

Storytelling

Keep It Short

Powerful videos are often under 2 minutes long. The effort you put into keeping it short will go a long way in helping you focus your message.

Keep It Simple

Try to focus on one main topic (ie. an event, one person's story, a lesson, a testimonial). It's easier to get excited about a video that is focused.

Be genuine — Viewers want to connect with the work that your organization is doing. Focus on content that is compelling rather than what's "cool".

Keep It Fluid

Beginning-Middle-End: Catch the audience at the beginning and explain what is happening, build emotion in the middle, and come to some sort of resolution at the end.

Keep It Moving

Audio: Video shows the story but don't forget the importance of audio. Audio adds emotion and excitement to the piece and can offer valuable contextual information. Simple, poignant narration or a great music track can drastically improve your piece.

Keep It Interesting

Capture varied shots:

- Wide shot - establishes the scene
- Medium shot - gives more intimacy, focuses on one subject
- Close-up - for emotion and direct connection to what is being said or done
- Extreme close-up - very intimate, emotional effect.

Practice, Practice, Practice

Shoot, download, review, and edit as much as you can.

Shooting Tips

For a basic introduction to the camcorder click [here](#).

Keep it Steady

When handhold shooting, make sure you keep your hand steady and avoid jerky movements. When panning, do so very slowly to retain detail.

Use the digital zoom sparingly. When possible, move physically closer to the subject.

Stay focused on your subject the whole time they are speaking so you don't miss any of the action.

If conducting an interview, always use a tripod if one is available. Offset your subject to one side or the other to keep the frame visually interesting and set up close to the subject.

Sound Tips

Remember that the microphone is on the camcorder so the closer you are to the camcorder, the better the sound will be.

Be aware that if you shoot in a place with a lot of background noise it is likely that your subject's voice will be drowned out, so pay attention to your surroundings.

Lighting and Composition

Sunlight is good, but be sure to keep it at the shooter's back. This will help you avoid backlight situations which leave your subject blacked out.

If using artificial light, try to get more than one light source to fill the subject.

Flip Video Camcorders do well in low-light situations but you will always get the best footage when you have good lighting.

Editing Guidelines

Not all great videos need editing. Some do. Below are three examples of how you can edit your footage depending your goals.

Shoot and Share (Simplest)

The basic footage is great, but you might want to trim a bit off the beginning or end of a clip and share it.

1. Plug your camera in and, using the **FlipShare** software that comes with your camcorder, find the clip you want to share on your camcorder.
2. Click the little scissors icon in the lower right corner and you can use the sliders to set the beginning and end points of the clip.
3. Click "save as" and title your new clip. It's perfect and ready to share.
4. Highlight the clip you just made and click the "online" icon in the "share" box at the bottom of the page and share directly to YouTube, MySpace and others.

Create a Movie (Some Editing)

Tell a story — You have several clips that together capture the essence of a story. You can combine a series of clips, add titles, and perhaps add music to make a single video.

1. Using the **FlipShare software**, highlight the clip/s you want to use and click the "Movie" icon in the "Create" box at the bottom of the page. The software walks you through adding titles, credits, and music (if you want) and will insert dissolve transitions between clips.
2. The software does its magic and your new product pops out in the "My Movies" folder.
3. Then follow the steps from "shoot and share" to post your new movie online or email it to colleagues.

Professional Video Piece (Advanced Editing)

Create a media piece for DVD, broadcast or other distribution — Flip Video clips will be a part of a more complex video that includes footage from other sources, still photos, and/or voice-over narration.

You will want to use a full-featured editing package to support your more sophisticated use of media. We suggest starting with freely available software: either Windows Movie Maker or [Video Spin](#) (free download but \$15 for the important upgrade) for Windows, or [iMovie](#) for Mac (pick the version that is compatible with your system. There are Vimeo basic tutorials for iMovie [here](#) and Windows Movie Maker [here](#). Final Cut Pro users can also follow the steps below.

1. Organize all of your material. Put all still photos, music files, storyboards and narration files into a folder on your computer and label it **Project X**.
2. Download the footage from your Flip Camcorder onto your computer. It is easiest to open it up like an external drive, open the DCIM folder, and then the 100VIDEO folder. Your clips will be there. Copy and paste them to your **Project X** folder. Alternatively, from within the FlipShare software you can select a clip and right click (PC) or cntrl click (Mac) it and select export. This will keep that video organized within your FlipShare software but also allow you to export an exact replica to the location of your choice.
3. Import your files into your editing system. Each of the programs is a little different but generally you can either drag and drop or click File -> Import.
4. Start putting the pieces together. Record a quick narration, lay down a music track and try some simple transitions. FYI, effects often take away more than they add so keep it simple - let your subjects tell your compelling story.

Learn More

Editing is not easy, but you can improve if you know what you want to make and you are willing to put in a little time. Watch lots of videos and see which ones you like, then model yours after theirs. Here are a few resources to learn more about video production:

The folks at freevlog have put together an [excellent piece](#) about how to create a video blog, soup to nuts.

Current.TV has put together [this resource](#) for training. This section focuses on editing but there is a lot of useful stuff in there. . . so dig around.

Blip.tv encourages everyday folks to start making their own episodes, and [this](#) is what they have put out for support.

Finally, [this](#) video by our partner Witness, does not outline specific tips for editing but talks about the importance of storytelling and is valuable to watch for the editing techniques utilized for the piece.

Video Distribution

There are dozens of online video sharing sites out there and they each have something a little different to offer. We have found these to be the easiest and most effective ways to get your footage out there to an audience that will appreciate the work that you do.

Sites With a Social Focus

These sites are all connected with a larger social change mission. Browse through them to see which will work best for your organization.

[DoGooder](#) - *DoGooderTV enables nonprofit organizations to present new videos and existing media to new audiences. Once site visitors see the compelling stories of nonprofits, DoGooderTV gives them a direct way to donate to the organization, join, volunteer or simply find out more information.*

[YouTube Non-Profit](#) - *Video is a powerful way to show your organization's impact and needs, and by designating a "Nonprofit" channel on YouTube, you can deliver your message to the world's largest video community.*

[The HUB](#) - *Through the Hub, individuals, organizations, networks and groups around the world are bringing their human rights stories and campaigns to global attention and to mobilize action to protect and promote human rights.*

[MTV Think](#) - *MTV has launched Think to give young people everywhere the opportunity to make your community and your world better. The Think community provides the tools so you can do just that.*

[Causecast](#) - *Causecast, dubbed "a one stop philanthropy shop" by TechCrunch, is a platform where philanthropy, social networking, entertainment and education converge to serve a greater purpose.*

[MySpace Impact](#) - *MySpace's hub for social and civic engagement – a channel for the causes and campaigns MySpace users care about. As part of the mission of IMPACT, we assist not-for-profit organizations and political campaigns in their efforts to make a positive difference in the world.*

[TeacherTube](#) - *Our goal is to provide an online community for sharing instructional videos. We seek to create a need for a more educationally focused, safe venue for teachers, schools, and home learners.*

General Video Hosting

If you need a place to host your videos in order to embed on your own website, share through email or spread through a social network, the following sites might be good for you.

[Vimeo](#) - [Blip.tv](#) - [YouTube](#) - [Facebook](#) - [MySpace](#)