

CORPORATE HOLLYWOOD VS ONE - TAKE CHARLIE

Looking good on your corporate DVD and web casts!

I love the clients who 'wing-it' on camera and get it right the first time. We call them "One-Take Charlie" because we shoot them (record them) once and we're done. The production values for this kind of project are relatively predictable and easy to quote.

I recently video taped a group of senior executives presenting a *do-or-perish* initiative to their management team in preparation for an international roll-out. We had quoted a flat fee for recording a live presentation that would be distributed to their international offices, on a DVD. After the presentation, we reviewed the tape and it was a no-brainer that one part of the presentation failed to make the point. The executive was off-script. The client concurred and we made plans to re-shoot in a studio.

During preparations for the original recording, we had left a camera rolling while we tested equipment, and we had a few minutes of tape showing the empty stage. Our plan was to reshoot one executive on a chroma-key (green screen) background and then substitute the background with the empty stage from the original event. .

When the client arrived at the studio he had no notes. In fact, he never worked with notes. I asked him if he wanted to do a couple of practice runs and he said, "No, let's get it done so I can get back to the office". He moved into position, the cameras rolled and the executive launched into his presentation. He stopped about 30 seconds later. After several more stops his frustration level grew and things went from bad to worse. He left the studio and we used the original footage.

When someone tells me they are going to do it in one shot, I often say, "go ahead - make my day!"

The executive's original presentation to a live audience was smooth, polished, entertaining and engaging but he failed to make the point. He had the same problem in the studio. In fact, many executives are quite comfortable with on-camera interviews but asking them to talk direct to the camera when they are alone, is off-limits. Why?

The answer came from an executive in a management search firm. She has interviewed thousands of people and noted the stark differences between extraverts and introverts in an interview situation. Extraverts were quick to engage, were energized by having people around them, and answered questions on the fly. In short, they are quite comfortable 'winging it'. Introverts were harder to engage; they were more reflective and usually paused to think before giving a cautious, direct answer. Extraverts would often drift off-topic.

circulation is a permanent record of a bad performance. It might end up on You-Tube!

After reviewing thousands of hours of tapes, I am certain that those who take the time to script and rehearse, consistently produce better results, live or taped!

This experience is not unique to executives! Professional speakers are often smooth as butter on stage but I've seen them freeze in a studio. A local news reporter concurs that presenting to a camera is different from presenting to an audience. Actors read a script, rehearse, and then try several times on camera before they get it right. I work with a local television studio where we pre-record parts of a live-to-air show so fewer mistakes are seen on air. Bad scripts can be re-written. A bad, live performance, will always be bad.

Digital video can change how companies communicate with staff, channels and customers.


Here's the hook. When you're talking to a camera, there is no one to engage or respond to! Whether you're an introvert or an extravert, the things that normally prompt your dialogue are absent and this causes people to freeze, unless they are scripted and rehearsed.

I always recommend scripting and rehearsing the presentation but 'wingers' often respond with, "That will look phony!"

So why do it that way?

When you're 'live' on camera, anything that comes out of your mouth is seen by the viewer and you can't take it back. As you climb the ladder of success, the last thing you want in

But it goes much deeper than that. Scripted, well rehearsed executives spend less time in the studio. Their message is clearer and the cost of production is lower. That's before you consider the cost savings of online vs. in-person communications.

Digital video is quickly finding its way into corporate communications; it is changing the way we communicate with staff, channels, and customers. 



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