

Corporate Video Production

Second Edition

Beyond the Board Room
(And Out of the Bored Room)



A Focal Press Book

Stuart Sweetow



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(And Out of the Bored
Room)**

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Corporate Video Production

In this updated edition of *Corporate Video Production*, Stuart Sweetow teaches aspiring and seasoned videographers how to make imaginative corporate videos with eye-catching designs, rhythmic editing tricks, and essential scriptwriting and interview techniques. Readers will learn how to shoot on location or in a studio, work with employees-turned-actors, find new clients, and produce online videos and podcasts for corporations, government agencies, and nonprofit organizations. Additionally, this new edition includes discussion questions, chapter summaries, and professional tips, and covers live webcasting, mobile devices, shooting in 4K, microvideos, microcameras, and storytelling techniques for corporate social responsibility programs. The companion website (www.routledge.com/cw/sweetow) features downloadable forms and further resources.

Stuart Sweetow is a video producer specializing in corporate video production and informational videos. His career started in 1970 when he won first place in the Southern Illinois University Film Festival, after which he worked as a staff video producer for corporations for several years until he founded Audio Visual Consultants, a video production company specializing in producing training and marketing videos for corporations and nonprofit organizations. He taught video production for seven years at the University of California Berkeley Extension, and has written over 100 articles on video for various magazines.

This book is dedicated to my beautiful bride, Sandy, who gave me encouragement and patience, and also found us a home with an office for me to write.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

Corporate video production has come of age. At one time, cinematographers referred to corporate videos as “industrials,” a genre to which they retreated between making “real” films. Talking-head videos or unimaginative safety films dominated the field, and too often one might hear the word “boring” precede the term “corporate video.” However, as professional video tools came down in price, corporations invested in cameras and editing gear. A generation of enthusiastic filmmakers who sought access to those tools took jobs in the corporate world. While broadcast television was reducing staff, corporate media centers grabbed the best and the brightest.

The television producer who craves the excitement of a live broadcast will get that adrenaline rush by transmitting a shareholders’ meeting live to viewers at home. The ambitious video professional who wants to meet a top corporate CEO has an opportunity to film him or her giving a talk and beaming it via satellite to employees worldwide.

In addition to TV producers entering the corporate arena, Hollywood cinematographers discovered that corporate executives were not as stuffy as they once thought. Over the years, innovative companies developed communication departments with creative staffs. They sought imaginative filmmakers to apply their cinematic artistry to produce engaging marketing and training videos. As corporations developed social responsibility programs and discovered YouTube as an avenue to reach the public, documentary filmmakers found they could support causes in line with their own humanitarian values.

Many companies have equipped their video departments with cutting-edge post-production applications and network storage infrastructures. Some organizations send video messages via their satellite networks, and growing numbers use IP distribution. When researching this book, I found a trend where corporate video producers favored location filming over studio production. Smaller HD cameras enable speed and flexibility, and many video producers now edit videos on their laptops during the flight home from a shoot.

Throughout this book I have included examples of video applications that corporations use, such as customer communications, product announcements, employee training, and public relations. Social media has enabled corporations to relate to the public in an interactive way. Nearly every major corporation has a YouTube channel, and many companies film their customers giving testimonials or praising their products. Sometimes

ordinary people say surprising things on camera, such as the Chicago woman who said she and her neighbors were praying that Walmart would open a store in their community. You'll read about that and other unexpected uses of YouTube in Chapter 16.

The production values of some corporate videos now rival those of Hollywood. AT&T created a series showing twenty-something singles texting and exchanging files on smartphones with AT&T data plans. An educational film from Honda about their humanoid robot ASIMO combines elements of a science-fiction film with artistic cinematography. IBM produced a series of videos for their "Smarter Planet" YouTube channel that incorporate multilayered imagery together with smartly edited interviews.

Savvy video producers have reinvented presentations by using innovative production techniques to create videos that remove the boredom factor. There is no reason why employees or customers should be sentenced to "death by PowerPoint" now that video producers can create lively presentations with creatively composed video clips, dynamic 3D graphics, and carefully crafted scripts.

A well-designed short video has the capability to reach viewers on an emotional level. Poetic writing, rhythmic camera work, and a compelling soundtrack all create synergy to grab the viewers' hearts and convert visitors into customers. Market researchers understand the incredible impact that video can have on their companies' bottom lines. Corporations are investing in video services to utilize the medium to the max, and video has become an integrated communications tool in the enterprise.

In addition to learning about corporate video production techniques and applying some of the examples shown here, it is wise for you, the video producer, to learn about the values of the company you work for, how they use their brands, and who their customers are. Then you can apply those principles to producing videos that align with the mission of the enterprise. The image of the company is literally in your hands.

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

The video industry has undergone major changes since the first edition of this book was published. Corporations are benefiting from the improved economy and are more likely to invest in equipment and personnel. Social media has exploded, and user-generated videos have become commonplace. Mobile video use has skyrocketed, and cell phone makers seem to compete with one another to see who can provide the coolest video features with each new smartphone release.

In this updated edition I have added a new chapter devoted specifically to mobile video, including smartphone production, formatting videos for mobile distribution, drones, and tiny action cameras such as the GoPro. I have expanded the section on YouTube to show examples of brands getting video viewership in the millions—rivaling traditional advertising. You'll read about the huge corporate adoption of microvideo sites, such as Vine and Instagram Video with six-second and fifteen-second run times.

Facebook, Twitter, and other social media now let you post videos natively, and I report on the clever ways many corporations have incorporated this feature into their social media marketing programs. You'll learn about major retailers filming events with smartphones and instantly posting their videos to social media sites. Brand awareness booms as loyal customers repost these videos.

In the first edition I reported some skepticism in the corporate world about the benefits of user-generated videos. But you can't hold back a customer with a smartphone. Buyers boost brands by sharing their experiences of products, and some even produce how-to videos that companies gladly post on their YouTube channels. Some savvy companies tie their shopping pages to videos, so buyers can seamlessly switch between a video screen and their shopping cart. Calls to action (CTAs) include "Subscribe to Our YouTube Channel" and "Buy Now."

I have expanded the first chapter to report on companies' innovative uses of video. Salesforce filmed Hillary Clinton speaking at their annual convention. London fashion company Burberry created a YouTube channel of jazz performances aligned with new product releases. McDonald's Hamburger University positioned a bunch of mini-cameras in their simulation lab to analyze the whole buying process—from greeting the customer, to cooking the food, to delivery.

Employee training and recruitment are demonstrated through such examples as Facebook's corporate office producing a large collection of short videos featuring employees showing what they do at their jobs. The first chapter includes a section with job postings for typical opportunities in video production. I have also updated the salary ranges for various video jobs. Unfortunately, at the time of writing (May 2015), pay rates are scarcely higher than they were in 2011. This is due to a sluggish economic recovery. Hopefully, by the time you read this, companies will be demonstrating more faith in the power of video by paying video producers what we are really worth!

Live streaming has benefited from newer technologies, and I report on how companies incorporate live webcasts with advances in teleconferencing and wireless IP transmissions. In the first edition, HD video was all the rage; now you'll learn about enterprise-grade 4K and 8K video production, and how to wrangle all of that data during production, post-production, and distribution. Cyber-security has become an important concern for corporations, so you will learn various options for corporate media managers to secure video assets. The last thing your company wants is some hack posting inappropriate videos on the company website or sharing private video webinars with the competition.

This second edition has more text boxes, all of which feature practical information, such as how to develop your own smart-phone video production class for employees or how to embed YouTube videos to the company website. Several colleges and universities use this book as a textbook, and each chapter concludes with a summary of key points and takeaways. I have also added discussion questions for teachers of video production to develop course outlines and exams on particular topics.

The glossary has been expanded to include several new industry terms, such as "unmanned aerial vehicle" (commonly called a "drone") and "haul videos" (user-generated videos of customers showing the results of their shopping sprees).

Finally, I have developed a companion website (www.routledge.com/cw/sweetow) where you can find links to video samples, download production planning forms, and see the full-color versions of several photos that are printed in black and white in the book.

I hope that the website, the text boxes, and all of the updates will help you to play your A-game when producing corporate videos.

Website addresses were correct at the time of writing and may have changed.

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