

My name is Danielle Benzon and it's my job to help people like you create videos that feel fresh and fun and authentic and are really a pleasure to make.

I want to tell you about three technical secrets that are maybe keeping you back from creating the really professional high level videos that you deserve to be making.

Now I'm talking about do-it-yourself videos, actual professional videos are a whole other thing that we can talk about if you're interested, but for now I'm talking about filming in your basement, filming in your office, filming outside. Doing it yourself - selfie videos or on a tripod, but in a way that feels professional so the your audience can hear your message and not get distracted by some technical thing that's going wrong.

The first thing is sound.

I know that seems weird. It's a visual medium why is sound the most important thing?

Well if you think about it, when we're walking through life our soundscape is consistent. The sounds stay where they are no matter where I'm moving or what I'm doing, but my visual field is always changing. I'm moving my eyes, I'm moving my head, I'm going up and down and things are going in and out of focus. So we are a little bit more forgiving on some of the stuff on the visual side than we are on the sound side.

It's really important that your sound is clean, consistent and engaging.

Clean:

I mean your microphone isn't going "brkkrk" and crackling all the time, and also that there aren't too many background sounds. Background sounds are hard to control and you can't always get rid of them completely but they need to not be in competition with your voice.

Your voice always needs to be easy to hear no matter what is going on in the background.

Lapel microphones are fantastic for this because they are focusing on your voice and they're not focusing on everything else around you. If your microphone is in your camera and your camera is quite far away from you then that's not going to be the case, so be aware of that.

Consistent:

If you're moving close and far away from the camera your voice is going to come in and out. If your vocal energy is up and down it's going to come in and out and that's going to be hard for your audience to stay connected to, so make sure that your vocal tone, your vocal volume, and your relationship to your microphone are always consistent.

Engaging:

You have to be engaging in your sound on your video. It's so important because people are multitasking. They're on their Facebook, they're on their email and they're not always a hundred percent focused on you.

If you're speaking too slowly or you're taking too much time to think, or you want to wait until everyone comes on the video before you start talking about what you want to talk about, you're going to lose them and they're going to decide that you're not interesting even before you've started your content.

So if you're getting on video early because you want people to come on before you start your content - great! Have something to talk about. Have a story to share or some questions to ask. Have something to keep your audience engaged so you don't lose them before you start.

If you're one of those people who takes a long time to think in between different ideas I would really recommend pre-recording your video and rehearsing it a little bit better so you don't have long pauses in your video.

Also your vocal energy has got to be at a certain level.

You've got to be you, but you on a really excited day. Or you on a really enthusiastic day.

Unless you're doing a meditation video or something that requires a nice relaxed state, make sure that your vocal energy is excited and alive because your audience again is probably multitasking and you've got to keep their attention. If you speak too slowly you will lose their attention. (YouTube has this fantastic feature where you can watch videos at one and a half time, so for speakers that are speaking too slowly I'll just speed them up because it's really frustrating and I get annoyed and I get impatient if people are speaking too slowly.)

It's not like public speaking.

It's not like speaking in person.

You are competing for your audience's attention so you've got to be really on-form.

You've got to be really alive and really enthusiastic.

Or you're going to be not heard at all because your audience has switched off your volume and they're watching you on silent, possibly I believe on the toilet!

So you also always need to have captions.

When your sound is on it needs to be clean and consistent and engaging but sometimes your video won't have sound because your audience has switched it off so you need to always have captions for all of your video to cover that base.

So that's the first thing. That's sound.

The second thing is lighting.

Now lighting is really easy but it's amazing how many people get it wrong. You can't be in the dark. If your lighting isn't good enough for your camera to focus on your face properly that's a problem! You need to be lit. Your face needs to be the most lit thing in the frame, so if your background is lit more than your face that's a problem.

Now if we're inside it's really easy - just get two lights. Put one on each side, throw them at your face and you're done.

If you're outside it's a little bit more tricky because you don't have control over the sun or the clouds. Ideally you want to have a cloudy day so that it's a consistent, diffuse light. If it's a really sunny day you've got a problem because you're either looking into the sun and you're squinting into the sun when you're talking or you've got the sun behind you and you may feel fine but your audience can't see you and they'll be squinting into the sun when they're watching your video!

So make sure that your background isn't too bright. You don't want that to be distracting for your audience. You don't want the light to be too bright in your eyes because you don't want to be squinting, but you do want your face to be the thing that is the most lit so that it is grabbing the most attention. It is the most important thing in the frame.

The third thing is framing.

Similarly to lighting, in framing you want your face to be the most important thing, but you don't want your face to be the ONLY thing.

I see some people do this and it's okay for more casual videos but I would really be very careful with doing a kind of portrait selfie video when it's just your face. That's too intimate for me and I don't care how casual you are with your audience most of the time that's going to feel unprofessional to me.

I want, as an audience member, and I think most people want, something landscape.

Not just because it works on most platforms better, but also because it allows for more context because your background is the thing that's going to be giving you the most credibility. Most of that professional feel is going to come from your background and

you can do so much with your background. You can create a really strong vibe, to be like whatever your brand is. However you want your audience to feel, you can really create that with your background.

It mustn't be ALL about your background. If you're this tiny ant in the middle of the background that's obviously not a good thing, but I kind of like to have about 2/3 background and 1/3 me. So you can see in my videos I've got a third of "context" on either side of me and I'm approximately the middle third.

You can cut yourself off at a mid-shot or at a mid-close up. I wouldn't go in closer than that. I really prefer a mid-shot because I'm a hand talker and I don't like my hands coming in and out of the frame. I think that's weird so I prefer to be a little bit further back and I like having the context of my background to help my audience understand what they're experiencing, to understand where they're at and what they're supposed to be feeling.

So that is sound, lighting and framing.

Bonus Secret: Angle

The last piece of framing which isn't really framing but I really need to mention because it's super important, is the angle that your camera is positioned at.

Ideally you want it to be eye level. You don't want your camera to be below you because we really don't want to see up your nose, as beautiful as your nose may be. We really don't want to see your nose hairs. A lot of people when they're doing selfie videos will hold their camera too low or they'll hold their camera way too high. Then we get floating-head syndrome and that's really weird as well. So you want it to be eye level plus an inch, or even plus a centimetre, even better.

Almost eye level, but just with a little bit of an angle so that it gives you nice jaw definition.

That's not quite framing but it's close and I'm squeezing it in there because it's really important to me. I feel so bad when people do these gorgeous videos but you're seeing up their nose.

So if you want to have a professional feel, if you want people to take you seriously: ideally some sort of landscape frame where we can feel the context of what's going on around you and really pay attention to that angle.

Now that is all you need to know to create professional feeling videos.

3 TECH SECRETS TO MAKING QUALITY VIDEO www.TheInspiredSpeaker.com

There's a lot more on authenticity so I'm going to make another video about that because I think it's really important, but as far as the technical things go, the three secrets that are going to really make or break your videos - you've got it!

You know everything that you need to know to make your videos feel authentic and professional and for your audience to be able to hear your message and not get distracted by all that technical stuff that's going on.

Now that you know these things - go out give them a try.

I look forward to hearing how it goes.

Much love,
Danielle Benzon

