



BAMA 404: Video Production

CHAPTER 2: Scripting Technique

2.1 Video Script - Scenario

2.2 Concept

2.3 Structure

2.4 Content

2.5 Style

2.6 Format

2.6.1 The Opening

2.6.2 The Closing





- Video Script is also called scenario
- A video script is a product of Concept, Structure, Content, Style, and Format.
- Awareness of the role of each will result in scripts that are targeted to the audience and the goal of the video.
- These elements, plus an Opening that grabs the audience and a Closing that ties it all together are vital to the success of your video.





- The Concept is the device used to tell your story.
- The basic voice-over-picture information video is the most common.
- In many respects, it's a non-concept.



Structure

- **Structure is the way you build your case to tell your story.**
- **In simplest terms it is:**
 1. Beginning
 2. Middle
 3. End
- **The most common structure for informational videos is:**
 1. Introduction
 2. Features
 3. Testimonials
 4. Call to Action
 5. Conclusion





- It is helpful to understand the basic three-act dramatic structure, even when writing informational videos.
- Structure Moves the Audience.
- Structure is more than the skeletal design of the script. It is the mechanism that moves the audience. Structure Provides Transition Points.
- The Structural Outline is Like a Gearbox.





- Content is what goes into the script. A video project with an unclear goal will turn the script into a kitchen sink full of extraneous information.
- When in doubt, throw it out.
- The absolute best you can hope for is that viewers will remember three key points.
- Irrelevant content will make it more difficult to remember even those three.
- Of course, with corporate videos everyone in the organization wants their side of the story told -- more and more stuff. For the writer, it becomes a holy war to restrict the content, and by so doing, empowering the script.

■ **Less is More.**

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- Style concerns the look and feel of the video. Many corporate production styles are patterned after broadcast television styles such as news documentaries, video magazines, MTV, docudramas, commercials, and infomercials.





■ Writing Style.

- The major style malady I encounter is print-oriented writing. Print describes; video shows.

■ Give it Punch.

- Complex sentences full of commas and clauses have no place in a script. Short declarative sentences, phrases, and even one-word statements give punch to the narration. Read your copy aloud when you type.





■ Video Brochures.

- Corporate writers accustomed to churning out newsletters and brochures often approach the video script the same way -- *as words illustrated by pictures*. Hence, we've been given the oxymoron, the *video brochure*.

■ A Multi-Dimensional Palette.

- Unlike the two-dimensional print world, the video writer has a dynamic, multi-dimensional palette -
 - action, camera movement, point of view, sound effects, music, character, dialogue, narration, and even...silence.





- The script format must accomplish two goals:
 - It must facilitate a good read and serve as a production blueprint.
- Unfortunately, the more production detail in a script, the more cumbersome it is to read.





■ Blueprints for Production.

- Unlike feature screenplays which start out as spec scripts designed to entice a reader, agent, or producer, corporate scripts are essentially shooting scripts -- blueprints for production.

■ Like a Paper-Edit.

- The two-column format functions like a paper-edit -- the shot-by-shot relationship of audio to video functions like two running time lines. Theoretically, the producer can take the script into the edit suite and cut to match.

■ How Much Visual Detail?

- For a writer, the big question becomes, how much detail belongs in the video column? Many producers are really looking for a narration script. They prefer only vague visual suggestions from the writer because the visualization of the video is the producer's province.





- **Experience Preferred.**
- One caveat, though. The visual side of scriptwriting demands experience, preferably video production and editing experience. One stroke of the pen can add a whole day for an expensive location crew.
- When it comes to production, those nifty ideas that look good on paper always turn out to be harder to pull off than anyone anticipates. My production advice is to keep it simple then work hard on the set to make simple look polished.



The Opening



- The opening is the most crucial element of the script. In a 10 minute video, the first 30-45 seconds introduces the subject, the concept, the questions, and the style. Even more important, the opening needs to take your tired, jaded, skeptical viewers and grab them by the collar.
- With a screenplay, it is customary for script readers to judge the first 10 pages. If those first 10 pages aren't absolutely gripping, the reader's report comes back with a *PASS*.





- The video may have a goal, but for the audience, there has to be a pay-off. Completion in a script is like consummation in marriage, you have to deliver the goods. Good structure will bring the script to completion without having to impose an ending.





■ **Trouble with Endings.**

- Have you ever noticed how many Hollywood films have trouble with their endings? A sure sign that a Hollywood script has problems with structure is the freeze-frame ending -- an artifice to signify transformation.

■ **Transformation.**

- All films, even corporate/industrial videos, are ultimately about transformation. Hollywood might transform a loner into a lover. The corporate video transforms the unconvinced viewer into a believer. A believer in knowing your audience, finding a strong concept and opening to hook the viewer, and using structure and content rather than style to make your point.





The End
Thank You

