Quick tips for filming

This guide offers a few points for thought that will help you get the footage you need, and will help if you are not use to recording footage.

Generic quick tips

Camera settings
Ensure that your device is set up to record as high quality as possible. This will help to capture what you record in as much detail as possible. Search online for how to set your device up to record in the highest quality. Where necessary, adjust the brightness of your device so that you can clearly see what is being recorded.

Storage
Check that your device has enough storage to record the footage. You may be filming a single shot or multiple shots to be put together, and both options can take up a lot of device storage especially using the higher quality recording settings.

Airplane mode (phones only)
If using a phone to record, turn airplane mode on so that you have no interruptions or distractions while recording.

Film in landscape
When recording, all videos should be filmed in landscape. Not only does this show more of the picture and look better, it ensures that each video is consistent in the filming.

Lighting
Think about the location where you are filming and if it will provide the right amount of lighting to bring the speakers or footage into clear focus. If filming indoors, consider your sources of light which could be the office lighting and/or natural light through the windows. If filming outdoors, avoid filming in very bright places as some cameras may overexpose the recording and the speaker/s won't be well seen.
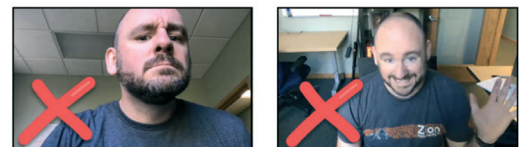
Audio is very important
It's necessary to also consider where you film so that the audio that's recorded comes out as clear as possible, so find out where the microphone is on your device so that you don't cover it up while recording. If you are in an office, avoid any high-traffic areas such as communal canteens during peak lunch hours, and if outside think about the surrounding area for busy roads, construction or others talking.

Keep the camera/phone steady
Having a shaky hand can risk the quality of recordings and distract from the subject in focus. By bringing the recording device closer to your body and bending your elbows you'll find this minimises any shaking. Alternatively, you may wish to mount your device using a tripod or improvise by leaning it using furniture to keep the device stable.

Filming on a laptop (or phone) camera
If you are filming using a camera on your laptop try to make sure you are not looking down on the camera or up at it, maybe place your laptop on a box or stack of books to raise it up closer to eye level so you are square on and centered in the frame/screen (see example to the right).

Complete a test-recording
Once you are set up, film a practice shoot to make sure that all your preparation will result in the right quality recording. If you don't, you run the risk of having to re-film due to a poor-quality recording.

Lead in and out
When you hit record leave a 3-5 second pause before speaking at the start and end as this leaves room when edited for transitions and cuts to be made and makes sure the camera is recording at the same time as the audio.

Things to remember for Midcounties videos

a. ALWAYS Shoot in landscape

b. Don't forget introductions on camera state who you are and where you are from. For instance "We are here today with xxxxxx from xxxxxxx to talk about their partnership with Midcounties and how its helped them" or if you can't avoid filming in a busy noisy place just state this ie "We are here today at our busy AGM to talk with xxxxxx about xxxxxxxx"

c. Where should you be looking? Well if you are being interviewed by someone on camera look at them. If you are the sole person and someone is asking questions from behind the camera you have two choices you can look at them (positioning is important with this one though) or look into the camera whichever you're comfortable with! If you are just doing a piece to camera with no question look into the camera!

d. File format should be mp4 (if using an iPhone it will be .mov and may need to be converted after to .mp4)

e. Try to keep you video as short and to the point as possible 1-5 minutes (most people only spend one minute watching a video online) this will depend on what you need to include obviously, and good planning to fit it all in as quickly and seamlessly as possible

f. Please read the rest of this more indepth guide to help give you a good idea of what to do. If you're unsure just watch you recording back and see if you are happy with it and it hits the advice in points 1 - 6! Happy Filming!

1. Create a Storyboard and/or Shooting Script

The best videos don't just happen – they're a result of meticulous planning and preparation.

Before you even think about getting your camera equipment ready, consider putting a storyboard and shooting script together. Storyboarding helps you figure out exactly what shots you need before you start filming, and a shooting script is like a screenplay for your video.

Storyboard panels for 'Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows, Part 2'

You don't have to draw a stunning masterpiece for your storyboard. In fact, you don't need to draw it at all. You can use a series of still photographs as a storyboard, or even rough sketches or stick figures – whatever is easiest. Just make sure you know what shots you need before you start filming.

Remember – the more time you spend planning your video, the less likely you are to find yourself missing footage later on or re-shooting.

2. Prep Your Presenters or Interview Subjects

Make sure all your presenters or subjects know what's expected of them beforehand to minimise mistakes or wasted time on the day of the shoot. You should have a rough idea of what the finished product is going to look like long before you arrive at your location, and your presenters should know exactly what they're doing.

Also, try to avoid having your presenters memorize pages upon pages of script – they're probably not actors, and asking this of them is likely to cause more anxiety (and mistakes) than allowing them a little freedom to speak freely can be better as long as they cover off any key points you wish mentioned.

3. Audio

As mentioned before make sure you are somewhere quite if possible a room aware from busy street noise, people talking loudly etc. Control what noise you can to remove it from the recording (unless you are filming at a busy event and want to portray that!). Make sure people know you are filming near by, so they are quite and don't ruin you shoot, it may help to put signs up around where you are filming to make people aware! Make sure any mobile phone are on silent! Make sure any people in the room with you are fully quite when you start recording. If you are unsure about the sound play the clip back at full volume to see if any unwanted noise stands out. Then re-shoot and do wat you can to control that noise. When you do play the clip back to check it, also pay attention to the people speaking and if you can hear them clearly, as you may have to re-shoot and get them to speak a little louder depending on how good the mic on your device is! Where possible it may be better to use a clip on mic especially if someone has to talk in a busy loud environment or if the camera has to be far away from your speaker.
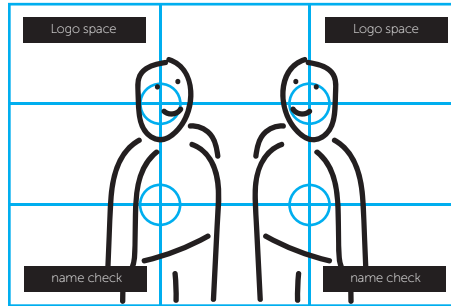
4. Composition

Whenever you're filming anything (or taking photos), remember the "Rule of Thirds."

Imagine your shot is divided into nine equal sectors by two horizontal lines and two vertical lines, like so:
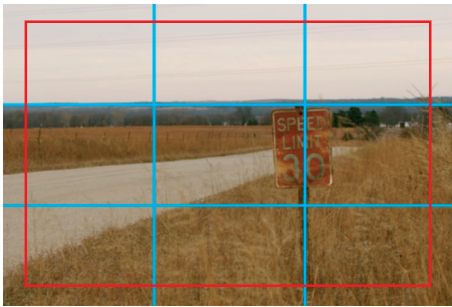

This shot is if you need a graphic to the right. **If you don't position the person in the centre of the shot.**

So for instance in a two person interview you may want the two people slightly facing each other but still angled towards the camera so you can see their faces still.

Also keep in mind space for any name checks to pop up or space for any corporate logos in the top left or right areas, so think of this when composing the shots.

Try and keep all action within the red area, you don't want things bleeding off-screen!

Editing marketing videos Rule of Thirds applied to landscape
In the example left, the upper of the two horizontal lines is the logical horizon point for this shot, as using the lower of the two would result in the shot containing way too much empty sky. Of course, this might be precisely the effect you're trying to achieve, so think of this as a guideline rather than a hard-and-fast "rule."
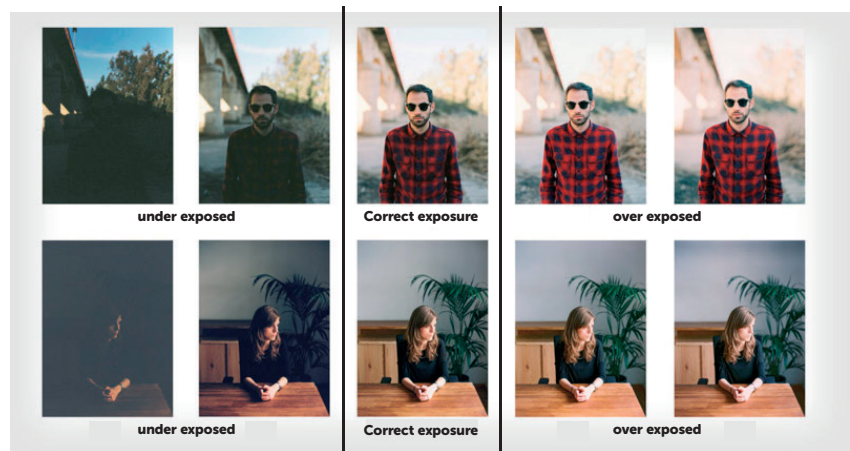
Many cameras enable you to overlay this grid onto your viewfinder, making it easy to compose your shot before and during filming.

However you choose to frame your shot, make sure that you keep composition in mind, especially when setting up your camera.

5. Lighting

Few things will ruin a marketing video faster than a shot that is either too light or too dark. Yes, you can correct image brightness and contrast in post-production to some extent, but it's better to get the shot right on the day of the shoot than relying on "fixing it in post-production" later on. Another tip is don't shoot people directly against bright backgrounds such as sitting infront of a bright window in a dark room as you will end up with just a Silhouette of the person you're trying to shoot! So check this on screen before recording.

6. Don't Assume You Can Fix Everything in Post-Production

Editing packages such as Premiere Pro and Final Cut Pro are extraordinarily powerful and enable you to accomplish a great deal with your videos, but they're not magic.

Don't assume that any and all problems with your video can be fixed in post-production. Sometimes, you simply won't be able to correct the brightness or contrast of a shot as much as you need to, or manage to isolate a single person's voice in a room crowded with hundreds of people. Yes, it might be possible given enough time and skill, but post-production should be seen as a process to add polish and finesse to your video, not an opportunity to go back and fix mistakes that could have been easily avoided during a properly planned shoot.