

Producing an Effective Community Business Video

by

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An Effective Community Business Video Is Your Storefront.

Today, anyone with a mobile device can record a video and share it to the world. While these videos may be entertaining, they often fall short of being effective when it comes to promoting a business or organization. To be effective, a *Community Business Video* results from a collaborative effort between the business owner and the video producer and is strategically built on a foundation of proven marketing guidelines and rules of videography.

When a potential customer visits a websites and is subjected to text, buttons, sliders and navigational bars, especially using a small mobile device, they will often become frustrated and visit a competitor. However, when this same potential customer visits your website and is greeted with an compelling narrated video describing **You, Your Products** and **Your Services**, your message is delivered with immediate impact. I've observed that the most effective *Community Business Videos* are placed front and center on websites and these narrated videos become storefronts.

Whenever a Client Asks Me to Produce a Video for Their Business or Organization, I Begin by Asking the Following Questions:

- 1. What product or service do you sell?***
- 2. Who are your customers?***
- 3. What do you want the video to do for your business or organization?***

Once these questions are answered, I begin the process.

An Effective Community Business Video Begins with Thoughtful Writing

Now that I have a clear idea of what you sell, who your customers are and what you want from the video, I begin writing. As a videographer, I may have several video clips, photos and music files; however, the foundation for an effective *Community Business Video* must begin with thoughtful writing to create a ***Timeline***, a ***Narrative*** and a ***Storyboard***.

The Timeline

Effective Community Business Videos are usually a minute or two in length. While some can be longer, my analytics indicate that unless the video is exceptionally compelling or has a wealth of relevant and important information, potential customers will usually move on if you cannot engage them in the first ten seconds.

The following is an example of a common *Timeline* that introduces your business or organization.

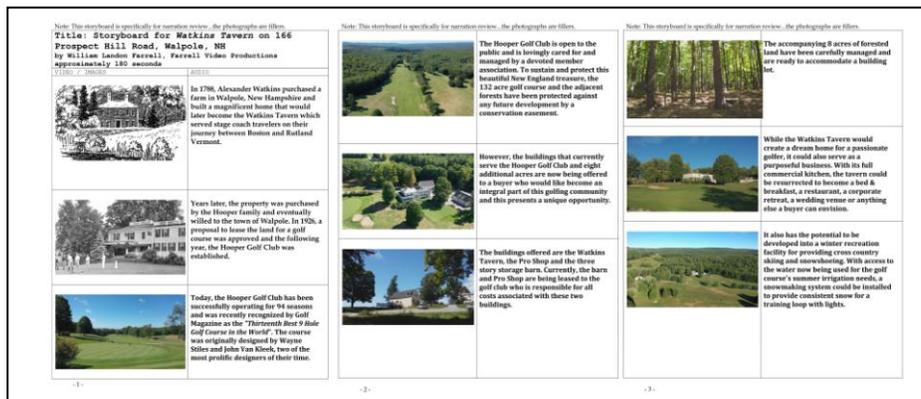
Who We Are Where We Are Located	What We Provide What We Sell and/or Services We Provide	How We Do the Best for Our Customers	Why You Should Consider Us	Visit Our Location Call Us Visit Us on Web or Social Media
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The Narrative

Whenever a video opens, it is more effective when there is some form of narrative; either a third person narrative, or excerpts from an interview. Viewers have audio and visual channels. The visual alone is not enough, even with music. There needs to be some form of narration to engage the viewer to appreciate the message and keep watching (and listening) to your video. This is where careful writing is required because it establishes the narration. A narrative can be third person where someone is speaking in the background, an interview where a person speaks on or off-camera with visual overlays, or a combination of the two.

The Storyboard

I always build a storyboard for my clients. This gives them a clear idea of where their story is going.



Selecting the Music

While selecting the music before recording the video may seem counterintuitive, **it is the music selection and narrative that sets the necessary emotion.**

When asked about his thoughts on the selection and use of music in his work during a 2011 PBS interview, Ken Burns said the following:

"We sort of do the music backwards. We record it (the music) before we start editing so that we can permit the music, at its own complicated emotional force, to dictate the pace and rhythm of cutting rather than the other way around"

As a videographer, I am a devote follower of Burns' process. It is his careful selection (and recording) of music that gives his films such visceral reactions. My best productions have resulted from the thoughtful initial choice of music that merges with the narrative. I sometimes spend hours listening to selections of commercial music from production companies. It takes listening to dozens of selections before I find a few that might work. I then go back to the question of who the customers are and select the music with this in mind. Additionally, if a client has a preference of music, I'll always collaborate with the understanding that the final selection of music must be licensed and purchased from a production company.

Recording the Video, Photos and Preparing the Graphics.

Having a script written beforehand allows me to consider specific video recording sequences. My experience tells me that it is usually unproductive to record anything without a plan. Occasionally, I'll record video without a fully completed plan because of time constraints or windows of opportunity that may arise, especially with aerial footage that requires the best possible light. However, filming without a plan is like wandering around in a hardware store looking for stuff that isn't needed.

Using a Tripod and Stabilizer

I'm not a big fan of using a handheld camera without a tripod or stabilizer. Camera movements must flow smoothly to result in a professional production. I use a tripod, slider or stabilizer (or a combination) and let the subject and landscape do the movement. Additionally, I don't use a motorized zoom lens. Judicious and conservative panning in and out, often referred to as "*The Ken Burns Effect*", is best done in post production editing.

Recording Aerial Video and Photographs

I am an FAA certified drone operator (RPC#4214233) and carry a \$1M insurance policy for each commercial flight. I always file a flight plan with local municipalities and communicate with abutting neighbors. I operate my drones with the highest regard for safety and use slow, deliberate motions to record the best possible footage.

Recording the Narration and Interviews

I use a soundproof recording booth whenever I create a third person narrative. If a client or a chosen talent wants to narrate the video, I'll help with the preparation of the script and go on location with my audio equipment. I also do on-camera interviews using professional-level lavalier microphones.

Editing the Video, Narration and Music

Before any editing begins, I assess the video footage, photographs and audio resources. While this is a time consuming process, it is important to carefully review everything to select the best video footage and audio resources. While I may have recorded an hour's worth of footage and narration, only a few minutes of material ever makes it to the next step in the editing.

I approach editing as a disciplined art form. Because I use modern non-linear editing software, I can make changes whenever necessary. While there is a certain degree of creativity required, the finished video has a specific purpose which is to deliver an effective message for a business or organization.

The Client Review

Once the initial video has been rendered, it is ready for the client's review. The video is then e-mailed with a link on my VIMEO channel. This first draft video is password protected and once the video has been reviewed, any necessary changes and modifications can be made. Even after the video has been published, additional changes can be made whenever necessary.

Distributing the Community Business Video

Community Business Videos are distributed in a variety of ways. First, all rendered files and photographs are uploaded and stored in an assigned Dropbox® folder. Then, there are the two major platforms to launch videos such as the widely popular YouTube® channel and the more professional VIMEO® channel that is devoid of any advertising. Next, your video is embedded on your website. In addition, social media pages such as Facebook®, Twitter®, Instagram® and many more are platforms where you can upload the video file or link. The video link can also be shared with your customers in the body of an e-mail. Also, there are the more traditional methods of delivery and distribution such as DVDs, Flash drives and Blue Ray disks. All of these hardware devices can be branded with your logos. The *Community Business Video* can be viewed on mobile phones, tablets, computers, DVD players and monitors, Cable TV broadcast and classroom projections and theaters.

Please Contact Me

Please call me at (603) 252-5904 or e-mail me at bill@farrellvideoproductions.com for consultation or discussion. I'm located in Keene, New Hampshire, I'm a member of the Greater Keene & Peterborough Chamber and I serve New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Vermont. Also, please visit my website to review my work at <http://www.farrellvideoproductions.com>