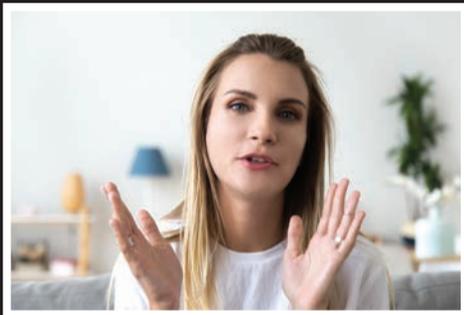




8 essential tips
for recording effective
video content with
your smartphone

WHO IS THIS GUIDE FOR?

Whether you are a small business owner or the CEO of a multi-national corporation, the need to communicate through video content is essential.

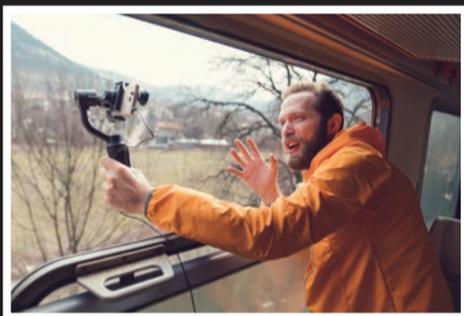


Today, everyone has a brilliant video recording device in their pocket, but may not understand the best practice to getting great audio and visuals from their smartphone.



Some great video content ideas you could produce with your smartphone for your business marketing and communications include:

- Basic online course with video modules
- Filming presentations and seminars
- Business updates
- Vlogs
- Product demonstrations
- Social media updates
- Customer testimonial videos
- Educational content
- and plenty more....

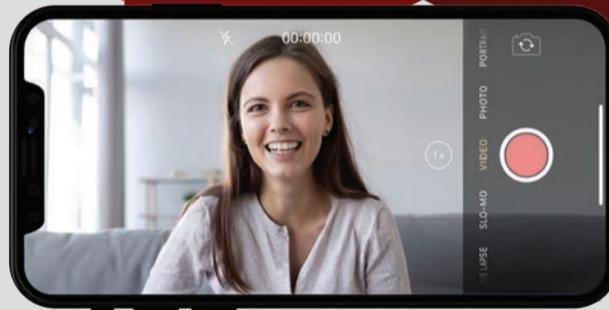


This guide will take you through the basics, covering topics such as lighting, best framing, audio, choosing ideal locations and what to do with your video once you've finished recording.

We also give you some ideas on what accessories you can add to your smartphone to really enhance your videos.



Implementing the tips from this guide will be sure to take your smartphone videos to the next level.



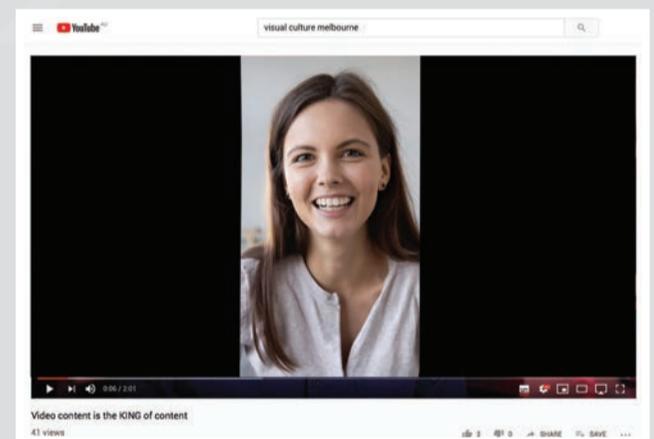
#1 WHERE TO SHOW YOUR VIDEO?

The first thing to determine before setting up your smartphone to record video content is to decide where the video will be shown. Will you be using it for social media? For your website? For your internal Learning Management System?

These platforms all have different options for frame size and orientation. The most common orientation is for standard wide screen/landscape, which is ideal for YouTube, Vimeo or your own internal video platform. This orientation also works well for LinkedIn and Facebook.

For Instagram and Tik Tok, a square format could work or if you are producing daily video stories, then the portrait orientation may work best.

Have a good look through these different platforms and decide which style best suits your purpose.



Decide where the video will be displayed to decide on which orientation to film. This example shows the wrong orientation for YouTube and other horizontal players.

#2 CHOOSING A LOCATION

Where is the best place to film your video? There are so many options you can explore, but ensure it's a location that best represents your business and message. One option is to simply film in your office, studio or home. Find a nice background with some colour, but make sure it doesn't distract too much from you as the main subject. An office with some nice artwork, vase of flowers, lamps etc can work. If you have some business banners or artwork, you could use those as a backdrop as some subtle advertising.

Try to avoid filming against a plain white wall. You may choose to film outdoors, for an authentic video, why not try the walk and talk style. Audio and lighting is also a big factor, which we explain in more detail shortly.



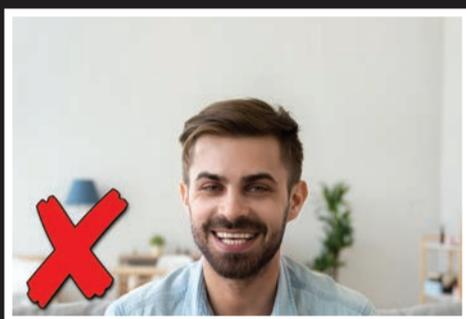
Choose a backdrop that best represents your brand and personality but ensure it doesn't distract from the subject.

#3 SET YOUR POSITION

There are plenty of options as far as tripods which include a smartphone attachment. Selfie sticks are also a good option, most you can set up as a tripod which is quite handy.

Another option is to go handheld, smartphones these days have quite a good stabiliser built in to reduce some of that handheld movement, but if you're talking for a long period of time then maybe that isn't an option holding your arm out. You could get someone else to film for you, making it easier to position the frame. Even if they're going handheld, you're going to get a nice stable image and consistent framing of your shot.

Or if you want to go high-end, invest in a special Gimbal designed specifically for smartphones. You can capture some great cinematic style footage with these.



Too much headroom in this frame



Avoid cropping the subjects head



Ideal framing



Interview style setup and eyeline

#4 FRAMING YOUR SHOT

Once you've worked out how the smartphone will be positioned, decide if you want a tight or a wide frame. Remember, if you don't have an external microphone then by all means get as close as you can to the smartphone while maintaining a decent frame.

Ensure you have the subject positioned correctly in frame - make sure the space above the head looks right, so don't allow too much empty space above the head and don't crop the top of the subjects head.

If you are filming interview style, ensure the subject's eyeline is looking to someone off camera, it's always best to position the frame so the person is slightly off centre.

You could even invest in a cost effective set of lenses that attach to your camera - ones that offer various width and depth for your footage - such as the fish eye look.

Which camera should you use on the smartphone - front or back? While it's easier to see the screen that you have the correct frame by using the front facing camera, the rear facing camera could be the best option as it is often a higher resolution for most smartphone models. If you decide to use the rear facing camera but concerned how the shot looks, record a test of the few seconds and then replay the footage. If you are happy with the framing, it's time to proceed to recording the full segment.





Use natural light when appropriate



Avoid bright backgrounds unless you have foreground lighting or can darken background



Use the sun as a backlight when filming outdoors

#5 LIGHTING TIPS

Lighting for your video is really important. While the camera on your smartphone records a high quality image, it's up to you to select the best lighting. Make sure it's not too bright or too dark where you film, unless you have alternative lighting sources.

For interior filming, ensure you avoid things like standing under a down light. Also some fluorescent lights may appear OK to the naked eye, but on the camera, these could flicker or give a rolling effect. If a lamp is available, you could use that as a light source. A dark space will also mean the smartphone tries to compensate by adding a lot of grain and artifacts to the footage.

If you have an office with a great view, be wary of the brightness of that background. As soon as your subject stands in front of a window, the camera will adjust the settings to suit the brightest part of the scene, leaving your subject in the foreground as a silhouette. You can manually adjust the camera's exposure for the subject in the foreground, but this will mean your background will become too bright. Consider using a half shade blind or you could change the angle of filming to use the natural light from the window to light your subject - no extra lighting required!

It is a good idea to invest in some cost effective LED lights which allow you to adjust the brightness and also the colour temperature. Make sure you get a light stand, along with some batteries to make your setup as portable and sturdy as possible.

When filming outdoors, use the natural light. Cloudy days and shade give a nice even lighting tone. On a sunny day, make sure the sun is behind your subject to act as a backlight, try not to face the sun while recording as the brightness may cause you to squint.

#6 AUDIO RECORDING

For best audio results, try to find a nice quiet room. Try to avoid things like noisy air conditioners, busy traffic or even a radio. But if your only option is to use a space that has some noise, such as a busy warehouse, you could show the source of noise in the background to help the viewer understand the context of the location.

If you are only using the built-in microphone of your smartphone, try to keep the phone close, no more than a meter away otherwise it's going to pick up a lot of background noise. But also factor in your framing. As mentioned before, run a test to check your framing and audio levels.

I would highly recommend purchasing an external microphone such as a lapel microphone that connects to your smartphone via a cable (you can also get extenders for the length of the cable and adaptors for newer smartphone connections). It allows for good quality audio as it's more directional, mainly picking up your voice and reducing the background noise. There are other options for smartphone recording devices. It's a very good investment.



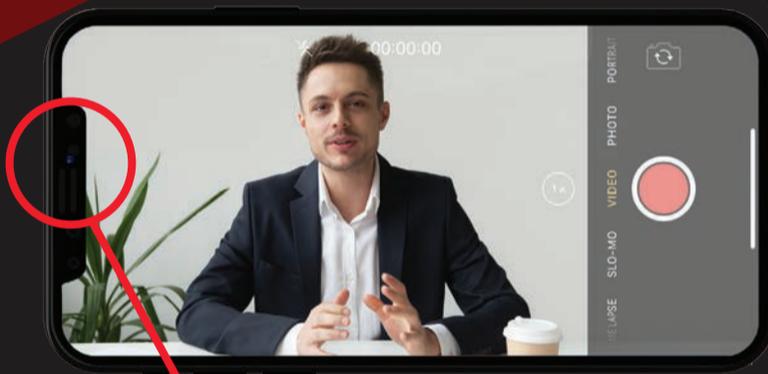
#7 EYELINE AND DELIVERY

OK, so now you're just about ready to hit that record button. But a few final things to consider.

Firstly, when you are delivering straight to camera (down-the-barrel), there is one important thing to remember. If you are filming content yourself without assistance, you should have your smartphone positioned so the screen is facing you, so you can check on framing. But when you are ready to speak to camera, don't look at the screen, instead, look at the tiny camera positioned near the screen. If you look at yourself on screen, that recorded footage is actually going to show you looking slightly off camera, not ideal in maintaining the viewers attention. So, get used to speaking directly to the camera, it will make for much more engaging content.

The other thing to consider when pressing the record button is to allow at least 2 seconds before you start speaking. If you try to speak at the same time as pressing record, there is a high chance you are going to cut out the first few words. And the same rule applies for the end of recording, don't reach out to stop recording or look away until you have finished talking, pause for a few seconds at the end.

Not happy with your first take? That's the beauty of digital video - you can easily delete a clip and start again. The more practice you get delivering to camera, the easier it will become.



For best eyeline, look at the camera lens, not at yourself on the screen

#8 RECORDING COMPLETE, NEXT STEPS...

Congratulations - you have successfully recorded a high quality video with your smartphone - now what to do with it?

Many social media apps allow you to upload straight from your phone into their platform. Check on the procedures for each of these platforms for guidance. There are some apps that allow you to edit on your phone, such as Adobe Rush, iMovie and others. You can even trim the top and tail of your clip directly from the smartphone.

But if you would like to do some more basic editing - such as combining a number of clips, adding graphics such as your logo or even captions - then it's best to transfer the video files to your computer where it may be easier to edit. There is plenty of edit software on the market, you just need to choose which works best for you - free or paid. You can use bluetooth or AirDrop, or even email the clips to yourself to work on those edits. Also consider filming some overlay footage if you are confident in editing that content into your final video.

It's also a good idea to backup your video files in a safe place for future reference.

Another great idea for your video content is to add captions. A good app is rev.com, where you can upload your video and have it transcribed and a captioned .srt file created of your dialogue. Then you can either 'burn in' the captions in an editing program or simply upload that .srt file when you post your video on Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube etc.

So there you have it, plenty of ideas on how to best use your smartphone for recording awesome video content. My final piece of advice is to test, test, test. Test the best platform for your audience, test the locations, test the audio, test the lighting and test your delivery to camera.

Good luck!



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