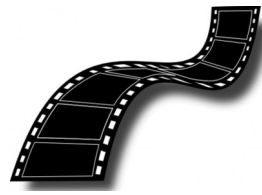


8 Hour

Video Workshop

The method to take control of your message, marketing or to simply make a movie.



Jim Bumgardner

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Dedication

This workshop series is dedicated to all of the people who have ever wanted to learn something new but were never allowed to look behind the curtain. Never forget that education is a personal mission and one that you never have to give up on no matter your age, race, creed or religion.

This workbook is also dedicated to my wife Alicia and my daughter Kaitlynn for encouraging me to create this program as well as allowing me the time to write, produce and create it.

And one final but very important shout out to my mentor and hero for life and beyond; Mr. Bob Gay. Bob was "that teacher" that took me under his wing, taught me how to speak, nurture my natural talents and inform me when I was being a complete idiot. For all of those things Bob I owe you so very much and will never forget that. Ever.

Jim - 10/21/2014

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Introduction

In 1999 I got bit by the film bug. Hard. And once the bug bit I knew I had to make a movie! But how? Where did you start? How do you start? Those questions led me on an almost *Wizard of Oz* like journey. The trick however was that there was no Tin Man, Cowardly Lion or Scarecrow or even a clearly marked Yellow Brick Road to help me on my journey. I didn't even have a Toto to keep me company.

There was one "good witch" at the beginning of my journey. His name was Joe and he worked at the Little Rock (Arkansas) film commission. I figured if anyone could point me in the right direction it would be those folks. He did but not in the way I was hoping. When I asked him how I should get into making films Joe very succinctly said to me; "Get a camera then start shooting." Of course at the time I had no idea how simply brilliant that statement was. Still that didn't offer any true guidance and inspiration.

Having been fortunate to have attended a fantastic broadcasting class, I assumed that such an avenue existed for film instruction. I was wrong. I wanted practical application and not theory and a high price tag (and algebra). But at this same time technology was making a huge left turn and the curtain was becoming more and more sheer.

And now here we are, with me offering to you my insight and experience with the hope that it will help you avoid the same pitfalls, detours and distractions that I wrangled with for a decade. While there are no guarantees for success in this rapidly changing industry, at the end of this workshop I do promise you this; you will have participated in a program that will have shown you the basics, allowed you to immediately apply what you have learned and have created a team project that will hopefully instill within you the desire to create more visual entertainment.

With all of that said I want to strongly emphasize that the techniques I am sharing with you today are not the end all be all to video production. Like many things in this world there are many paths you can get to the same destination however these steps have served me well for a very long time and they work. And like all forms of art there is no "right or wrong" way to create entertainment. That's talent and it can not be taught. It can be nurtured and developed but not taught. The equipment however is more absolute. There's only one way to turn stuff on and off and in some instances there are formulas that can actually help free up the creative process. I promise to show you those too. Now with all of that said let's get to creating!

Jim Bumgardner

Part 1 - History of Mass Communications and forming the crew

Today's interconnected world of information and entertainment can make many of us take for granted the journey that came before. The history of mass communication is a fascinating one and to see how one grew from the influence of the others is actually pretty neat. Plus understanding where we came from can most certainly help us as to where we're going. And that's why I'd like to start the workshop off with a trip through time to explore the evolution of mass communication. Don't worry I won't go all the way back to cave paintings or hieroglyphs. The late 19th and all of the 20th Century's will suffice.

**To note there is actually a lot of history prior to the dates listed below. Again for the sake of time and commonly accepted timelines of development we will go with these dates. I do however encourage all of you to do some of your own research into this fascinating history.*

As we review we'll discuss origins, peaks and valley's for each of the mediums and their relevancy today. At the end of this discussion we will also form the teams that will make up our production crew.

Newspaper- 1690: Okay so this one dates back a little further. But for our purpose I'll just point out that newspapers were the first form of affordable mass communication.

The Telegraph - 1830: Dots and dashes didn't make for much entertainment but the letters formed from them sure made getting the word out a much faster process than going to press.

Still Photography 1838 - : This advancement was a real game changer. No longer did history have to rely on the talents, interpretations and style of a particular artist to capture the image of people, places and things.

Audio Recording 1877 - Good ole' Thomas Edison and his crew in his workshop figured out fascinating ways to actual capture and play back the spoken word or any other sound.

Film 1896 - : And then the pictures started moving! Now not only could you see images from the past you could now see them in action. * It wasn't until 1919 that the sound and video were coupled together effectively by Lee DeForest who was also the genius behind the triode vacuum tube that led to the development of our next two advancements; Radio and Television.

Radio - 1920 (commercial radio): Okay so up until this point we could read stories in newspapers, pull a thousand words out of a single picture or watch a million silent films play out on the screen but now thanks to those magical wireless waves we could now hear music and voices from around the world.

Television: - 1947 (commercial): So now we could not only hear people and music but we could also see them too. This also led to a big game changer for the motion picture industry. Now people didn't have to go to the movie theaters to see films. They could watch them from the comfort of their own homes.

Video Cassette Tape - 1970: Now it was possible to record the television broadcasts for playback at a later time. This technology really took off in the 1980's.

Satellite Television - 1976: Although this tech didn't really take off until the 1990's due to equipment cost limitations, the ability to transmit signals from space, free of the restrictions of terrestrial radio and television waves broadened the reach of the smallest network.

Internet: - 1995 (commercial) - The ultimate communication tool was released on the world. Literally the whole wide world. From it's inception to today the Web has made possible nearly instantaneous communication possible between people on opposite ends of the planet. Increasing broadband and data streams along with more and more advancements in coding and compressing techniques have made audio and video transmission possible and at mind blowing speeds.

Exercise -

Name your favorite form of mass communication and why it appeals to you the most.

Why is this important?

Now let's create our crew teams:

Writers / Producers - Handles the main writing duties and planning as well as ensuring that everything needed for the production is ready to go (location, cast, props). This group is crucial to the production starting and continuing smoothly.

Camera / Sound - These folks are going to handle the actual production equipment including cameras, microphones, lights etc...) This group has the burden on translating and capturing what's on the written page into the real world.

Editor / Graphics - Members of this team will be responsible for the post production equipment and second unit images, video, sound, and music. Once everything is shot the production shifts to these folks to put it all together. These folks are the cleaners so to speak. Their final artistic expression will add the final shine to the shoes.

Distributor / Marketing - Now that we've got a video we've got to get it out to the world. To clarify the Distributor in this instance is going to be responsible for finding and managing all distribution sites (i.e. YouTube, Vimeo, Facebook Fan Page). The Marketing person(s) will be responsible for coming up with the clever copy (text) to describe the video as well as generating a press release to share on both social

media platforms and to traditional media outlets. These folks are crucial to making the video appealing to the masses without the audience having seen even one frame.

Director / Assistant Director - These two folks are the President and Vice President of this production. The Director who is responsible for everyone on the crew. If something doesn't get done the Director has to pick up the slack. The Assistant Director is of course there to help in all of these things and to serve as the second set of eyes and detail checker. A Director rises to this position through experience, artistic vision, a strong work ethic and even stronger managerial skills. The attitude, patience and talent of these two people are what make your project either a pleasure or a terror to work on.

*To note we are going to be moving at a much faster pace than what would be considered normal so don't allow yourself to get frustrated as you learn something new. We're a crew and in this together. But with that said also note that you don't have to have all of these people to bring your project to life. In fact you can even do all of it by yourself but at the end of today's workshop I think you'll see how much fun and inspiring it can be when collaborating with others. But if you are a lone producer know that you can do it and knowing all the bases will make it much easier to make great work even as a solo act.

*Fantastic online resource for release forms, templates and documents - <http://www.filmsourcing.com/blog/production-documents/>

Part 2 - Brainstorming - Planning - Writing

In this second part we are going to do three very important things. In fact these are the most important things we will do all day.

First we're going to brainstorm an idea for our video-
What will our video be about?

What type of video will it be? Silent, Documentary Style, etc...

Secondly we're going to outline our idea. - Here we lay out the agreed upon idea in broad strokes to figure out the three acts of our play. We'll work a little backwards in our thinking here. We'll start with the end (what we want to accomplish) and then go back to the beginning where we describe the details of how we're going to get to the end and then we'll lay out the middle where we show our work. The process if you will.

Thirdly we're going to write our script. - The script is a much more defined and refined version of the outline. Without a fine tuned script your heading for disaster. Even a silent film needs a script. This is where you get your first opportunity to work out details on paper before you shoot the first frame of video.

*Of course when shooting home videos or live events and gatherings it's tough to plan everything out because of the spontaneity of reality. Even some scripted videos can find moments of "accidental magic" so please don't misconstrue the need for planning with containing your creativity into a box.

EXERCISE

Let's write this sucker!

*Remember, we are writing a script for video so be very descriptive in what we should be seeing on screen.

*A writing rule of thumb: If there is going to be narration or an on camera person, dialog times out to 90 words per 30 seconds. That breaks down further to 9 lines featuring 10 words per line. This formula allows for a very natural pace and delivery for your announcer.

Why is this important?

Part 3- Storyboarding and Rehearsing

Now that we have our script the second most important aspect for the creation of your video project is to "block" out the action and prepare the materials (equipment, props, cast) that will be needed.

Placing your primary equipment - Tripod - Camera - Microphone - Lighting; No matter the size of your production those four tools are essential to good quality video. Also drawing up a diagram of where everything is on set can help tremendously if you have to split the shoot up over several days.

A master shot list is also a very important tool and step you can take. This checklist can help make sure that no detail is missed.

Since we are working as a full crew everyone has a specific duty. And not unlike a larger production there will be times when each division may not be able to talk with the other and that's where the script and story board will come in very handy. Plus the other members of the crew will be working too so professional courtesy dictates that you want to keep from interrupting them as much as you yourself don't want to be interrupted.

*The storyboards do not have to be works of art. So long as they convey the major camera set ups and motions that you want. You can also use a digital camera (or smart phone) and some stand in actors to create your storyboard panels. The main thing is making sure they are accessible to the rest of the crew.

Rehearsing with actors is very beneficial for every member of the crew. One tip to remember however is to make sure the camera is rolling during these times. You never know when you might catch a perfect all be it accidental performance.

EXCERCISE

Create the Storyboard, Shot list and master equipment list

Part 4 - Production

It's time for ACTION! Believe it or not this is the second easiest part of the process. With the pre production having been thorough you'll find that when it's time to shoot your crew is a well oiled machine. Everyone knows their part and roll. And if not that's okay but odds are things are going to go pretty smooth.

Three set ups for each scene /principle actor is an incredible way to take your production quality to the next level. The three main set ups are the Wide, the Medium and the Close Up. It is also very important to note that when shooting your videos to "zoom with your feet" and not the camera's built in zoom lens. To a point using that feature is okay however no matter how great the camera is you risk losing some fidelity of your image. Also using a zoom feature adds to the cameras potential to shake.

Another very solid rule to follow is to always use a tripod. Steady shots will always come across as more professional and clean. In the event that your action calls for some panning or tilting a good tripod is going to give you a much smoother end result than trying to follow the action by hand.

Audio can be even more important than the video. Not all consumer grade cameras are going to give you the option of plugging in an external microphone but if at all possible this is a feature that should be a must have when purchasing a new camera. In the event you do not have an external microphone available all is not lost but you have to use your ears very deeply. Turn off air conditioners and fans. Avoid high traffic or high wind situations. In the instance where you are going to be shooting an outdoor event plan on dubbing your audio or replacing your audio track with a music bed.

*Many off the shelf editing software programs will allow you to mix, edit or replace your audio tracks. This is a wonderful resource but do your best to be mindful of the sounds on your set.

*Another tip I would strongly encourage you to get in the habit of is not reviewing your footage on set. Video cameras make it easy to do this but it can lead to headaches and problems. The first being that you could accidentally erase or corrupt your footage. Secondly the potential for an actor or crew member to become "too self analyzing" and as such want to get another take. That can eat up precious time and resources. Trust your camera person and your director as well as your editor. This is a team effort and the team isn't going to let anything terrible fly.

EXERCISE

Get everything shot with script and storyboards in hand. Also have a member of the writing staff designated to take notes to any "magic moments" or trouble spots that may have arisen during your shoots. This type of set diary can come in very handy once we get into Post Production.

Part 5 - Post Production

Now that we've got all the ingredients for this soup, let's make the soup! At this point the Editor and Graphics person gets to put everything together according to the script, storyboard, and set diary. It is highly recommended that only the director be involved in the process other than the Editor and Graphics person.. Again other crew members or actors could become problematic.

*While it is important to trust your equipment it is also important to be safe. If and when possible you should create an archive back up of all of your raw footage. Also if space allows on your primary editing computer making a copy on the original video and project files could be a saving grace. Externally is even better but regardless a back up is always a good thing to have.

Beginning Editors and Graphic Designers would be wise to remember a very important rule: Less is more. Having the luxury of three setups gives an Editor the ability to change perspectives often. If you pay attention to most every good video you see these days and count the cuts you'll find that even the most mundane video has a crazy number of cuts. Also Graphic Designers while you may a wiz bang in Photoshop or other such programs keep it simple and clean. Too much or too busy can really take away from your project.

Music, Magic and More! While in most instances the writer and director have already laid out the music, sound effects and enhancements they want for a video as Editor and Graphics in Post Production you may find that something else works better. Play with it, try it out and experiment. However this is a team effort and collaboration as well as there being a deadline of some sorts so don't make permanent changes without talking to the rest of the team and don't insist on "playing around" too much. As a director I would encourage and appreciate this departments input but I would personally prefer that the original cut be completed first.

Credits are crucial. Everyone deserves credit when and where it is due so it is of the utmost importance that the Graphics person handle this duty with an extreme eye for detail. Make sure names are spelled correctly and proper title is listed. Also as a matter of personal taste may I stress keeping the major credits at the end of the video. Let's face it, opening credits are interesting to the crew and the crews family more so than anyone else in the viewing audience. Even your friends and colleagues want you to get to the point or action when watching a movie. Remember to always put your audience first. They will appreciate you for it.

EXERCISE

This is it. The final stage of getting it all together and seeing the scripted page come alive. In this process it would also be a great time to make notes for the Marketing and Distribution team of the scenes that stand out the most and would be what your team considers to be the strongest element.

Part 6-Distribution and Marketing

This part seems like it only applies to businesses. Not true. Every video must find its audience. Your organization needs sponsors or recruits to see it. Your family videos must get in front of the eyes of the family members that were either in the video or wanted to be but couldn't. Plus you never know who you may inspire! Here is where the marketing folks get to shine!

The designated marketers on the team will now create the "sizzle" for the press that needs to accompany the launching of the video to the world. While a brief synopsis is necessary in promoting the video it is much more important to generate interest and curiosity about the video. So as you write your copy think in line of open ended and teasing questions. Never pose Yes or no questions in your marketing materials.

Example:

Wrong way - Do you remember how much fun you had in class?

Better way - What was the most fun thing about being in class?

Seems simple once you think about it but like most things you've learned today, a lot of these things we simple don't think about until someone points it out.

For the person handling Distribution your job is one of pure organization. Keeping up with sites, passwords and scheduling is no easy task. And if you are part of a group that is wanting to continually spread your wings and reach it is most certainly a bear keeping up with all of the new outlets that are becoming available every day. And with that said...

DO NOT TRY TO DO THEM ALL. Well not at first. Do yourself and our team a favor by mastering one outlet at a time. While it may appear beneficial to be everywhere it could actually hurt you and your message if you aren't using the outlet properly or consistently. There is still a lot of truth and merit in focusing on Quality over Quantity.

The same message rings true for the Marketing team members as well. While some marketing strategists say sending your message out everywhere is THE way to go, I again must disagree. Master your avenues. Press releases can be shared cross platform but do so sparingly. Otherwise your spamming folks. If your group has a newsletter or subscription email list great, forward it on but never do it blindly. Same thing with fax campaigns or traditional media outlets. If you haven't made at least one real contact (be it face to face, phone, email, fax etc) don't automatically start bombarding the entity with your stuff. Reach out to them yes but don't just throw it away. Your teams message is far more important and valuable than to be categorized as junk mail.

EXERCISE

Exercise - Let's screen it! - Once we've got the video uploaded to youtube let's have everyone in the class share the link however we can. Let's see the response we get by the end of the hour.

Action - What should be the next video?

Conclusion

Also once you've created this video it is possible to take all of the raw elements and convert them for use in the other forms of mass communication that we outlined earlier. Imagine that, we've already done the main meat of the work and now we have content that can be repurposed for radio, television, print and so on. Efficiency!

So, are we going to carpool to the Oscar's? If so I want to drive.

Thank you for allowing me to take you on this journey and I hope that it was only the first of many, many more to come.

Jim Bumgardner

About the Author

About the author and your director ...
Jim Bumgardner

Jim began his professional mass communication career in 1990 while still in high school. Beginning with newspaper his interests morphed from that to radio, then television and finally the web.

Jim created this video workshop to empower folks of all ages to use video effectively in a fun and entertaining way.

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