



bgreen
ecological film festival

TECHNICAL GUIDE

HOW TO CREATE A SPOT

TECHNICAL GUIDE FOR THE CREATION OF A VIDEO SPOT

1. PRESENTATION

This guide aims to help youngsters in the creation of video spots so as to facilitate their participation in **bgreen // ecological film festival**.

2. WHAT TO BEAR IN MIND WHEN THINKING ABOUT CREATING A VIDEO SPOT?

In the production of a video spot, you have to remember that the structure is different from a movie or longer videos. Therefore, it is important that you address a strong and clear main theme, have few characters and a basic situation that can be clearly addressed/solved. A short introduction, a fast conclusion and the emphasis on the development are the basis for a good spot. Thus, what truly matters is the expressive power of the image.

The audiovisual language has its own rules and grammar. It uses two types of elements:

- **Visual elements – the images;**
- **Sound elements – soundtrack, music, sound effects and silence.**

The success of a spot is partly due to sound. This complements and empowers image. There are many ways to tell a story and, regardless of particular style, there are certain fundamental rules we must respect so that our message is effectively conveyed and understood by the audience, namely:

3. Shots

The most important thing in a director's work is to gather images that will satisfy the interest and keep the audience curious.

A shot is an uninterrupted recording. Its duration may vary. Close up shots capture the spectator's attention to a detail or an action. Wide shots provide more visibility and allow the incorporation of a wider range of descriptive elements in the image.

3.1 Types of shots

Wide Shot: In this shot we highlight the environment in which the action unfolds but lose the details of characters and smaller objects. People appear somewhat distant in a very wide space. Places acquire more importance than characters.

The wide shot enables us to see the place/space: a city, a house in the middle of a field, a stadium, etc.

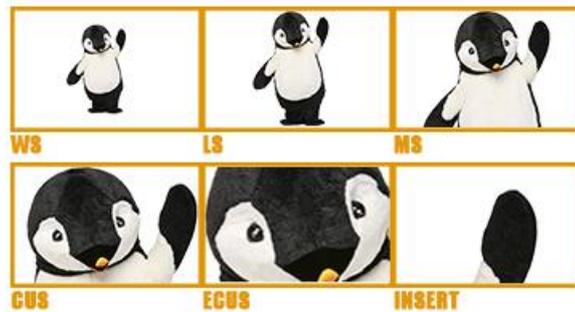
Long Shot: It is possible to see the picture of a character's entire body. His/her figure occupies the space between the top and bottom of the screen but also allows the viewer to partially become aware of the surroundings.

Medium shot: Here it is possible to see the characters from the waist up, allowing us to see the expressions in their faces and also the direction of their look.

Close up shot: It is possible to see the head, the face and the shoulders of the character thus enabling us to understand the expression and the feelings he/she is conveying through their visage. The place where the character is located loses importance as it cannot longer be seen.

Extreme close up shot: The traces in the character's face occupy the whole screen enabling us to focus all our attention in an expression of fear, anguish, pleasure, among others.

Insert: This shot makes us concentrate all our attention in the detail of a face or an object which possesses expressive narrative importance.

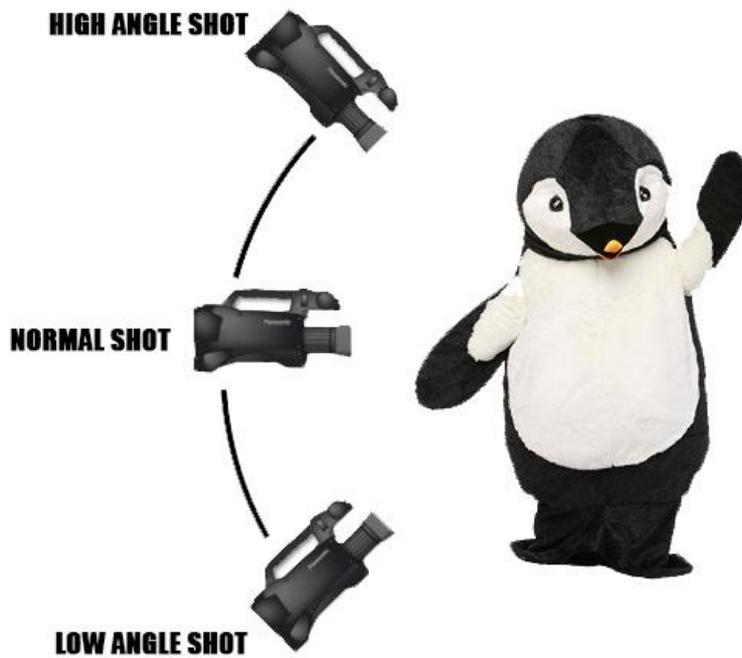


4. Types of camera angles

High angle shot: When the camera is positioned at a certain downwards angle. The object is seen from above. It is normal to use such an angle to show a character's inferiority. For example: A child seen from above becomes even smaller.

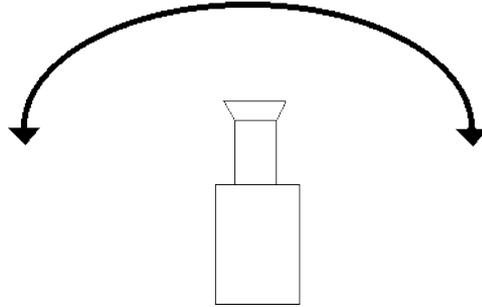
Low angle shot: Contrary to the high angle shot, the camera is placed at a low angle facing upwards thus highlighting size. It conveys strength and authority.

Normal shot: When the camera is positioned at the same level as the object.

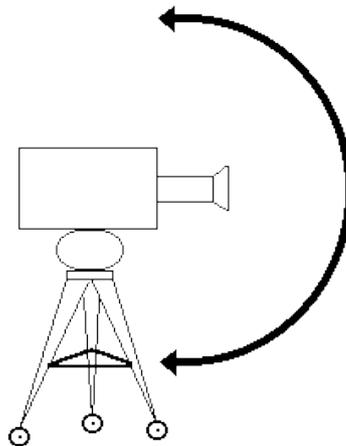


5. Types of camera movements

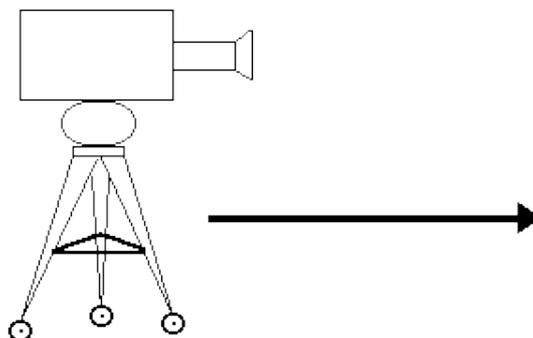
Pan: The camera is fixated on a tripod and goes from left to right or vice-versa. The speed should be steady, not too fast nor too slow. A good panning must be constant and stable.



Tilt: The camera, fixated on a tripod, moves up and down or vice-versa.



Travelling: The camera physically moves from one place to another.



Zoom: Without changing position, the director can come in closer or further away from the object by simply manipulating the zoom. We mustn't overuse it as it may cause dizziness in the viewer.

6. Sound

Just like image, sound generates meaning. It is important to think about it taking into account its expressiveness and in accordance with the idea or mood we want to convey. Unlike many may believe it is not a secondary element of the picture. In a video spot, sound holds the same importance as picture as conveyor of a message. The effect achieved by combining sound and image could hardly be achieved with only one of these elements. There are different ways to capture sound such as recording it with microphones at the time of the shoot – direct sound. It can be done directly with the camera or with independent recorders that can be later synchronized with the picture that corresponds to each step of the post-production.

6.1 Dialog or voices: It can be between two or more characters that talk or sing. With a voiceover we can also present the thoughts of a character or the voice of the narrator.

6.2 Sound effects: These are the sounds that derive from the characters actions. For instance, if the character is walking, we should be able to hear the footsteps.

In this category we can also insert the surrounding sound which is the sound that is characteristic of the place where the action is unfolding. For example, in a big city characteristic sounds may be cars, horns, etc.

6.3 Music/soundtrack: The soundtrack may be a part of the action itself.

7. Light

The existence of the movie itself depends on light, i.e. it allows us to see the pictures. Therefore, it is important to program and experiment on the most suited effects according to the action we want to show.

8. WHAT ARE THE CREATION STAGES OF A SHORT MOVIE/SPOT?

The process of creating a movie is composed of a series of tasks that are a part of three different stages:

In audiovisual creation, the most important thing is that the chosen criteria are the ones the group considers to be most useful in order to organize the whole work and to prevent misunderstandings.



8.1 PRE-PRODUCTION

Pre-production is the first phase of the work, when the movie is planned. It includes writing the script, searching for the best places to shoot, building sets, creating wardrobe, and so forth.

8.1.1 Defining the idea

Defining the idea implies setting the theme of the spot that should be as concrete and straightforward as possible. After this, the target audience should be considered (youngsters, teenagers, parents, urban or rural population, etc.). Later on, it is necessary to define the aim of the spot, which represents the message that is conveyed to the audience.

8.1.2 Writing the script

Remember to create a synopsis, i.e. a short text that summarizes the general ideas of the spot and presents its characters and situations.

In the script, you should write the character's lines, their actions and describe the surroundings where the shoot should take place.

Later on, a storyboard should be done, where the key scenes are described, how the characters are inserted in the sets, what shots should be taken and which angles should be used. Here are some audiovisual-related concepts and names to be used in the writing of the script:

Example of a storyboard:



Page 1 – Storyboard of bgreen // ecological film festival 2013's spot.

8.1.3 Technical team.

There are six main functions:

Director – conceives, plans and directs the production from the initial idea till its conclusion. He/she directs the recording and in editing checks that the final product is in accordance with the initial idea/concept.

Producer – leads, manages and supervises the contents of a production. He/she enables the realization of the production as he/she is in charge of obtaining the equipment (cameras, lights, etc.), the actors, the set design, and so on.

Camera operator – works in direct articulation with the director and is in charge of recording the images.

Gaffer - Ensures the needs regarding artificial lighting in interior and exterior scenes.

Sound recorder – Records the audio.

Script supervisor/ Continuity supervisor – takes notes on which scenes have already been shot.

All the aforementioned functions may, at times, require the need for backup staff or assistants.

8.1.4 Finding the best set

It is necessary to look for the places/locations that best fit the production.
For example: finding places with little noise in case voice capture is needed.

9. PRODUCTION

Once the pre-production is finished, it is time to start shooting. This is the production phase.

9.1 Recording formats

All videos must be recorded and edited in digital media.
Recommended resolutions: PAL 16:9 or HD.
Suggested export formats: MPEG-2, WMV, MP4, MOV, FLV.

10. POST-PRODUCTION

Once the shooting is completed, you will be able to start editing. This phase is called post-production and the techniques hereby used can provide your spot with a unique style and rhythm. It is easy to edit scenes with a computer by using video edition software. It is in this phase that you are able to introduce sound and apply effects and transitions

10.1 Types of transition:

Direct cut: going from one image to the next without any type of transition.

Fade out / in: The ending of the scene becomes gradually darker until it fades completely, transitioning to the next scene that will become gradually visible.

Cross dissolve: In this case, the scene fades out while another starts fading in, i.e. the end of the first scene is overlapped with the start of the following scene.

10.2 Types of editing:

Linear Edition: Follows the main action chronologically.

Parallel Edition: Two or more chronologically independent scenes unveil simultaneously to create an association of ideas.

Alternate Edition: Two or more scenes that occur at the same time in different locations but that consequently converge in a single scene.

E.g. A car chase that shows alternately the chaser and the person being chased.

Inverted Edition: When we change the chronological order of events with flashbacks or flash-forwards.

10.3 Edition software

If you have a computer, you can edit your own spot with any video edition software. There is free software available that is normally previously installed on your computer such as Windows Movie Maker.

You can also use professional software, which normally has a lot more tools that enable a more detailed image edition such as color correction, etc.

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