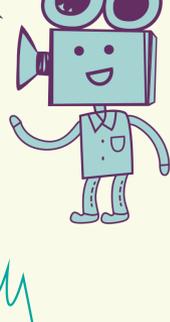


VIDEO STUDIO ON A BUDGET

Great video is key to building your brand, engaging your audience, and increasing your sales. So why don't more entrepreneurs include video on their websites or as part of their product offerings? Because they think it's too complicated or requires expensive equipment or high priced experts. The reality is that today, it's easier and more affordable than ever to create professional looking videos yourself.

Here's what I use to film all of my videos at BrainPower Studios.



Camera

Sony HDR-PJ540 - \$559 USD (Amazon.com)

There are lots of good quality, reasonably priced video cameras on the market today. This one has a built in projector, which is not a necessity. But, I use it in both my business and personal life, so I like it for showing home movies on the go. You can save about \$100 if you skip the built in projector feature. This camera works easily with Mac iMovie for video editing, produces high definition recordings, has a good built in microphone (and external microphone jack), one touch WiFi sharing and a battery that lasts through 10 hours of filming.



PRO TIP

Most smart phones today are capable of good quality video recording. So if you're on a tight budget, record on your smart phone. I still use my iPhone to record video when I am on the road.

Microphone

Vidpro Professional Lavalier - \$29.95 USD (Amazon.com)



This is a decent quality lavalier/lapel microphone for the price. The 20-foot cable works well for me because I don't pace around a lot while I am recording. If you need to move around a lot when you record, I recommend you upgrade to a wireless microphone like the Sennheiser XSW 12-A XS Wireless Lavalier System (about \$400 USD).

PRO TIP

Use an external microphone even if your video camera has one built in. Poor sound quality is the number one reason people won't watch your videos.

Lights

Canadian Studios 2400 Watt Video Studio Lighting Kit - \$299 CDN (Amazon.ca)

This well priced, entry-level lighting kit includes: Three 4-light bank, selectable light fixtures with adjustable stands, a 5 foot boom arm with clamp and sandbag, three 20" x 28" softboxes with inner and outer diffusers, twelve 5500K light bulbs (total 2400 Watts) and a carrying case. Everything you need to get you started.



PRO TIP

Filming indoors with overhead lights tends to create unflattering shadows. Filming outdoors or by windows can create an inconsistent look, as sunlight changes throughout the day. Using studio lights indoors and outdoors can create more flattering and consistent lighting, giving your videos a more professional look.

Video Editing Software

Screenflow (Mac) - \$119.99 USD (telestream.net)



ScreenFlow makes creating, editing & publishing videos and screencasts easy. It can capture video from your computer screen while recording input from your video camera, microphone and computer audio. Its familiar Apple software user interface makes it easy for Mac users to learn.

PRO TIP

iMovie, which comes pre-loaded on newer Mac computers, is a great video editing option for tight budgets. Consider Camtasia if you edit your videos on a PC.

External Hard Drive

Western Digital My Passport Ultra 2 TB Portable Hard Drive - \$99 USD (Amazon.com)

Tiny, fast and high capacity, this portable device allows you to back up all of your content onto the drive itself or to the cloud.



PRO TIP

Trust me, \$99 is a small price to pay to avoid losing all of your videos when your computer crashes. I speak from experience. Ouch.

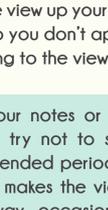
7 TIPS TO HELP YOU BE GREAT ON CAMERA

1 Properly Position Your Camera

Position the camera lens slightly above your eye level. Any lower and you risk giving your audience an unwelcome view up your nose. Sit or stand far enough back from the camera so you don't appear to be a giant talking head, which can be startling to the viewer.

PRO TIP

Look at the lens, not at your notes or your computer screen. However, try not to stare directly into the lens for extended periods of time, it looks unnatural and makes the viewer uncomfortable. Glance away occasionally, like you would in a face-to-face conversation.



2 Properly Frame The Shot

Once your camera is set to the right height, take a careful look at what it's capturing in the background. You don't want your viewer to be distracted by what's going on behind you.

PRO TIP

You can purchase simple, inexpensive photography backdrops on Amazon to keep the look clean and classy, or you can find a place in your home with an uncluttered background. Be aware of posters, photos, books on shelves or artwork behind you that might be distracting, offensive or not in line with your brand.

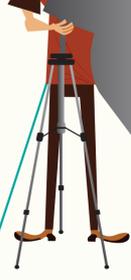


3 Great Lighting Looks More Professional

Natural light is great, but often it's not enough to prevent unflattering or distracting shadows.

PRO TIP

Using lighting kits indoors and outdoors will improve the quality of your video and make you look even better. Be especially aware of shooting with bright light or windows behind you. You will appear very dark and hard to see by contrast.

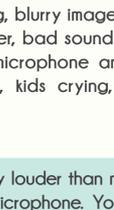


4 Sound Quality Makes Or Breaks You

People may forgive bad lighting, blurry images, wacky transitions and minor technical glitches, however, bad sound quality is an immediate turn off. Use a good quality microphone and eliminate distracting background noise (e.g. traffic, kids crying, dogs barking, ringing phones, etc.).

PRO TIP

Speak slightly louder than normal, even if you are wearing a microphone. You will come across as more energetic and enthusiastic. Vary the pitch, tone and pace of your speaking to keep a viewer engaged. You don't want to sound like a robot.



5 Personality is Priceless

People buy you before they buy your products and services. They want to do business with people they feel they know, like and trust. So, be yourself and let your personality shine through. Perfect doesn't sell - authenticity and enthusiasm does.

PRO TIP

Be casual and conversational and try not to read directly from your notes. Relax, smile and gesture normally (don't sit or stand like you are frozen in place). If you look comfortable and confident, you will make your viewers comfortable and confident.

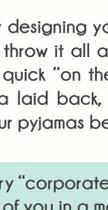
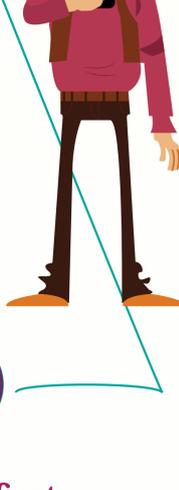


6 Be On Brand

You have likely spent time and money designing your logo, crafting your copy and building your brand. Don't throw it all away when you step in front of the camera. It's OK to do a quick "on the go" video with your iPhone, but unless your brand is ultra laid back your audience is not why you comb your hair and change out of your pajamas before you start filming.

PRO TIP

If your brand is very "corporate" and you want to film a quick video of you in a more casual setting and outfit, that's fine. Just quickly mention why you look different so your audience is not confused (e.g. Here I am on vacation in Maui...).



7 Practice Makes Perfect (or at least makes it easier)

Being great on video takes time. No matter how uncomfortable you are now, you will get better. So stick with it. Remember, you don't need to eliminate every "um" or "uh". People want to see the real you, not a stiff, overly "professional" version of you.

PRO TIP

Practice what you want to say a few times and then go for it. Don't try to memorize a script or you will end up feeling even more stressed as you try to recall every line you had written out. Look at the camera and imagine you are having a relaxed conversation with a friend. You will appear more confident and feel more relaxed.

