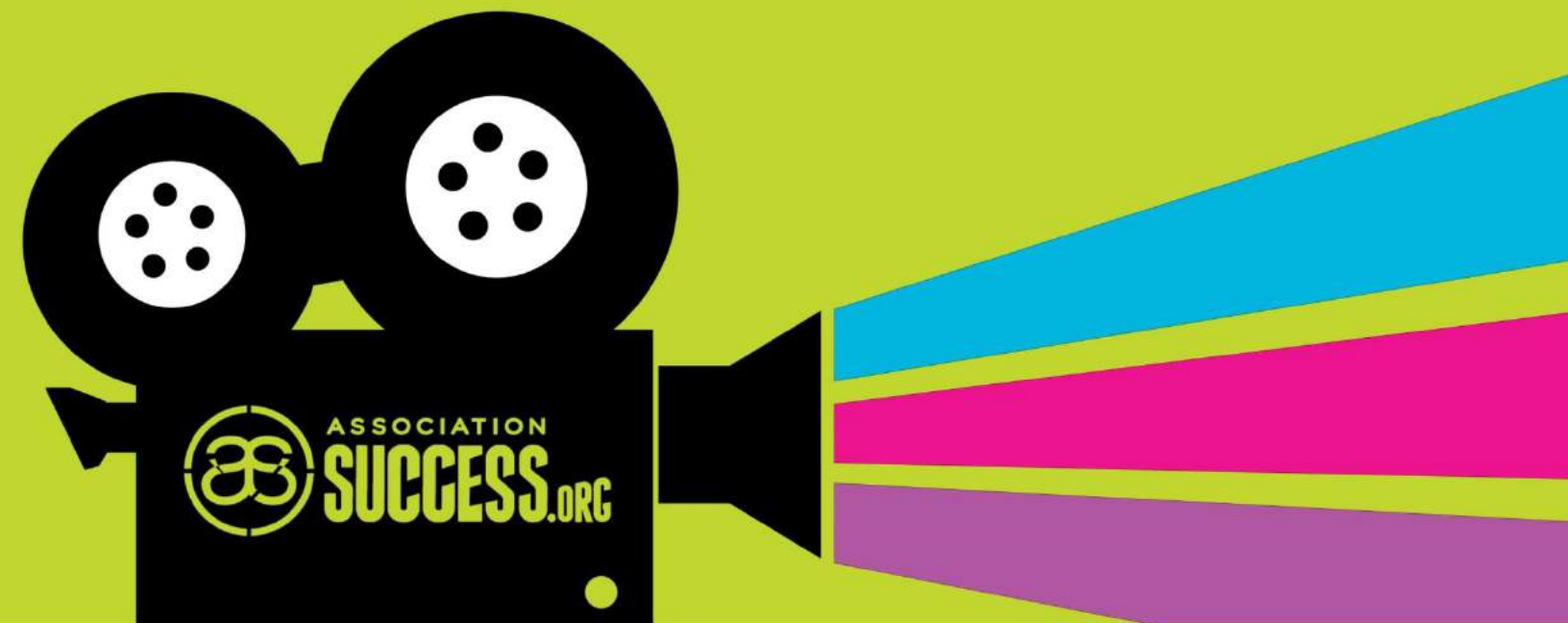


# THE BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO CREATING VIDEO CONTENT [ON A BUDGET]



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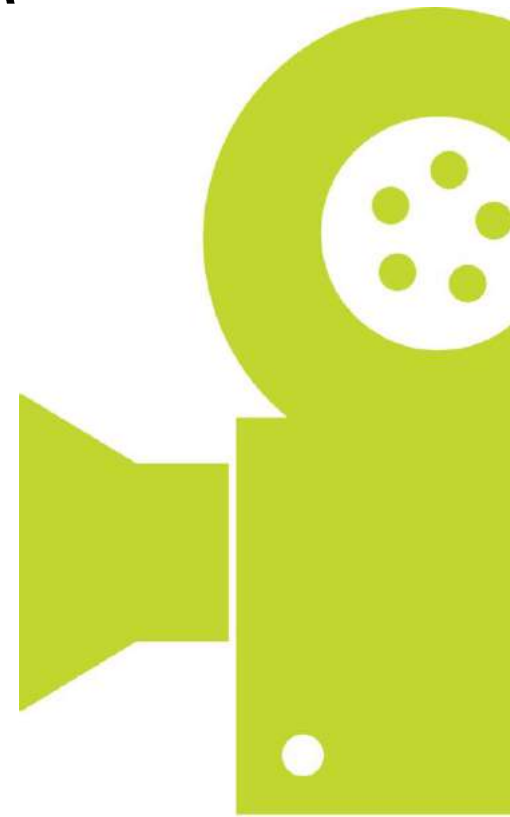
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**Increasingly, associations are incorporating video content into their marketing strategies. And for good reason. After all, it's an extremely effective means of communicating with your current and potential members.**

But it can be intimidating – and that's why many are scared to pull the trigger. How do you make a high quality video that doesn't overextend your budget? Not to mention, how do you find the time with all of your other initiatives?

I have a film degree and have worked with video for over a decade. One of the major lessons I've learned is that producing a good quality video can become extremely complex, but it doesn't need to be. For very little money, you can create an excellent video that will help you achieve your goals.

One of the key factors to staying within budget and timeframe is efficiency. With that in mind, this eBook contains a step-by-step guide, a list of affordable but effective equipment, and documents to help you organize.



## STEP 1: RESEARCH AND GATHER IDEAS

Think of this as a master brainstorm. Put all of your ideas into a Word Document in point form. You want to get everything down that may potentially be of value in your video. Any and all ideas are encouraged; consider both audio and visual strategies.

To help guide your thought process, the Appendix contains a Pre-Video Planning document that walks you through the most important questions to consider.

## STEP 2: EDIT AND DOCUMENT THE INFORMATION

Now is when you whittle down your brainstorm into something a little more concrete. The Prep Document, also in the Appendix, is what I use.

It is divided between “what you see” and “what you hear”. The “what you hear” will be your script, while the “what you see” indicates the accompanying visual elements showing on the screen. Sometimes this will be a really straightforward document, as there may only be one scene.

The “Props” section will be extremely useful to keep you organized for the day of the event. This should include anything from a specific t-shirt that the speaker is wearing to a particular item required in the background.

## STEP 3: REVIEW / GET APPROVAL

This is the time to review the documents with other stakeholders to make sure you have full buy-in for the upcoming process. Now is also a good opportunity to incorporate any new ideas. Essentially, this is about making sure everyone is on the same page! For the approval part, you can even add a signature line on the documents. This will act as an important backup in the later stages. For example, if one of your stakeholders feels an element is missing, you can refer back to the original document.

## STEP 4: PLAN THE SHOOT

In this stage, you'll be referring to your Prep Document a lot. Make sure you have everything you need for each shot. The last situation you want is to be behind the camera, with all of your people ready to go, and then remember that you forgot a prop. Don't forget props! That's why you have a list that you created ahead of time.

## STEP 5: SHOOT

### LIGHTING

If you have no light, you have no image. This is why it is the most important concept to grasp. Quite simply, the more light you have, the better your image will look. Always make sure your main subject is in the best light. If you change settings on your camera, be aware that this will change how the overall image looks.





## FRAMING

When it comes to framing there are a few key principles.

The **rule of thirds** (which involves aligning your image according to the grid you will find on most cameras) is a way to organize your structure within the frame of the image. Aligning the important parts of your image on the lines or intersecting points of the grid will generally give you a more appealing image.





The **180-degree rule** is a guide that can help with visual logic and keep objects on the same sides of the frame in relationship to other objects around them. The basic concept is that it should be possible to draw a line between the objects, and to ensure that the camera is only positioned at an angle of 180 degrees around that line.



## STABILITY

When it comes to stability, one can never underestimate the value of a good tripod. It is easier to start out by having motion in the frame rather than the frame being in motion - and you will get a cleaner look because of it. You can also “stabilize” your camera by locking the settings.

I go into more details about these principles in [this article](#). Included in the article is a video I created to highlight the points, which I highly recommend watching to grasp the concepts. This, of course, is an excellent example of how useful video can be to convey important messages!



## STEP 6: ORGANIZE ON YOUR COMPUTER

I have made this its own step because if you are not methodical, you're going to end up wasting a lot of time. Create a folder for each video you make (articulated as a "project"). Keep *everything* you need for the project in that folder. For example, if you are planning on including your logo at some point, drop a copy of the file into this folder for easy retrieval right when you need it. Make sure it's a copy so that you don't risk tampering with the original file. Now, create sub-folders, such as Video, Images, Audio, Documentation, etc. This is to stay efficient and organized.

## STEP 7: EDIT

Now is when you open the program and move in all of the necessary files from the project folder – and start editing!

If you've never done this before, it will feel overwhelming. The good news is that there are plenty of YouTube tutorials that will walk you through the various steps, and I promise that your first video will take exponentially longer to edit than all of the others that come after it!

The work you put in at the planning stage will provide the perfect foundation for your editing. For example, your Prep Document is a map for you to follow. Without some sort of reference, your editing won't be effective – and neither will your shoot.

Making cuts can be tricky, but there are some strategies you can employ during the editing process. Some tips for how and where to make cuts can be found [here](#), while below are five key things to bear in mind when making cutting decisions.

1. Always choose what you think is the best shot.
2. Edit out mistakes.
3. Cut on actions or motion. For example, if a character points, cut on the point; if a motion moves left, cut to another motion that moves left.
4. Cut on sounds, cut during the pauses, or cut during the lull of repetitive sounds.
5. Give yourself time to digest the changes and try to keep an objective eye. One you finish, step away for at least a few hours, and return with a fresh perspective. Does it move effortlessly and coherently? If something grabs your attention in a negative way, and feels nagging, consider changing it.

Note: You may consider outsourcing the editing if you feel you aren't equipped to do this part effectively.

## STEP 8: SEEK FINAL APPROVAL

You can now reassemble the original stakeholders and show them your wonderful final product. Take notes on their comments and make any necessary adjustments to the video. You may need to re-shoot certain sections, but ideally if you followed the Prep Document closely then it won't be necessary.

## STEP 9: EXPORT FINAL VIDEO

That's it! You've done it! You now have an amazing piece of content that will continue to add value to your organization. You just need to export it so the content can be consumed.

Regarding exporting, you should always pay attention to file types. What format is your original video in, and what do you want your final video type to be? If you want a more formal introduction to formats, you can find one [here](#). There are some decisions to be made: a format that is widely compatible often comes with a reduction in quality. For example, a format like H.264 and a file type like MP4 tends to be compatible with most things, but it is compressed, so you will lose image and audio quality. On the other hand, an MOV file in Apple ProRes422 format demands special circumstances, but will offer no quality loss.

If you are hosting online, be sure to read the video requirements for your particular host, and follow their outline as best you can. Most programs should have the presets available to match your desired output, so you can just click on an obvious link like “share to YouTube” with no need for guess work.

You will want to keep a copy for your archives; I tend to keep both an uncompressed and a compressed version.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the most important part is to make sure you have fun with it! This will really shine through in the authenticity of the video you create. You'll certainly experience some frustrations throughout the process, especially with your first video, but if you're patient and willing to watch a whole lot of YouTube tutorials, you will find ways to streamline the process and improve the quality of future videos.

Always remember that you're creating something extremely valuable. People pay attention to video. It is as close to talking to someone one-on-one as you can get without physically being there, making it an extremely effective communication tool. It also gives you the opportunity to share people's stories, provide important information, and build meaningful relationships. Essentially, this is one more tool that you can use to convert people into believers of your association. And the good news is that with all of the resources available to you, it has never been easier.

## EQUIPMENT:

For cameras, lighting, and headphones, the links below bring you to a list that I've compiled of products I'd recommend in order from least to most expensive. I've also included a short explanation of why I like each product within the links.

### CAMERA

If it's in your budget, I would recommend a [DSLR](#), along with a [mic](#) and a [tripod](#). It will give you a more professional look and sound and has lots of flexibility. That said, your camera phone will likely work just fine, as long as you keep in mind the principles laid out, such as stability.

### LIGHTING

Natural light is your best friend, but if you need to buy lights, [here](#) are some reasonable options. After all, light will make all the difference in the look regardless of camera.

### HEADPHONES

Here's a list of [good ones](#). I use the Klispch AW-4i. They are great for monitoring audio – as you record, when you are playing it back, and during the editing period.

## EDITING PROGRAMS

**iMovie / MovieMaker:** On your computer you likely have a program already installed that you can use to edit your videos, such as iMovie or MovieMaker. They're free, but are missing some necessary functionality, such as the ability to separate audio from video (which is important, for example, if the two did not sync up properly). I would certainly try it out first, and if you find it doesn't have what you're looking for, there are some other great options out there:

**Camtasia:** This is a relatively new program and is very intuitive to use. It can take most file formats and allows really quick sharing to YouTube. It also has several call out animations that you can use. For example, if your video is a tutorial, you can easily put in an arrow that points to the relevant part of the video. The other cool function that Camtasia allows is to do a video capture of your monitor. This is great for recording webinars, or creating tutorials.

**Adobe Premiere Pro CC:** This program is one of several in the Adobe Creative Cloud. I've included it on the list because it's possible that your company already owns the suite (you get a discount for buying a membership to multiple Adobe products) and thus you will have access to this program at no additional cost.

# PRE-VIDEO PLANNING

What is the title of the video?

Who is the target audience for the video?

What are the audience's needs and what is their level of understanding?

Why is the video being created?

What are the steps needed to achieve the message? (Why, what, where, when, who and how.)

Why is that important?

How does this fit into the larger picture?



What would be your introductory sentence?

What supports the introductory sentence? (Story, connections, details)

What would be the summary sentence?

What is the call-to-action of the video?

How will the effectiveness of the video be measured?

What is the deadline?

# PREP DOCUMENT

#	Logistics	What You See	What You Hear	Props
0	Who, what, where, when, why...	Describe the scene	Lines from script / sounds heard	Additional items required

#	Logistics	What You See	What You Hear	Props

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