

10 things **you should know before hiring a Video Production company**

1. Define message, audience & Distribution

Before you meet with a video production partner, be sure your internal marketing team clearly understands why you're interested in video as a marketing tool. The arguments for video marketing are compelling; still, you should clearly define if you need a corporate overview video, facility tour, new product demonstration, or some other type of video. Once you define your company's needs, decide how you plan to share the video with your potential customers. Is there a distributor network with sales representatives who can launch your video from a laptop demonstration? Will your video be seen exclusively at trade shows? Streaming from your website? Direct mail marketing on CD-ROM? Once you answer these questions internally, you'll be able to begin a confident conversation with potential partners to produce your video.

2. Demo & References

Can the potential video vendor supply a demo of their work featuring previous clients? Your video production company should have no hesitation in providing you samples of their work, and they should offer to provide names and phone numbers of their clients, along with the price range of each production. If the company is hesitant to give provide you demos or their satisfied clients as references, they may not have any!

3. Content Distribution

In today's digital age of the Internet and hundreds of cable channels, distribution is critical. If your production company has the creative expertise to not only produce your video but help you distribute it online (by preparing it to stream from your website, integrate into multimedia email brochures, and through DVD and CD-ROM mastering) then they have the creative and technical skills to make your video marketing efforts even more successful.

4. Production & editing equipment

Do they use broadcast-quality cameras and editing decks? The equipment used should be able to produce a broadcast-ready video, even if you don't intend to use the video for broadcast commercials.

5. Creative Control

During the script writing process, you should have final approval on the script before field production is scheduled. You should have final approval on the music selected for your video as well as who is selected to be the on-camera host, if one is required. Your production partner should never dictate what the creative components of your video will be. Be sure the terms of your agreement make this clear.



continued

10 things YOU SHOULD KNOW BEFORE HIRING a VIDEO PRODUCTION COMPANY

6. Re-writes and Re-edits

How many drafts of the script will be produced during the creative process? How many drafts of the video will be available for your review during the editing process? Make sure your agreement allows you at least three opportunities to provide feedback and direction during the script writing process. Also, be sure you have as many opportunities to review the video during the editing process before the final master tape is delivered.

7. Additional Costs

Make sure your agreement clearly details additional costs such as animation sequences, stock footage, actors, music, location fees, etc. Rates vary for on-camera talent and location fees, so these items typically come outside the terms of a standard video production agreement. However, other creative parts of your video, such as music and narration, should be included in your fees.

8. In house vs. Outsource

Does your potential video vendor have in-house personnel or do they pass off parts of the project to other vendors? By having on-staff qualified technicians, you'll be assured technical accuracy, consistent quality and reduced costs. By having personnel and facilities on demand, there's no need to add unnecessary mark-ups or delays. The result is an on-budget, on-time delivery of your video project.

9. Estimate

Will the video production company provide a No-Cost Quote? They should provide you an item-by-item budget and a detailed outline that specifies the equipment and personnel required to bring your project to life.

10. Guarantee

It is a sign of complete commitment from your video production vendor that they can guarantee your complete satisfaction. A well-produced video can become the crown jewel of your marketing department, representing a compelling, story-driven presentation of your products, company history, and the core values of your company. Guarantees are rare in the marketing industry; a company that promises to return your investment if you are not satisfied with their work is a company committed to your success.

