

9

Mistakes to Avoid

When
Filming For
Social Media



WELCOME

When you want to use video to communicate your message and engage your audience, a professional film is certainly the way to go. Partnering with a video production company that's well versed in the challenges that come with working with a variety of industries will allow you to bring your creative vision to life.

Unfortunately, resources and budgets don't always allow for a film crew to come in and take the reins. But never fear – that's where your trusty smartphone comes in.

You can use your smartphone to record videos for social media, so long as you follow the pro tips and keep your brand reputation in mind. At [Wildwood Media](#), our team of videographers has been crafting high-quality, compelling films for businesses and non-profits across the UK since 2014.

We've put together a list of tips that will help you avoid the common pitfalls that come along with DIY filming. Follow these, and you'll be sure to record a handful of thumb-stopping videos for social media.



1

Focus on LIGHTING

Bad lighting is enemy number 1 when it comes to filming your project. No one wants footage that's blurry, off colour or so dark that your audience has to squint to try and work out what they're watching! Without good lighting, you run the risk of having your time, energy, and sometimes even money completely wasted – something nobody should have to deal with.

So what is 'good' lighting and how do we get it?!

'Good lighting', put simply, means lots of it! But there is a happy medium here – while we want lots of light for clear, bright footage – you don't want so much that your film looks bleached and washed out, so there are certain areas you'll want to consider when it comes to getting the perfect lighting (more on that later).





Why do you need it?

Good lighting is essential to good film because it makes everything look, well, better. Whatever your industry happens to be, your social content should look clear and professional. This is especially important for those videos that will live on your social media feeds and not disappear after 24 hours – people look at feeds and their aesthetics these days whether we like it or not – and you can only capture that polished look with good lighting.

Having said that, while not quite as essential as feed content, great lighting will also help you out when it comes to filming videos for Instagram and Facebook stories (which disappear after 24 hours). Most viewers are used to seeing video that's a bit rough around the edges here – so seeing your sleek and professional presentation is an easy way to immediately help your brand stand out from the rest.

But don't worry – getting good lighting for DIY films doesn't need to cost the earth or feel like a complex math's equation! We're here to make it a piece of cake...





Creating the perfect light source



Here's how you can take advantage of good lighting for your next video.



Creating the perfect light source

1

Sunlight – Also known as ‘natural light,’ is your best friend – it’s free and, well, the best light there is. Set yourself up facing a window, hit record and let the sun do the rest! You’ll be reaping the rewards of that natural, soft daylight throughout your film – but beware of direct sunlight – avoid this as it will create harsh shadows and have your film subject squinting – not a good look!

2

Lamplight – If you find yourself filming in the evening or have an inside space that doesn’t get a lot of natural light – you’ll need to find a lamp. Most UK bulbs emit what’s called ‘tungsten’ light, which often gives off a more warm, yellow tone. This isn’t great for filming as it’s often less flattering than natural light. Try looking for lightbulbs that are listed between 3600 and 5000K on the Kelvin Scale as these will give off a more ‘natural cool light’ than others.

3

LED Light – Finally, if your budget allows, we’d recommend an LED light – ring lights are great for filming for social media and they don’t have to break the bank! You can pick one up for around £30 – £50. These generally give off light that’s comparable to daylight – but make sure you get one that comes with a ‘diffuser’. This will soften the light and give the illusion of more expensive equipment when it comes to your polished and enhanced images.

2

Consider SOUND



If your sound is terrible, it really doesn't matter if you've captured footage worthy of an Oscar. Unless you're producing mime – sound matters! And it matters a lot! If your sound is bad you run the risk of your viewers focusing on how poor the sound quality is as opposed to your actual video content. This is bad news for your messaging which will end up completely lost in translation.

Even though we're living in the instagrammable age where the focus is always on aesthetic visuals, sound makes up 50% of your video so it's just as important as the visual elements, or, if you ask us, even more so. There's a reason that the video production industry makes a point of saying 'The viewer won't notice the audio is great, but they recognise instantly when it is poor.'

So, now we agree that sound quality is the pièce de résistance to film, what can you do to make sure you're optimising it? While it's true that the best options require you to spend some money, all is not lost – there are a handful of options that won't break the bank.

Top 3 tips for getting great sound

1

Remove background noise – while you might not be able to entirely eliminate all traces of background noise – some will be out of your control – you can focus on those that are within reach. E.g. Turn off the television or radio even if it's on in another room – you'd be surprised how far sound travels! Pause anything that might interrupt your filming and move to the quietest location you have.

2

Get ready for your closeup! – Avoid being too far away from your mic (or phone) – if you wanted someone to hear you, chances are you're not going to stand meters away from them and shout – you're going to go closer to them. Same goes for your mic! The best sound happens when you're close to your microphone because it can actually pick up what you're saying!

3

Invest in a proper microphone – the best sound will come from a device that’s dedicated to capturing sound so you might choose to consider buying an inexpensive microphone. Each mic will be good for different purposes so you’ll need to work out which will be best for you. If you’re looking to make your voice sound clear and crisp you’ll want to look for a lavalier (or lav for short) microphone. These are great for use being clipped onto clothing and they can also plug into your camera or smartphone – easy! As always, these will have varying price points but you can get them from anywhere between £20–£70. If on the other hand, you wanted to capture more of the environment sound (what we call ‘atmos’) you can find yourself a ‘shotgun’ mic, which is brilliant at capturing the sounds of anything it’s pointed directly at. These can set you back anywhere from £40–£150 if you want a decent one.



3

Start STRONG

With the rise of platforms like Tik Tok and other short-form content like Instagram reels giving content creators just 60 seconds to record, we've seen a dramatic decrease in the human attention span. Gone are the days of 40 minute YouTube videos - we're used to content that's quick and snappy and our brains are hungry for it! And you might not even have 60 seconds - some studies have shown we lose concentration after a measly 8 seconds!

To be in with a chance of engaging your audience your video needs to grab their attention and it needs to do it fast. How do you do this? It's a saturated market and with platforms like Instagram pushing video content like reels - everyone is doing them. So you need to stand out. What would you choose to stop and watch amongst the sea of videos? Start with something that has a big impact - maybe a high octane song, eye-catching imagery or a captivating sound bite.

Now you've got their attention it's just a case of keeping it - should be easy huh? Wrong! 8 seconds doesn't take long to count down and that human's attention span is quickly deteriorating!





4

Keep
LENGTH
in mind

Think about what your video needs to get its message across and stick to that. It can be tempting to leave in things because you've spent time and energy filming them – whether that's things you've said or shots that you think look good – but it's important to remember – never make your video longer than it needs to be. After the first set of edits have been made it's time to go back again and see what else you can cut that won't take away from the overall message. Be brutal with this.

It might be difficult to leave these bits on the cutting room floor but your video will end up tighter and as a result, will likely be engaged with more. And there's never any waste when it comes to filming – you can repurpose the shots that didn't make it for future use in social media content – win-win!



5

Listen carefully while

EDITING

To make your video as concise and attention-grabbing as possible, you'll need to cut down any interviews as much as you can. People aren't robots and interviews can feel awkward for some people. 'Umms' and 'aahs' are a normal part of human dialect, but they don't make great interview fodder. If your subject is off-screen (with their voice still heard over the shots), edit out any pauses or those 'ums' and 'aahs' - these all add up and you can save a lot of time by removing them. Your interview will feel a lot more professional and snappy once this has been done too - result!

Another top tip is to put your critical cap on and really listen to what's being said - a lot of people will tend to waffle a lot when answering a question with just the beginning and ends being the key to their answer. While not always the case - cutting out the middle part can give the impression of a more cohesive answer.

6

Use a
SONG
to guide you



You might want to choose a specific time duration to try and stick to for your video before you even pick up the camera. A nicer way than simply sticking a timer on is using a song to guide you that fits that duration. Be sure you don't use copyright music unless you have permission, or use a track from a quality royalty-free library.

When you do this you'll be forced to edit the video so that it wraps up within the boundaries of the music – and remember – the most engaging videos are short and sweet, so you could think about using only the beginning or chorus of a song as you film as well.





7

Don't forget about **SUBTITLES**

An overlooked but important part of video editing is subtitles. It goes without saying that subtitles are essential for those hard of hearing, so adding them to your videos makes them more inclusive of people who would otherwise struggle to engage with your content. But more than that – a lot of people watch videos on social media with low volume so as not to disrupt those around them who might not want to hear! Maybe they're even watching them somewhere they shouldn't be (see also – work!)

But if you can't properly follow what's being said how long are you going to watch? Not very! So making sure you've got these included in your video is important.

If you're not sure how to add subtitles, never fear – it's not as hard as it once was! Generating free subtitles is possible but they're not always the most accurate. If this isn't too much of an issue for you then using YouTube is a cost-effective way to do this.

Even if you don't publish your video to the video platform you can simply start up an account, upload your video, and have Google create your subtitles for you. Download the .SRT (subtitle) file and upload this alongside your video and voila! Instant, free captions!

if you're after real accuracy with your subtitles, you'll need to be paying for them. Using services like Rev, Descript and Happyscribe will get you perfect captions and you can expect to pay about £1 per minute of video - you'll be happy you kept your video so short and snappy!

You might also want to look into services like the above that will allow for users to 'burn' their subtitles onto their videos - in layman's terms, this means the subtitles will show up wherever your video plays. But do note that doing this means your audience won't be able to turn these off - not a huge problem but something to consider. These kinds of files often work great on platforms like Instagram who won't allow you to upload an .SRT file.

While adding subtitles might feel like an added stress, the good news is that they work, and you can expect to reach more people and garner more views on your content when you use them. You might feel that subtitles ruin your artistic vision and while the aesthetics of a video are important - what's the point if no one views it?! More people will tune in when subtitles automatically appear on screen than without so they're definitely worth the hit!

8

Get the **RESOLUTION** and aspect ratio right

Now that you've got the proper gear, it's time to think about the resolution and aspect ratio of your film. If those two things sound unfamiliar, don't worry! We'll explain.

Having a video with the right size and shape is key, as each social media platform can be picky about the types of video they feature. Should you get it wrong, you risk not having many viewers. And that's what we don't want!

Aspect ratio can be a bit technical, so we'll make it simple and stick to the three main sizes you should focus on when creating your videos.

But first, there are two main resolutions you'll find when filming your video: 4K or 1080p. Don't let the numbers fool you though - these two resolutions are basically the same rectangular shape as your TV at home! 4K is just a bigger version of 1080p, meaning it's more detailed.

Your video shape will sometimes be called its 'aspect ratio,' and most of the time, you'll be creating videos that have a 16:9 aspect ratio. But there are two other aspect ratios to consider as well, which we'll cover now!



1920x1080
(16:9)

If you're filming a video on your smartphone, it's most likely in this 16:9 aspect ratio! These are the kinds of videos that are best watched on a full screen – if you've ever turned your phone sideways to watch something, that means it has a 16:9 aspect ratio.

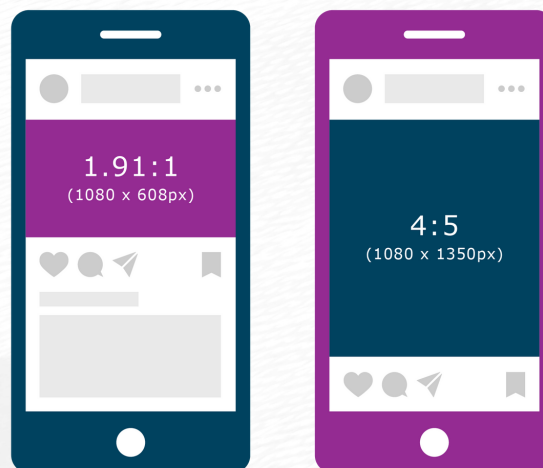
Though great for viewers to watch should they be on a computer or able to flip their device sideways, this aspect ratio isn't the best when it comes to viewers scrolling through their social media feeds. Since it's a rectangle, your video won't take up as much vertical space – not the best when trying to grab someone's attention! You want your film to take up all of their screen and entice them to watch. If you want to create a video that takes up more space, you'll want to use the next aspect ratio!



1080x1350 (4:5)

A 4:5 aspect ratio will create a film that's more of a chunky rectangle – no turning your smartphone here! Users can watch your video as they scroll through their feed. It'll fill their screens and (hopefully!) cause them to stop and pay attention. The image below shows you how these first two aspect ratios are different.

Instagram Supports An Aspect Ratio of 1.91:1 To 4:5 For All Feed Videos



So, moral of the story here? The 4:5 aspect ratio is perfect if you're looking to reach your audience as they're scrolling through social media. But, you'll have to edit your video accordingly, and will lose a part of your film if you filmed it in a 16:9 aspect ratio!

We think that short-form content under 60 seconds is perfect when shared in that 4:5 aspect ratio. Remember: attention spans are short – and only getting shorter! So if you have a quick flick you want to share, make sure it takes up as much of a viewer's screen as possible. This way, they're less likely to miss it!



1080x1920
(9:16)

As you can see, this third aspect ratio is our first recommendation in reverse. What's it good for? Facebook and Instagram Stories! This aspect ratio takes up the entire screen, perfect for story content. When your video is filmed in 9:16, viewers won't have to tip their phone sideways, since your content will be filmed in portrait instead of landscape.

Those pesky attention spans are always getting in the way, and with this aspect ratio it's no different! We recommend keeping 9:16 video under 30 seconds when sharing it to your stories. Otherwise, it will span multiple stories, leading your viewers to tap forward and forget about what you're trying to say. Short and sweet is the name of the game here!

9

Work with a **PROFESSIONAL**

When you're not a videographer, you risk sharing video content that lacks professionalism – which is exactly what we're here to help you avoid! Choosing the right video production company to work with is a risk. We get it! That's why we work with you as part of your team.

At Wildwood Media, our highly qualified team has a broad skill set having worked across all genres of video production – so whether you're a charity, or a corporate enterprise you can rest assured you always have the expertise you need when you contract our services.

Planning a video project is a big deal – it's okay to be nervous here! Such a big project is an investment of your time and money, not to mention that it can significantly impact your reputation. So we make sure you get it right – the first time

We produce engaging videos that make your job feel easier – not more stressful. Because broadcasting your message clearly and professionally should never have to feel like a gamble!



Whether a promotional film, training video or site tour, we'll maximise your investment, help you repurpose footage, and keep your costs to a minimum. Here's how you can get started with us:

1

Share

Tell us about your project so we can fully understand what you want your video to achieve and why.

2

Plan

We take time to understand your priorities and create a comprehensive plan to navigate challenges and mitigate risks. This way, you can bring your creative vision to life within the constraints you face.

3

Film

We take care of everything for you, from lighting and location to sound and scripts. Together, we'll agree on a schedule so everyone knows where to be and when. Then, we'll edit your footage and apply high-quality, professional touches before giving you time to review it.

4

Enjoy

Share your video with confidence, knowing you have a film you can feel proud of. We leave you with a video that captivates your audience, with a clear message and superb cinematography, so everyone can experience the excellent care and professionalism you deliver.



**Book a call today
and let Wildwood
Media take care of
everything. We'll
make the process
simple from start
to finish – so you
never feel anxious
about making a
video again!**

Discuss Your Project With Us



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